

In the rural areas of not-so-very-long ago, the bee held quite an esteemed position in the economic welfare community. Many hives were kept; great value being placed upon the beeswax and honey. A whole mythology grew up around the bees and for generations developed and diversified until, alas, the advent of the mechanised world put paid to all such irrational beliefs. This brief article will, I hope, remind us of some of the superstitions associated with bees, now largely forgotten.

From ancient Greek times, bees have been regarded as messengers of the Gods, the link between the material world and the divine manifestations. Thus they are said to be the carriers of the human soul on its final voyage, and hence the almost universal practise of 'telling the Bees' when a death had occurred (more of this later)

Their origins were Christianised in an ancient Breton Belief

that states that bees were born of the tears of Christ, shed whilst dying on the cross. This probably relates to the fact that in English lore bees are said to sing sacred songs on the true Christmas Eve. Old folk swear that the true Christmas eve can be thus determined by listening patiently at the hive.

It was always thought (and not without reason) that bees were intelligent and peace-loving creatures, and would not tolerate quarrelsome families or cursing keepers. In more recent times science has demonstrated that the bee is indeed sensitive to the intonations of the human voice. A Bedfordshire legend states that if the hive is not doing very well, a sure-fire remedy is to sing Psalms in front of it.

Beeswax was considered to be vital for church candles and particularly those use at funerals. Further quasi-religious myths warn that only on a Good Friday may a bee-hive be removed. That, according to our ancestors, the bee is somehow with intelligence and divine connections, cannot be in doubt, perhaps it can all be explained by the, then unknown, fact of the 'dance' worker bees indulge in to communicate the locality of prime pollen areas and, as already mentioned, their response to the human voice.

Throughout Northern Europe, it was considered wise to communicate to the bees news of any event in the lives of the people around, particularly of a death or a wedding. In the case of a death an iron door key would be knocked three times on the hive, which would be tied with black crepe then, perhaps, a simple rhyme would be recited:

"Little bee your master is dead,  
Leave me not in my necessity."

Usually spiced funeral cake and sugar, or a biscuit soaked in wine, was left. Another rhyme sometimes spoken was:

"Bees, bees, awake,  
Your master is dead,  
And another you must take."

In the event of a wedding, again the hive would be decorated, the bees informed and offered wedding cake. This would ensure that the wedding party did not get stung.

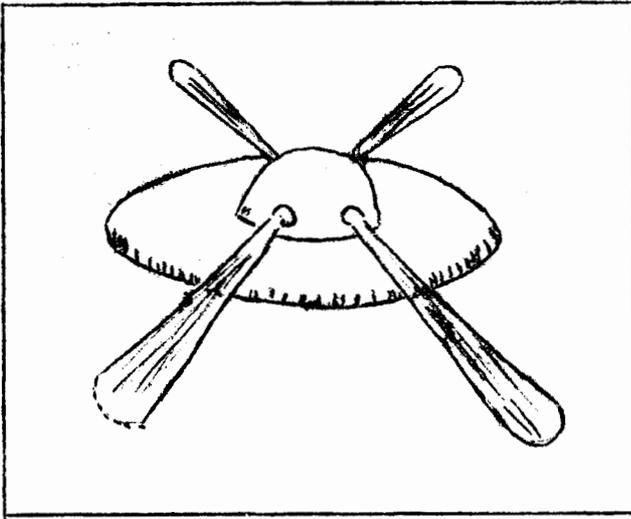
Swarming bees developed an exclusive lore: If an unknown swarm arrived on







