

The Armchair Ufologist

Tough on ufology -
tough on the *causes* of ufology

Issue 1- Junish 1997

In the Year of Our Lord, Kenneth Arnold

THE MYSTERY OF HISTORY

Once upon a time, between 1985 and 1993, there was a magazine called UFO Brigantia. The world was a simpler place then. UFO books and conferences were an event not an expectation, there were few ufologists and fewer UFO groups. People lived happily in that state of barely repressed tension and confusion which characterises the subject so well.

UFO Brigantia thrived in such an environment and was responsible for publishing some of the best and most cutting edge articles of the period. If it was controversial we at UFOB would print it. Thick was our file of letters from those who couldn't quite see the joke. Frequent were the threats of legal and physical action against us.

UFO Brigantia was the organ part of a (very) loose clench of ufologists who went under the name of the Independent UFO Network (IUN). Founded and manipulated essentially by myself, Philip Mantle, Dave Clarke, Martin Dagless, Rod Haworth and Stuart Smith the IUN was responsible for the growth of large UFO fests in the UK, having started them off in Sheffield during 1988 long before they were a twinkle in anyone else's eyes.

All the large BUFORA conferences, and most of the other Cons. you see before you now, are the direct result of the IUNs original idea to bring large scale weirdness to the public. And we succeeded, being responsible for bringing luminaries such as Hopkins, Keel and Vallee to the UK.

Not even the size of John Keel's room service bill dampened our enthusiasm!

And then, in 1992 following some serious duplicity on behalf of a BUFORA member at one of the aforementioned conferences I got thoroughly sick of the subject and did what so many others have done before - bailed out. Sold all my books, files and so on. Spent the proceeds on music and, ahem, recreational pursuits. The IUN persisted for a matter of months before Philip Mantle put his masterplan into action and began to hypnotise the BUFORA council by whispering "You are getting Santilli, you are getting Santilli", whilst gently swinging the promise of a bumper conference before their eyes.

This was the first in a number of successful hypnotic regression sessions Philip was to have with BUFORA Council, shortly to be televised as 'Yes, Philip Mantle'. Council duly regressed.

Unfortunately not long afterwards Stuart Smith died whilst attending a UFO conference in Austria, a desperately sad event which cast a shadow on the lives of anyone who knew the old bugger. Ufology for many of us was cold, the IUN was no longer and so the prosecution of the Great Conspiracy went underground.

We watched and waited.....

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In 1995 the Mantilli autopsy video so appalled me that I was drawn back into the subject once again. Sad life or what? A lucky break got me to being the co-editor of BUFORA's UFO Times and an even luckier one the gig as one of Fortean Times' UFO correspondents.

As I've eased back into the subject there have been a number of requests to start UFO Brigantia up again. Well, chaps and chapesses I can't - too much else to do. But there is a need for something which gathers together the lost minutiae of ufology - the conference reports, gossip, info that the usual zines won't touch with a bargepole and which I can't squeeze into FT or UT.

Stuff like that.

Then I came across Jim Mosely's Saucer Smear newsletter and Phil Klass's Sceptics Newsletter again at the F.T. UnConvention. Grokked on their essential simplicity and directness and thought hmmm mmmmmmm, why not? A bog standard newsletter would do the trick, and so The Armchair Ufologist was upholstered.

What's it for? Well besides the ideas mentioned above I'd like to it be a somewhere where people can express their *real* opinions about any aspect of the UFO scene.

Let's get the thin skinny down on paper about how the whole subject actually works. When people say and do stupid things in print, by phone, email, in person or at conferences lets chronicle it here. Let's talk openly about the group politics and the whys and wherefores of the whole shebang. Let's divine people's aims and intentions, their hopes to be

UFO superstars or their fears of relegation back to the ranks of the little people.

Everything the UFO scene is today is because of interactions ufologists have had in the past, everything it will be in the future is as a result of what's happening now. Where is it chronicled? Think of the service we'll be doing to the next generation of ufologists. Think of the disservice we'll be perceived as doing to the grate and the Good now. Think of the fun to be had.

People won't like it but so what? Maybe my sources of information will dry up as ranks close against people being shown the clockwork. It's possible, we'll just have to see. And this is where you - yes *you*, come in. Although I *try* to keep up with what's going on, read as much as poss, haunt the Internet and go to most of the ufo gigs in the north I can't do everything and I welcome your input in whatever way possible. I want informants! - We'll keep you secret if necessary. Everyone has their own hobbyhorses they love to rail against in the subject so let's hear about them. Be an armchair informer and receive the special mark I will bestow on you! My current stable of moles know who they are and I'm extremely grateful. Thanks boys and girls.

So, there's a Labour Government again, the sun's always shining, the Incredible String Band are reforming, small children can play safely in the streets, lions are reclining in close proximity to lambs and The Armchair Ufologist is afoot. Let's roll.....>

TWINKLES

The 'Alien Hunter' himself, Mr Derrol Sims, once a man from the CIA, now possibly a man at C&A was booked to 'perform' at the Truthseekers Conf on March 23rd. But something happened twixt booking and barking which led to him cancelling. Cancellations at UFO conferences invariably have a tale attached to them as we shall see elsewhere. But what could it possibly be in this instance? Well, try the following ufological equation-

Matthew Williams was behind the Truthseekers Conf.

plus

Philip Mantle doesn't like Matthew Williams

divided

by the fact that Philip is Derrol's good buddy

equals

Derrol *not* speaking at Truthseekers.

