

MERSEYSIDE UFO RESEARCH GROUP

NEWSLETTER NO. 2

JUNE, 1965.

Officers

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Meetings

The remainder of '65 meetings will be held in the Lounge at the Free Church Centre on: July 14, September 3, October 13, November 10, and December 8.

CRATERS: Their Origin and Classification

by

Alan W. Sharp, B.Sc., B.Eng., F.G.S., F.R.A.S.

The following article was specially written for the Newsletter. Some of the suggestions contained in it were referred to very briefly in the March-April Flying Saucer Review, but here you will have an opportunity to study them in greater detail. The article does not necessarily reflect MUFORG policy.

During the vast span of Geological Time, the forces of nature have caused holes to appear on the Earth's surface, varying in size from minor cracks and crevices to rift valleys and volcanic craters. Generally speaking, the term "crater" is reserved for such of these holes as have a certain regularity of shape, i.e. are more or less circular or oval in plan rather than linear or sub-linear.

In geologically very recent times indeed, man has added craters of his own making to those of natural origin. The former being classified as artificial and being due to such things as the use of explosives, mining subsidence and the occasional descent to ground level of Earth satellite fragments, rockets, etc. From such considerations, a start can be made on a table of crater classification:-

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|--------------------|-----------------------|
| A. NATURAL | B. ARTIFICIAL |
| 1. Natural Impact. | 4. Artificial Impact. |
| 2. " Explosion. | 5. " Explosion. |
| 3. " Subsidence. | 6. " Subsidence. |

Grouping these into classes, we have the following causative agencies

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. 1. Meteorites, | B.4. Artificial Meteorites. |
| 2. (a) Volcanic explosions. | 5. Bombs, shells, blasting. |
| (b) Lightning. | 6. Mining and tunnelling. |
| 3. (a) Volcanic subsidence. | Excavation generally, if |
| (b) Collapse of cavities of | of crater form. |
| subterranean erosion, the | |
| burrows of animals, caves | |
| and similar voids. | |

In addition to these, one must add the strange human category collectively known as the "hoax", which may be subdivided into the hoax for amusement, the hoax malicious and the hoax for gain, not

to mention sundry disturbances of the soil which scarcely merit the appellation crater.

Bearing this classification in mind, it becomes immediately apparent that many UFO craters fall into the latter category and should not be described as craters at all. This appears to apply to the Dufton Fell case, for instance although here the geological context may still be significant.

It is worth remarking here that meteorite craters may contain virtually no meteoritic material if the energy released at impact is sufficient to vaporise the impacting mass. Drillings in the Arizona meteorite crater, for example, have not been successful in locating a large body of meteoritic material.

Swallow holes and solution cavities in limestones and other calcareous rocks are not the only results of underground erosion by water, since the normal effects attributable to surface erosion can occur where underground streams run through the enlarge cavities - such as faults - in non-soluble rock.

Percolating water can remove the "cement" from arenaceous rocks such as sandstone, producing a crumbly residue with marked lack of grain adhesion. Sand itself is subject to the phenomenon of slumping, due to change in the interstitial water content. This is true of most unconsolidated sediments.

From the above brief summary, it can be seen that there is plenty of scope for crater formation without having to introduce UFO intervention and indeed none of the British examples which can be fairly described as craters (UFO variety) need an other-worldly explanation, Niton included.

To take specific examples, Niton is quite clearly a case of subsidence into a smooth-sided cavity of subterranean erosion. This explains naturally the apparently miraculous disappearance of a large volume of earth and rock. It was not there in the first place!

The recent Berkshire craters have been diagnosed independently (Reading University) as due to subsidence into solution pockets in the chalk sub-stratum.

The Charlton crater exhibited a symmetrical pattern of surface indentations which accords well with drainage into a central cavity. Here again, as at Niton, we are near the contact between the Upper Greensand and the Chalk.

Flanborough Head, another crater locality, is also a prominent Chalk feature, whilst Dufton Fell, near Penrith, lies in the famous Alston lead mining district in the local Carboniferous Limestone and adjacent strata. Mines in this area have been worked since Roman times and Dufton itself was intensively prospected much more recently than that, at a time when the Lake District was a hive of metalliferous mining industry.

The Carboniferous Limestone everywhere, from the Mendips to Scotland abounds with mine workings, pot-holes and caves, many of which are world-famous.

Hoever, with forty sheep lost at Dufton, the possibility of a little rustling seems on the cards!

In Scotland, Sanquhar lies on the fringe of the Leadhills mining district, also worked by the Romans, and, in addition, marks the southernmost limit of the Scottish coal mining area. The Lanermuir Hills, to the North East of Leadhills, comprise crater locality in similar geological formations to those of the Sanquhar district.