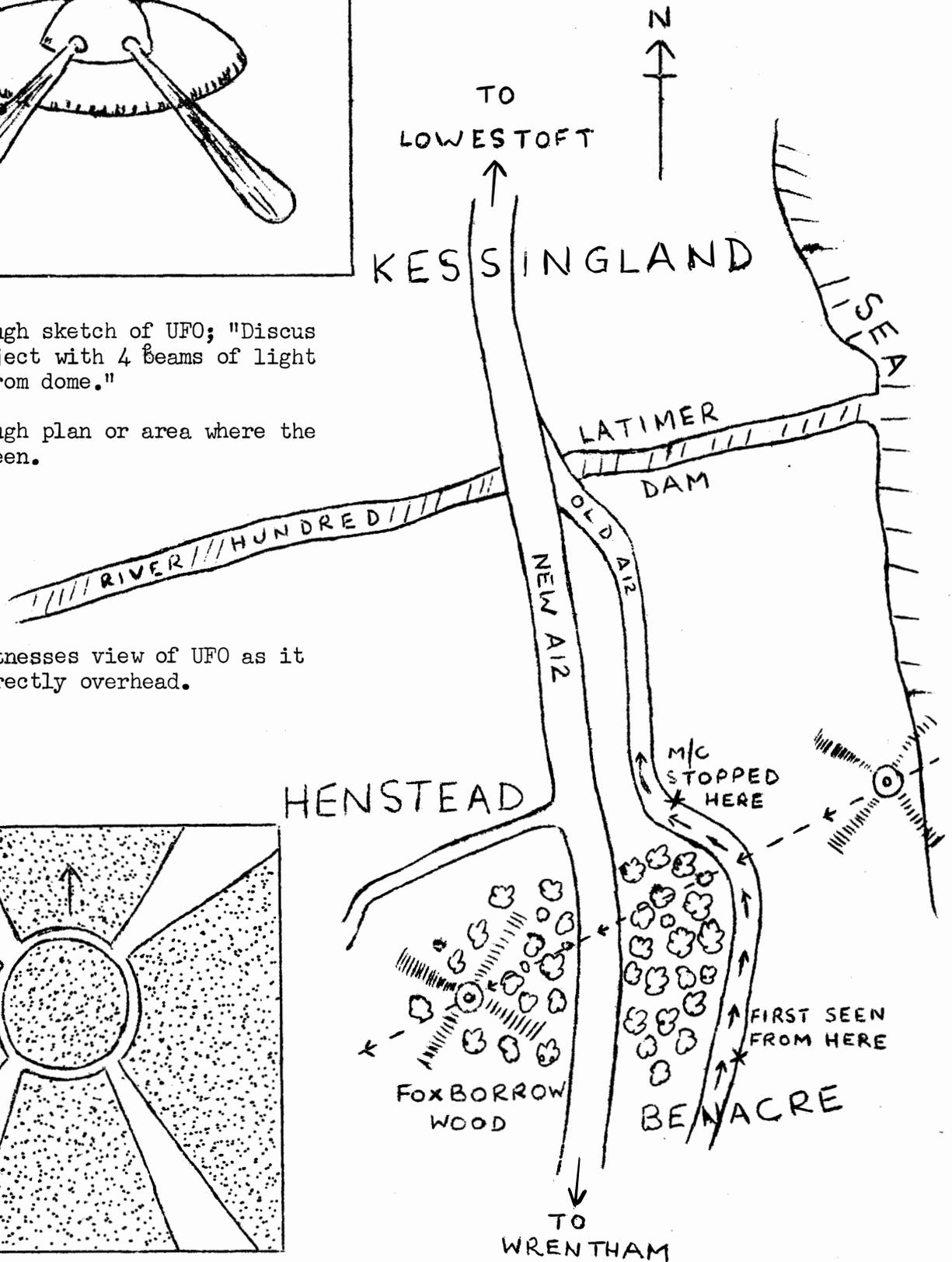
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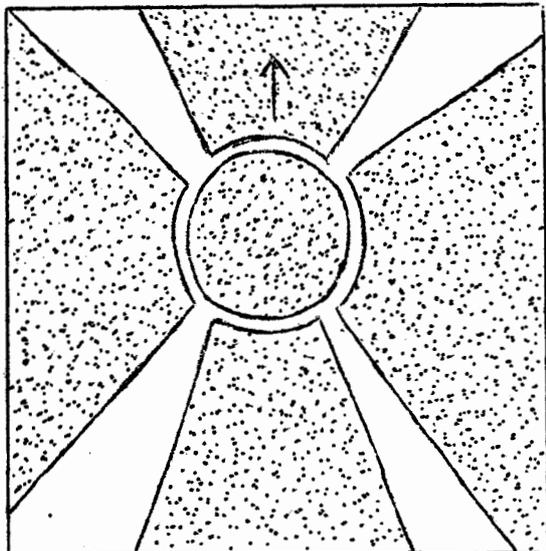
Above: Rough sketch of UFO; "Discus shaped object with 4 beams of light shining from dome."