Q.E.D.

Of course alternative explanations for this state of affairs will be on sale via mail order from 14 Woodhall Drive, Batley, West Yorkshire. Please enclose a stamped, addressed entity.

BUFORAGOSS

Oh dear, I suppose I'd better come clean. There's a lot of stuff about BUFORA and Philip Mantle in this zine. But there's a lot happening there and BUFORA watching is one of my hobbies. I'd just like it to be known that *all* the BUFORA gossip here is freely available, I have not breached

anyone's confidences with any of this material. I'm merely making it widely known.

It's supposed to be above, if not beyond, top secret but it's one of those open secrets in ufology that big changes are afoot at BUFORA. Everyone at UnConvention and a few other events I've been to knew anyway - and it wasn't even a BUFORA member who told me in the first place so don't start a witch-hunt guys'n'gals.

John Spencer, Steve Gamble and Phil Walton are allegedly leaving Council, maybe after the Congress in August. Word is they want to devote more time to some actual ufology and do more research. Very commendable, about time someone did some. Big excitement. New blood ahoj. It has been speculated that Matthew Williams, Judith Jafaar and Richard Conway are set to join the suits and skirts at BUFORA as a result of this momentous change.

But as you've seen, problems have already arisen and tears will be gushing before bedtime. Cages are currently being constructed to keep Mantle and Matthews apart. Other relevant problems include who will be chairperson if John Spencer goes? Could this see BUFORAs first ever chairwoman? Will Phil Mantle's political aspirations make him go for it (for chairperson, not chairwoman you fools) - before it's too late and the night of the long ufologists happens? If he does stand will Mike Wootten stand against him in a ufological Tatton? If so what happens to UFO Times? Who on BUFORA council has the steady hand and nerves it takes to keep the good ship BUFORA on an even keel? Who indeed.....

The excitement is positively underwhelming. Hints and clues are coming in daily and the answers are unfolding as you read. This stuff is hot and trotting. Here we go.....

Worse still, as I type this on a lazy Sunday afternoon a post appeared on the Internet from Matthew Williams. The cheeky little mynci is actually suggesting that people challenge Philip Mantle's recent appointment as BUFORA Press Officer by sending their support to him so he can petition Council. Can you imagine?

And Matthew *still* thinks he'll get on Council now? Not so fast sonny boy. That sound you just heard was sphincters tightening around the enormous oak banqueting table which is BUFORAs group mind. Trenches have been dug and the noise of Matthew's name being deleted from Christmas card lists is positively deafening.

What's the prob?

Apparently the boulder hadn't played by the book (the BUFORA book that is :-)) and as a BUFORA member had been presumptuous enough to demand democratic change *before* he got on Council.

UNTHINKABLE!

PREPOSTEROUS!

Heresy!

Of course, had he waited until he *was* on Council nothing would have happened because of the glacial slowness with which things happen there. Or maybe it's the effect of those strange sweeties you're offered, just

before the man with the mask and the long.....no, no, no it's all coming back to me now. Those interminable Saturday afternoon bore-fests, the indecision, the secretive back stabbing. Hey kids, I've been there. I know. I want to go back.

:-)

But back to Matthew. He's done nothing wrong, merely circulated a letter asking quite politely if people would support him. The very model of the democratic approach I thought. Not so. Phones have been hot and tears have been shed (by Council members indeed). But no one has yet given me a good reason just what the real problem is.

Because I don't think there is one.

Despite the fear and loathing Matthew seems to have caused in BUFORA circles I applaud his direct action stance as being highly ethical and hope this is just the beginning in a series of moves which will show some of the buffers who do nothing for ufology still on Council that it's time to take the 'special' applesauce and wait for the comet.

Things need to change radically if BUFORA is to remain a force in today's ufological jungle. In short it's about time Mr Reality came a calling.

Trouble has been brewing for years at BUFORA and it's refreshing that some of the membership have finally started taking an interest in what is happening to *their* organisation and to *their* money. If you are a BUFORA member reading this and support Matthew's motion I suggest you write to him saying so via the editorial address.

Rifts are also occurring over

the BUFORA summer congress. Apparently Philip Mantle's grundle has been dissed and he is demonstrating this by making it fairly public that he doesn't like how Richard Conway and Tony Eccles are handling things (they're doing ok in *very* difficult circs if you ask me - it's not their fault they've found themselves in an episode of Stepford Ufologists).

My snouts in the USA claim that Philip has been emailing speakers privately with his own version of events, telling tales about who has been offered air fare and who not, and of how it would have been much better if he'd been in charge.

I don't doubt it for a minute. The P.M. can organise a damn fine conference - but he should have done it from the word go and not sulked when things don't seem to be going right and when others are in difficulties.

Nothing like solidarity eh brothers and sisters?

My own take on this is that I really wonder just what's going on at BUFORA. Speakers booked originally have had to be cancelled because BUFORA weren't prepared to pay airfares, and so they are lumbered with lots of UK bods who'll gig for free and the US people who are daft enough to pay their own way just to come to Inger-land.