The sum of coincidence is too great to be ignored and, I suggest, the British craters must be seen in their true geological framework rather than in the enchanting context of visitations from outer space.

Although the Newsletter is normally produced for circulation among MUFORG members, it is felt that this issue may also be of interest to our fellow researchers in other Groups. If any readers would like to comment on the crater article, they are welcome to do so, as it may be possible to include a selection of crater views in our next issue. Please write to A. Rawlinson, 24 Saker Street, Liverpool, 4.

Mr. Sharp has also been doing some checking on Dr. Bernard E. Finch's sighting on page 28 of the current E.S. Review. According to him, there's not the slightest doubt that the object referred to in the report was Mars. He noticed that it is usual to indicate movement relative to the stars, but Finch's arrow points the wrong way. Another criticism is that the Moon is shown in the wrong quarter. Full Moon was on Feb. 15, two days earlier, so the Moon was two days after Full. In the report, it was shown at about five days before Full. Over to Dr. Finch

AF SECRETLY WARNS PILOT OF DANGER

(Reprinted from the NUCAP "UFO Investigator")

In a startling report just received, a former Navy pilot has revealed an AF warning that he might become seriously ill after three UFOs closely circled his plane. During an interview with an AF major at Kirtland Air Force Base, strict secrecy was imposed on the pilot. Except for his wife, who had to be prepared if he were suddenly stricken, he was ordered not to tell anyone about the encounter or the radiation hazard.

The pilot, who served in the Navy in World War II, is now a service engineer for a large tool company. He has a B.Sc. degree in mechanical engineering. He uses a private plane in business; to date, he has logged over 6000 flying hours. Following is his report of the incident which occurred on August 13, 1959;

Flying a Cessna 170, en route from Hobbs to Albuquerque, N.M., he was holding a course of 313 degrees, at 8,000 feet altitude. Suddenly he was amazed to see his Magnesyn electric compass revolving instead of indicating the course. Thinking the Magnesyn must be "haywire," he looked at the standard magnetic compass. "It was spinning so crazily I couldn't read it," the pilot reports.

A moment later, he was startled to see three oval-shaped devices in close echelon formation pass directly in front of the Cessna. They were grey in colour and identical in shape - like two bowls face to face (one inverted on the other) but with bottoms rounded instead of flat. The pilot estimated their diameter at about eight feet, but they could have been considerably larger. Since the UFOs were circling the plane at nearly 250 mph, no other details could be noted, except that they left a short, wispy trail.

As the strange objects circled the Cessna, the Magnesyn compass continued to revolve, precisely indicating the UFOs bearing. Holding the same tight formation, the unknown devices finished another circle, passing in front and then disappearing to the rear. The Magnesyn then came to rest near its original heading, and the standard magnetic compass finally stopped its "crazy spinning" and returned to normal.

Upon landing at the base, states the report, he was "hustled to an office and interrogated for about two hours by an AF major - the UFO Officer at the field." Then came the statement that "raised the hair on the back of my neck." the AF major told him that "if anything unusual happened, he he had any unusual illness in the next six months, to get to a government hospital right away." The AF, the major said, would take care of him.

Some years ago, Capt. D.J. Ruppelt, former Chief of Project Blue Book, confirmed that AF instrumentation had recorded high radioactivity when UFOs passed over the test area. Also, several apparently genuine cases of illness from UFO radiation are on record.

In the case of the former Navy pilot, the fear injected by the AF warning kept him and his wife in a state of apprehension until six months had passed, and he decided the AF was wrong to conceal the facts.

"MYSTERY OBJECTS IN THE SKY NEARLY ALL EXPLAINED" (?)

From the Liverpool Daily Post, May 24.

During 1964, a total of 532 unidentified flying objects were reported by the USAF or other observers and were investigated. But these objects, which USAF authorities in Washington describe as any aerial objects which the observer is unable to identify, have usually an intelligible explanation. The majority, after investigation, were found to be missiles, space satellites, meteorological balloons and searchlights playing on low clouds. Birds, aircraft vapor trails, fireworks and anti-radar silver foil dropped by aircraft also accounted for some UFO or flying saucer reports.

Though the Air Force claim that these objects do not pose a threat against the US, that they are not anything beyond present day scientific knowledge and that they do not originate from other planets, nevertheless since 1947 the Air Force has investigated 8,908 sightings.

(Our own Government would most probably arrive at the same conclusions but why doesn't it reveal the number of British sightings that have been investigated?)