Right: Rough plan or area where the UFO was seen.

All maps and drawings are based on originals made by the witness and now in the files of B.S.I.G.



Below: Witnesses view of UFO as it passed directly overhead.





# \* \* COMMENT \* \*

Following my series (as yet unfinished) articles on Black Shuck, I received a very interesting (and complimentary) letter from Mr. J. B. Delair, Research Programme Co-ordinator & Librarian of CONTACT (UK), and also Editor of the Groups magazine 'AWARENESS'. Mr. Delair's letter was so interesting that I have decided to publish it here (with his permission) as it forms such a good 'bridge' between what has gone before and the contents of this edition of LANTERN. - I.A.W.Bunn.

Mr. Delair writes:-

"...I have been especially interested in your informative article (issues 18-20 of Lantern) on BLACK SHUCK. Admittedly I was only dimly aware of the existence of these East Anglian manifestations, but on reading your intriguing account I immediately perceive some parallels with the UFO mystery, and, possibly, even an interconnection between the two. I mention some of these below, as it occurs to me that they may so far have escaped your own notice, and might prove to be fertile fields for further investigation; certainly your own researches show what can be done over a relatively short period of time,

Firstly, it may be wrong to study the BLACK SHUCK stories in isolation, for there are I believe other regions where comparable black phantom dogs manifest with fair regularity, as on the highways around Tavistock in Devon. As you say, such occurrences used to be often associated with the 'Devil'. I am no authority on phantom or pseudo-phantom animals, but seem to recall having read somewhere or other in the past other accounts of similar ghosly canines in Kent and Herefordshire. Probably you know more about all these than I do. Thus BLACK SHUCK might be best studied in relation to all phantom dog yarns.

Secondly, you mention that some BLACK SHUCK stories refer to sulphur-like smells and to scorching or other scarring of the ground. Some of the other dog stories I have just alluded to involve mystery, even gigantic, dog spore or footprints and, like BLACK SHUCK, seem impervious to human aggression and can disappear seemingly at will.

Thirdly, the characteristics you list for BLACK SHUCK are exactly paralleled by UFOs, which frequently disappear and appear into and from nowhere, sometimes through solid objects (walls, fences, trees); are often seen near, on, or even in bodies of water, and occasionally disgorge occupants alleged to have (in at least two instances) a great desire to possess terrestrial dogs. I also have accounts on file here of mystery 'black dogs' coming out of a UFO hovering low over a churchyard in the USA - part of the well-known 1973 world-wide UFO wave.

Fourthly, there is increasing evidence to conclude that the mysterious 'Manimals' (i.e., the Sasquatch, Bigfoot, Yeti-type creatures) are connected somehow with UFOs. Like UFOs and the phantom dogs, they come and go very mysteriously, often accompanied by acrid and other horrible smells (sulphur-like?), leave footprints, make weird sounds, and so far appear to be impervious to bullets and other missiles. They often move quite silently. UFOs do this too, and so do many mystery dogs.

Few people will withhold agreement from the assertion that UFOs represent but the tip of some much larger iceberg, presently still mostly hidden from us. Whoever, or whatever, lies behind it is part of some other 'realm' that logically must support or consist of a whole range of beings, objects, scenarios, etc., that to us appear to be most often ghostly, but occasionally tangible - or at least tangible enough to leave visible and recordable traces on good old solid Earth. Judged from the similarities of character just summarised, BLACK SHUCK, UFOs, and perhaps other mystery beings, such as the Surrey Puma, and the Sasquatch-type creatures, all represent different facets of a far larger whole. Certainly the traceable similarities are such that a theory linking them together is not too aberrant. Indeed, I believe this has already