Now, correct me if I'm wrong but a) don't BUFORA have stacks of money? b) If not then why not - it costs enough to join and c) When the IUN used to organise conferences we had this funny little way of thinking that went.....yeah, well, if we sell x amount of tickets at so much we will have so much which means we can afford to spend so much on

getting good speakers...therefore we will speculate on that figure 'cos we know we can't lose. Call it avant-guard if you like - but it worked for us.

It's a simple truth - listen carefully BUFORA brethren - *that you don't actually need much money up front to organise a conference.* So what's the problem?

Richard Conway did have one very good idea though which was to have more than one lecture theatre operating at once and run it like Fortean Times' UnCon. Groovy - but with one, no, two slight problems.

Firstly the amount of ground staff needed to pull this stunt off increases dramatically, and who's going to do all that - knowing what I know about how few people ever want to do anything at or for conferences other than to swan around looking important. And secondly, again as I was writing this, I received an email from the P.M.

This electronic missive told of how Philip had 'negotiated' a fee for an article in a Sunday glossy and that he 'respectfully' suggested the dosh be used to pay for the air fare of his 'good friend' Odd Gunnar Roed from Norway so he could speak at the Congress. Cheek! To be fair, Mr Mental did say if people didn't agree he'd go with the consensus.

But in a move which seems to somewhat undermine further the work Richard Conway and Tony Eccles have done on the Congress Philip also tried to veto the multi-theatre idea on the grounds that they would be lucky to sell the 450 seats to be filled. Another good idea gets swamped by borocracy.

One totally unfounded rumour doing the rounds is that BUFORA have no money! They have, they just don't know how to manipulate it for best effect.

And just coming in on the teletype is news that Michael Lindemann has pulled out of the congress and the Ecker's are wavy too.

If I was Richard Conway it would be slowly dawning on me that I was in what scientists have for years perceptively been calling 'the shit'.

One wag who knows quite a bit about the innards of BUFORA wryly commented "Perhaps they ought to get the Birdsalls in to sort their finances out"!

For the record Richard, if you're reading this, there are a great many people supporting you. On a metaphysical level this is obviously your first big initiatory test in ufology! Armed with the wand of intuition, the pentacle of protection, the weetabix of crunchiness and a pinch of salt you'll be ok and the demons will stay out of the circle. Honest.

Several people have contacted me to ask, appalled, how it is that Philip is *still* getting away with using the title Director of Investigations in all manner of places, when in fact he hasn't been D of I for ages. For instance, I am told that he is listed as D of I on the back of his new book 'Beyond Toshwell'. Additionally Philip has written a column for a new sci-fi newsstand publication called 'Star Voyager' where, yes, you've guessed it, he's listed as D of I again.

How can this be? It has been suggested to me that Philip is intentionally manipulating the situation and callously uses his

former status to enhance his 'reputation', and that in fact his desire to be BUFORA's Press Officer was driven by the very same need.

Of course any right thinking ufologist aware of the P.M.s philanthropic works among the ufologically poor at conferences both in this country and abroad will, as I did, immediately discount this rumour out of hand.

But you know how people are, they will talk and this sort of thing is bound to get around. A rumour discussed is better than a rumour left to fester.

Also, any suggestion that Philip's understanding of the word 'ethics' is that it's next to Sussex is something I'd rather not have to hear again.

To any readers who think that I am being a tad disloyal to the Mothership, I protest! Again! I happen to think BUFORA is a good org. but that it's run, secretively, divisively and non-democratically, and I'm a bit of a hippy when it comes to stuff like that. However, I wouldn't waste my time on it if I didn't have some hope for its future.

MASTER - WHAT IS THE SOUND OF TEDDY LEAVING THE PRAM?

Seekers after enlightenment have long pondered this gnarly ufological koan, but Mike Wootten, the esteemed editor of BUFORAs UFO Times has had a good stab with this:

Following Matthew Williams' assault on the BUFORA barricades, Mike bit back.

Sharply.

Rounding on Matthew (in a sort of virtual, email way) for his audaciousness Mike threatened the ultimate sanction. *If Matthew ever got to be on BUFORA Council Mike would resign from both editorship and from Council!*

Crikey.

I know and respect Mike enormously but I think resigning 'cos of Matthew Williams (say in Welsh sing-song voice for full ethnic effect) is a tad ludicrous and perspective needs to be gained quickly.

You've got the binoculars the wrong way round Mike!

MORRIS VS MCCLURE

Round One

Kevin McClure, author, editor of Promises & Disappointments, and all round nice guy strikes again.

Readers will remember his attack of Tony 'Ken' Dodd where Kevin concentrated on the fact that Tony was making children the focus of UFO abduction enquiries. All very commendable, even if it came to nought.

Well, it seems that Kevin is also carrying his crusade to Eric Morris and has reported Eric to his official nursing body for using hypnosis and allegedly making claims which he is not entitled to do.

Sensible move Kevin. Attack them through their professional bodies. Problem is that Eric has been thoroughly exonerated by them and is free to

go a-hypnotising whoever and wherever he wants.

UFO WARS

Even as you read this, Lancashire ufology is rent with screams of discord. The once sleepy community is now a hotbed of claim and counter claim with at least four major groups jockeying for position. Into this maelstrom came a new bug by the name of Tim Matthews, who started a group in Lancaster a few years ago and has fetched up in Southport where he has put on a number of tip-top mini-confs. and issued much information about Flying Triangles, Our Secret Technology etc.

He's active, out there and doing something, spending time, money and enthusiasm on research and investigation. Which is more than you can say for most people on the UFO scene. He should be praised not condemned.

The problem is no one else seems to like him - they won't go to each other's conferences and accusations about nicked material, silent phone calls, skeletons in closets and the usual playground behaviour abound.

Is this just another war of the poseurs or is there really something in it? Well, I know the Lancashire groups a bit and a fine bunch of dedicated individuals they are. Even more so for the number of women active in the community - respect to Cath, Paulette, Jean and June Cameron to name but a few - it's almost like the bloody Labour party - you can't move for chicks! I suppose that makes it a femalestrom rather than a maelstrom, but never mind.

But Tim M has well and

truly rubbed them all up the wrong way. "No chance", of a reconciliation I was told emphatically unless Tim M recants all his sins and walks naked through Lancaster bearing a placard saying 'I Am Guilty Of Everything Oh Yes, Including The Irish Potato Famine And The Rather Late Discovery of Penicillin'.

Letters of a legal threatening nature have even been sent from one party to another - so you know *just* how serious all this really is!

Tim M meanwhile is taking a defensive/offensive position and ploughing a lonely furrow. Good man! I suggested a summit to settle differences before it was too late, but no go.

I know Tim and find him ok actually. Sure, he can be a bit arrogant and forthright and says when he disagrees with people. All fine qualities in this subject as far as I'm concerned. "But he's wrong", the others say - and of course they're right? It seems to me more of a personality clash than anything else.

As my grandmother never used to say, Now children, why can't you all live in peace and harmony? Get it sorted boys and girls.

"Wrong" or not, Matthews has supporters in strange places. It appears that Bill Sweetman, the American guru of all things aviated and secret actually agrees with Tim's point of view and has offered to come at speak at a Timconf. later this year.

SPEAKING OF LANCASHIRE

The Blackpool group LAPIS who put on such an *excellent* show last November in Lytham brought their roadshow to Burnley on May 17th and presented 'A Day Of Strange Phenomena'.

The usual suspects were lurking everywhere, stalls bowed under the weight of ufological tat and there was much gossip to be hoovered up.

Eric Morris has returned from the shadows over the past few years and has now left his job as a nurse to devote his full time energies to the Alien Research Counselling Centre (ARCC). Say the C's soft as in 'centre' and oo-er missus Eric could have chosen his acronym a bit more carefully!

Serious guy is Eric. Told us some great stories. His favourite word is 'strange' and he seemed to be in a competition to see just how many times he could use this adjective in the course of his talk.

Eric example: Woman relates story of being taken into a 'strange' barn like thingy in a field.....sees a 'tramp' and a 'tart' across the other side of a pool of green stuff. Tramp & tart start having sex, woman is aroused by this and shortly finds herself in a threesome with the T & T. *And she enjoyed it.* I ask you, whatever next. If the ufological experience is to be demeaned by people's enjoyment of sex then it's time things changed. Immediately.

Aliens? Incubi and sucubi? Or just sexual repression made manifest in a jolly good fantasy. Let's face it pilgrims, we've all

had dreams like *that*, haven't we?

Eric is very sincere and obviously puts a great deal of time and money into the subject, being genuinely concerned about the plight which his informants find themselves in. But I worry about just *what* he is dealing with, what he is unlocking from people's psyches and what he's going to do when someone freaks out on him. But hey, he's a nurse and no doubt trained to handle all manner of psychic disorder. That's a relief.

And then he said he can so many cases he couldn't cope with them all so he started using regression hypnosis to "make things easier". On who Eric, on who?

Rule one in the Big Boys Book Of Being A Good Human is that under *no* circumstances do you mess with someone's mind and unfortunately, glamorous as it is, hypnotic regression does just that.

It might seem a good thing to do at the time, it might get 'results', the client may even want to be regressed, it might even get the media interested in you. But we have a duty not to do this sort of thing. A duty which doesn't need writing into UFO group rules and constitutions. Just something everyone should know. BUFORA has had a ban on using hypnotic regression for a long time now and it was decided to continue with at an N.I.C. meeting earlier this year. It's moves like this which make BUFORA the excellent organisation it can be. It will lead to less investigators and less 'good' cases as the fame freaks and glamour grabbers go elsewhere so they can hypnotise and impress. Let 'em.

Back to Eric and his case.

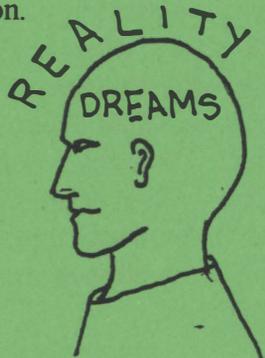
Look at it another way. Somewhere on the Cheshire/Wales border, if Eric is to be believed, is a very confused and frightened woman who has fessed up her inner mosts to Eric. Eric listens and thinks.

And then, on a bright May Saturday over a hundred people were 'entertained' by listening to the intimate details of someone's inner experiences life. Many of them perhaps even thought it had all happened in the objective world of the physical. I just thought it was tabloid ufology and didn't in anyway further our knowledge of the Close Encounter Experience.

There's a fine line to be drawn between research and investigation and entertainment and titillation. Despite Eric's protestations of confidentiality does that woman know that her story is now his story? And that it will soon be part of UFO history?

Eric presented *no* evidence that the woman's experiences were anything other than psychic in the literal sense, and no attempt to explain them in those terms other than to tell us that the woman wasn't promiscuous (!). How does he know, what does it matter anyway?

In fact throughout the whole sorry tale I was strongly reminded of the comprehensive diagram shown in the first episode of Father Ted, and I reproduce it here for your instruction and consideration.



Oh yeah, and she'd been shown scenes of the destruction of earth and one particular horrible one of a horse being ripped to shreds. Two years later she was taken to an adult creche on board this flying barn thingy and shown the evidence of alien tramp/human rumpy pumpy.

An ickle baby. All say Ahhhhhhhhhh.

And if that's not conclusive evidence of alien intervention in the affairs of mankind then I'm a banana.

During this tour de farce I had a dizzy spell and suddenly thought I was in an episode of Coronation Street being served by Roy in the cafe - but it was only Eric after all. Worse still I realised that 'veteran' (ie bloody old and boring) ufologist Arthur Tomlinson who was in the audience looks like Norris, and Judith Jafar (you can't keep the secret about fieldmice conferences for ever Judith - the world needs to know. Now. Before it's too late) bears a passing resemblance to Alma!

Oh my God. After that the whole day took a tumble.

Grumpy old George Wingfield (as Don Brennan of course) took the stage next. Crop circles? Pshaw, thing of the past boyo. George is *right* at the pointy sharp end and he was telling us about Flying Triangles - or as he's 'humorously' dubbed them - UFTs.

In one of those very special moments ufology sees all too frequently George reinvented the whole history of Flying Triangles in his own image, missed out totally the north and midland waves of the 70s and 80s, and 'forgot' to mention they were

known as the Silent Vulcan at that time.

Using the work of Omar Fowler as 'evidence' (and isn't it funny that both Omar and George are both chums and on the Flying Teapot Review consultants list) George proceeded to give us the history of FTs according to him and his chums.

Oh George, *george, george*. In his ever so public-school manner George 'compared' the FTs to known aircraft and concluded they weren't them and inferred it was our old friends the allens piloting them.

Sorry.....the aliens.

George read out numerous eye witness accounts and demonstrated a touching faith in the literalness of people's narratives. ie if they said they saw X then they sure as shit saw X and not Y from a different angle or even B with some unusual lights or maybe they'd never even seen X in the first place. The flaws of perception and cultural analysis are not really George's strong point at all.

Realising the audience had heard all this before from people who actually knew what they were talking about George quickly fell back on that old ufological trick of defining himself by his enemies. Tim Matthews was one ("Tim are you here, before I insult you"). Tim wasn't, so George waved a copy of Stealth Lies and Videotape around in a disdainful fashion and poured scorn on it.

Just because he didn't agree.

He then proceeded to get Tim M completely wrong by suggesting he thinks *all* FTs are flying out of Warton. He doesn't. God we were impressed. Well into a rant by then he rounded on

Matthews and 'others' for their 'motives' in the subject and suggested they may have 'sponsors', hinting heavily that of course they were all paid tools of government disinformation. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Too much time in the crop circles George baby.

But wait. The fragile limits of my world view were to be severely tested when George told us the tale of the 'missing file'. He'd once had a file called 'UFO' which in the 80s he stored on a mainframe at Warwick university and which contained some information about IBM in relation to UFOs (I think this was how he told it). The mainframe was an IBM one and lo, when George went to retrieve his file it was 'lost'.

The Lovecraftian obviousness of what was going on should stagger us all. George paused, the air heavy with inference. IBM had of course stolen his file, having an inbuilt program to detect anything to do with UFOs. The computer hadn't just eaten it or anything like that which happens to us normal folk.

Nosireebob.

But, George continued, FTs have been conclusively proved to be taking an interest in nuclear power stations. And he finally, but somewhat shyly, conceded that they "could be ET craft".

Well, yes they could.

Why these people - and you see them all the time at UFO cons, can't just come straight out and say at the beginning of their lecture that they believe wholeheartedly in ETs, have done since they were a puppy, and that their lecture will illustrate the proof of this, I just don't know. Other than, of course, the fact that there is a fundamental

contradiction inherent in the juxtaposition of 'proof' and 'extraterrestrials'.

So George went off to fettle his Whippet (true, I saw him coming out of the lift with one - unless it was an alien with a particularly effective cloaking device).

Dr Rauni-Leena Luukarem Kilde (Ivy Tilsley) next. 'Different' ufology, benevolent aliens, love as the central power of the universe, governments unable to face the change that is sure to come etc. etc. Course, Rauni-loobi is being harassed by 'them', microwave beams are aimed at her (shut the bloody microwave door then Rauni), she has had all her thoughts sucked out of her at a UFOcon by some dude with a belt device, and had to change rooms three times at the conference hotel for unspecified but presumably paranoid reasons.

Hard core - you know the score.

I didn't see Tim Rifiat's lecture on Remote Viewing but I did 'see' it. And I know what you're doing now as well, so stop it!

'Busty' Taylor last. I thought everyone had long since got over the schoolboy humour inherent in Busty's nickname, but the compere made it new for us each time he referred to him as 'Buster', conjuring up visions of a Beano cartoon strip based on 'Buster' Taylor and the adventures he has pulling on his joystick aloft the crop circles of England.

Nice bloke actually, entertaining speaker, seemed genuinely interested in crop circles but not concerned about making money from them. In fact

he's become financially poorer from his pursuit of the mystery. And that dear reader if I may digress a while, is the mark of someone who's serious about the subject. Simple fact: If you're making money you're invariably a charlatan. If you're loosing money due to your interests it's a safe bet that whatever your beliefs you hold them sincerely.

Or am I wrong readers?

Busty's seen it all and photographed most of it. He's even come upon people shagging in crop-circles. Accidentally, and in his 'plane, of course. He believes most circles are hoaxed, but that the simple designs represent a real phenomenon.

Fair enough, so far so good. But his logic seemed less than rigorous on this as he'd already showed us one of massive complexity which had allegedly formed in 35 minutes and was thus *not* a hoax.

When pushed he 'admitted' he thought they were caused by ETs and that maybe even the old ring barrows ("which look just like a UFO") were done thusly because the ancients were copying what they saw in the sky. He wouldn't be drawn too much on the subject of hoaxers, saying he was going to reveal 'all' at a meeting later this summer. Why not now, a few of us cheerily taunted - chicken or what?

At this a somewhat noughty George Wingfield turned his steely gaze on us mere insects and left us in no doubt who he thought, nay knew, who the hoaxers were - Jim Schnabel. Chris Kenworthy, Rob Irving, Wessex Sceptics, he snapped. Old news George, old news. Even Busty agreed. He was going to unveil someone else.

Not now, but soon.
We wait.

Actually old Busty *really* doesn't like hoaxers and even said he would 'fight' (a technical croppy term apparently) anyone he found hoaxing a circle.

That really would be the last straw.

I share the belief about most if not all crop circles being hoaxed but where the are good examples of a complex circle which has been aborted or made wrongly? They surely can't get them *all* right. Equally, why has no team of hoaxers taken a video of them doing the dirty deed, to whip out when the corn maniacs are proclaiming it to genuine? Answers please.

End of day - all went home rejoicing.

UFOLOGISTS DISAPPEAR IN SHEFFIELD

Another one of these small and newly formed, post-X Files UFO groups is the South Yorkshire UFO Network. Leader - or ex leader now - one Martin Jeffries. In April SUFON put on a day of lectures. It was perhaps the worst flop of a UFO day I've ever attended. Not because of the organisation and speakers which were all fine, but because of the lack of bodies on benches. If there was fifty I'd be stretching the imagination. A good time was had but money was lost.

Maybe he's serious ;-)

Perhaps the fact that it was on Sunday and a mile out of the City centre had something to do with it Martin? Or the mysterious non-appearance of most of his

groups members. Were they trying to tell him something?

Another potentially good ufologist, Jeffries had attempted to run before his strolling abilities were fully formed. Rumour now is of financial difficulties, an unscheduled departure from the love-nest and a total disillusionment with the subject. Come back Martin - you'll get used to all this, honest.

Ufology is a harsh mistress.

ZINE WATCH

Gordon Creaking, that indefatigable bastion of Flying Teapot Review excelled himself in the Winter 1996 editorial. I won't quote it all but this is the gist of it:

"According to an estimate issued recently...some 40% of children in our schools are emotionally 'disturbed'...As regards the state of our population as a whole we can already see for ourselves the stupendous rise in the drug problem.....Had governments applied the requisite remedy (i.e. **the death penalty**) something might perhaps have been done to stem the avalanche.....But it is clearly too late now, so we must expect that things will take their logical course and that we shall see the logical outcome."

Creaking goes on to say that he personally witnessed Chinese troops shooting and beheading drug pushers on the streets and found that to be highly effective. Yeah, right, Gordon killing people 'cos you don't agree with their actions is *always* the best way to deal with a situation. Does witnessing

murder in the name of ideology make you feel superior?

Quite what any of this has to do with ufology is made clear when Gordon tells us that the "Governments KNOW who and what is controlling this massive planned degeneration of Mankind, and are far too scared of bringing down upon themselves the wrath of the Dark Forces that rule this world."

So it's nothing to do with unemployment, low wages, bastard bosses, youths being no longer happy with just an orange and a peg for fun, umpteen years of a Tory government, the creation of an underclass to whip or anything like that, then Gordon? Nah, course not. It's those bloody aliens again.

Flying Teapot Review's address used to be in a place called Snodland. I rest my case.

And note the capitalisation. These aren't just any ol' dark forces kids, we're facing dark forces with capitals!

In Coronation Street of course Gordon would be Percy Sugden.

WHEN THE POPE COMES IN

Learned students of ufology will all be familiar with Nick Pope's seminal book of nonsense for children, *Open Skies, Closed Minds*, detailing his view of ufology from a MOD bods point of view. Well Popey's got another one out. Unread as we go to press, *The Uninvited*, is a tale of ufological derring don't as Pope goes in search of abductions. The Daily Mail were keen to help with this scientific treatise and splashed excerpts all over three issues in

early May. Of course they asked readers to write in if they'd 'had any experiences of the paranormal'.

As a result The Mail had the biggest reader response ever for this type of article and ended up perplexed at the sack loads of letters from people claiming who-knows-what. In the true spirit of scientific enquiry they are going to bin them all apparently.

Anyway, we 'gasped' as we read that Nick had personally investigated the Alfred Burtoo case, as even by our abacus we worked out that Nick would have been nobbut a lad when that happened and Alfred is long since croaked. Obviously a misprint - or perhaps his next book will reveal the secret of time travel?

Then a phone call from Jenny Randles reminded me of something. Cast your mind back to when Open Minds, Empty Wallets came out. I reviewed it in BUFORAs UFO Times and noted that it was strange (to borrow Eric's world for a moment) that Nick's *personal* abduction experience which took place in Florida was not mentioned in the finished tome.

We know it *was* in there because Jenny read the book in ms. form.

As if by magic (or is it majic eh, conspiracy fans?) this abduction case seems now to be in The Uninvited. There it was in the Daily Mail on May 14th *but under a pseudonym*.

Why? Nick too chicken to come clean and admit he'd had an abdu-exp? Or perhaps Simon & Schuster thought that the, er, 'flow of money' from punter to publisher might not be so liquid if Nick's 'credentials' were undermined by

this admission. Or was it perhaps the dark forces, sorry Dark Forces, who were manipulating the whole thing.

A call to the publicity person would probably have revealed the truth - but I really couldn't be arsed. Maybe we'll untangle that one for the next issue.

A VISIT TO THE EVIL EMPIRE

In the dim and distant days of Yorkshire ufology Graham and Mark Birdsall ran the Yorkshire UFO Society - YUFOS. Relationships between them and other Yorkshire ufologists were strained to say the least, a situation which culminated in late 1986 when the IUN solved their 'main' case, the Cracoe Fell photo, proving once and for all that it was a rock reflection.

Not a 'real' UFO.

Not the entrance to an underground hangar briefly revealed as Tony Dodd alleged.

Not what two 'unnamed' witnesses saw flying overhead later that same afternoon.

Anyway after a rather unnecessary incident during which I had to eject Graham Birdsall from my home in 1986 relations 'cooled' between YUFOS and anyone remotely connected with the IUN.

But that's all in the past eh?

YUFOS are no more and 'UFO' magazine is going from strength to strength and compared to a lot of the newsstand drivel about UFOs it stands up rather well. At least it reflects the scene even if it doesn't reflect *on* it. Graham Birdsall is now Graham W.

Birdsall and we all look forward to each issue to see which jumper he's wearing in which world location. It's a thrill Sir, honest.

Recently during some work Dave Clarke and myself were doing for a Sheffield Star UFO 'stand alone' publication we had occasion to visit the Evil Empire at Castle Kwest, sorry Wharfebank Business Centre. We were pleasantly surprised to discover that they now inhabit some very swish offices indeed. Coffee was served and Big G gave up some of his valuable time to an in depth interview which will see the light of day somewhere this year.

I still don't agree with most of what they prattle on about but credit where it's due. Unlike most orgs they have stuck to their guns and are now reaping the rewards.

The very same day we also asked the same set of questions to Jenny Randles and hope to meld the two viewpoints into a serious article at some point.

And yes, despite Graham's usually non-committal stance on the subject, he *does* believe that real, gen-u-ine aliens are visiting earth.

Lordy.

IT'S THAT MAN AGAIN!

Psytek is the name of a three day event (4/5/6 July) to be held at Derby's Assembly Rooms and features a whole smorgasbord of sci fi and sci fact. Saturday 5th July is UFO day and features (among others) lectures by Peter Hough, Jenny Randles and Philip Mantle in the afternoon.

The evening session is billed as The Great UFO Debate at which all the speakers and sundry

other liggers would have a mass debate about ufology. We have just learned that Philip Mantle has pulled out of said debate. Why? You tell us. Perhaps he'd got wind of the other panelists (Peter Hough, Jenny Randles, Ian Simmons, myself and a few others) and his bottle had gone. Perhaps he's got a 'prior appointment'. If so then donja think it's odd that he's still giving his lecture?

For anyone living within striking distance of Derby the whole weekend promises fun and facts. Contact them on: 01332 343 443.

THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF UFOLOGY

Or something like that. There has been talk of late of setting such an Institute up. The whys and wherefore's are long and complicated but stem from a number of ufologists who would like to see some actual research done and published within a reasonable time frame.

Look at it another way. Out of all the UFO groups, UFO zines, conferences, books and so on, where are the published in-depth research documents which actually further knowledge? Answer - there aren't any.

Solution? A group of individuals who want to take a decision to actually do some hard work on one or more areas of the subject, set a clear aim, objective and time period and publish at the end of it. We're casting around at this time for interested people with a view to having a meeting at the end of the summer to decide how

to progress it further.

One event which will happen, hopefully under the auspices of the Institute is a UK version of the M.I.T. symposium on abductions, CE4s or whatever you chose to call them.

You'll no doubt all be aware of the MIT event held in June 1992 at Cambridge, Massachusetts, and to which over fifty serious abduction researchers gave papers on every aspect of the phenomenon. This was real ufology. Unfortunately only two of the speakers were from outside the Americas so it wasn't a truly comprehensive look at the subject.

The subsequent publication gathered together all of the papers and was published as 'Alien Discussions'. This huge tome, 700 pages of it, is the definitive document on the abduction experience so far. Seek it out if you haven't seen it. Read it in bed if you dare (or if your arms are strong enough).

So, let's do one here. No commerciality, no plebs off the street, just a collection of researchers giving papers to an audience of their interested peers. Will it happen? Will the divided UK UFO community be able to put aside its many differences and gather in the same building for a day or two. We'll see.

I'm prepared to organise it and will happily take upon myself the task of publishing the papers afterwards. Let's see just what the UK abduction scene really does consist of. If people choose not to contribute to it then I think that says something about their commitment, research and investigations methods and their real interest in making their

findings known.

More news on this next issue, although I would love to hear what people have got to say about it, suggestions, offers of help and papers, contacts etc etc

It's a serious proposition to make something happen we can be proud of. Another suggestion for the putative institute was for a group of people to take a long look at car-stop cases. There are others and we await suggestions and offers of support and help. If you are interested please write via me at the editorial address.

Yet another project mooted by the (currently) virtual institute is the revivication of Project Pennine. Originally a catalogue of Ball Of Light sightings in the Pennine areas, Project Pennine has a dream.....

We want to maintain a seven night a week watch on a particular valley in the Pennines - noted for its persistent UFO reports - to try and catch light phenomena on instrumentation. By this we mean video, still photos, magnetometers etc. It has been done in Hessdalen and elsewhere and there is no reason why a small scale attempt should not be set up here.

It will require enthusiasm, time and equipment and the plan is to have the valley monitored for four to six hours a night seven nights a week.

A plan which could come to nothing? Surely. But we believe there are enough committed people in the north to do something. MORE

BUFORA Company Men & Women will demand to know why we haven't tried to do this through BUFORA. Answer: it takes too long, they won't put up the sums of money it will take, people who

have naff all to do with it will want to have a say and so on.

ALONE IN MANCHESTER

Na then. The last Saturday in May saw us parking the TAU saucer in rainy Manchester. Jenny Randles (why does my spellchecker always want to put Jenny Rankles?) was speaking at the Friend's Meeting House, on the subject of her new book Alien Contact - the first 50 Years.

Lawksamussy! Does that mean there will be more?

It's to be hoped so because there were only twelve people or so in attendance. Wether this is the result of a central Manchester venue on a Saturday which competed with a major football match and a local music festival, a comment on what people think of Jenny's lectures or anything else will be forever a mystery. The gig was organised by Tim Matthews so the fact that only twelve people were there will bring a warm glow to the hearts of many of his observers. But at least he tried to do something and that's what matters. The public are fickle.

It was interesting though. After JR had gone through her selection of slides the assembled throng had a discussion about the proofs or lack of them for the existence or non-existence of aliens.

With such a small group of people it was quite easy to see how people's assumptions coloured what they believe to be true.

BITS

As we begin to close word reaches us that BUFORA is positively boiling at the news that Matthew Williams' has *already* got over fifty BUFORA members to support his motion. There is excited chatter about revolution and overthrow, Extraordinary General Meetings and the like. Many of us have been here before, but consensus is that this is the farthest a probe has got into BUFORAs perimeter for a long time.

BUFORA member's private area on the BUFORA web site have a thread discussing the current state of affairs.

I think ladies and gentlemen that you put a few things to your membership and settled them once and for all.

IMPLANT NEWS

The education section of May 8ths Independent featured parapsychologist Sue Blackmore writing about alien implants. It's and interesting and instructive piece which I quote from here for your delectation.:

"The other day a young man stood in front of me holding in his hand a tiny object that he said had been implanted in the roof of his mouth by aliens who had been abducting him regularly for many years. Did I want to see it? Would I test it for him?

"It was about 3mm long and and a dull metallic grey. One end was flat; the other rounded, and one side was marked with stripes or indentations - but you couldn't see much with the naked eye.

She had it analysed on a stereo

microscope.

"The technician fixed the little metallic object into the machine and showed us how to change the magnification and explore the surface. There were bumps and lumps, and little craters.....My companion was thrilled - the fibre looked like one on a famous American implant. The texture looked like one he had seen in a UFO magazine.....

"I was suddenly longing for the final stage - to get it into the microanalyser. As the X-rays were turned on I felt a genuine thrill of curiosity, overcoming my suspicion of the mundane answer that might be in store. What if it were made of obscure elements rarely seen in the lab? What if it showed a weird mixture seen in no earthly object?

"We watched the waveforms appear on the machine; we could see the answer unfolding before our eyes. This wasn't guesswork, this was a machine that could actually tell us what the thing was made of. And we had it. It was 40 per cent mercury, 30 per cent tin and 16 per cent silver - about the same as a dental filling.

"Are you disappointed or relieved? I'm just glad we found out."

So, that's it for this time pilgrims. Hope you enjoyed it, hope you'll be back for more next time. And always remember:

**IF YOU CAN'T
TAKE A JOKE,
YOU SHOULDN'T
HAVE JOINED!**