

MUFORG Bulletin

June 1966

Edited by John Harney

COMMENT

The Publicity Boomerang by P.K.Haythornthwaite

The recent press coverage of UFOs has no doubt caused many ufologists much rejoicing. Cats will have been noted peeping out of bags everywhere, and the great truth to be on the verge of revelation. Other UFO investigators will have viewed the publicity wave with mixed feelings.

On the one hand, such publicity brings home to those who might not otherwise have been aware of it that the UFO is still very much with us. If some of these are encouraged to pursue the matter further, this is excellent.

On the other hand, certain consequences may be far from beneficial. Firstly, the publicity itself may tend to alter some aspects of the very phenomenon we are studying. In particular, hoaxers are given their cue and an already confused situation becomes more so. Secondly, a publicity wave can be followed by a period of reaction when news media will not touch the subject with a barge-pole, particularly when a much-ballyhooed sighting turns out to have a mundane explanation, as with the Cannock cine-film.

The conclusion seems to be that a steady trickle of serious coverage is better than a short period of sensationalism, and that UFO investigators would be well advised to take care not to encourage such sensationalism. At times of UFO flap, they would be wise to put in words of caution to the effect that all sightings should be examined critically and that many, though not necessarily all, are found to have conventional explanations.

It also seems that the aim of organisations such as NICAP, to achieve publicity breaks and Congressional hearings may be misguided in many respects. Encouragement of serious research by technically able people is almost certainly of more long-term value to UFO research than the achievement of mass support and general excitement.

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M U F O R G N E W S

Officers At the Group's Annual General Meeting, held at the Free Church Centre, Tarleton Street, Liverpool, on May 11th, the following were elected officers for the year 1966-7:---

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|----------------------------|---|
| <u>Chairman</u> | P.Hopkins, 17 Sandringham Drive, Aigburth, Liverpool, 17. |
| <u>Vice-Chairman</u> | T.Dixon |
| <u>Secretary</u> | R.D.Hughes, 86 Trouville Road, Liverpool, 4. |
| <u>Treasurer</u> | Miss M.P.Black |
| <u>Minuting Secretary</u> | J.Harney |
| <u>Astronomy Secretary</u> | L.Geoghegan |
| <u>Librarian</u> | J.Harnwell |
| <u>Committee Members</u> | Miss I.Amery, R.Donnolly, G.T.Woods |

ANNOUNCEMENT

B. U. F. O. R. A. N O R T H E R N

C O N V E N T I O N

The B.U.F.O.R.A. Northern Convention will take place on Saturday, September 10th, 1966, at the Textile Hall, Westgate, Bradford, W. Y.

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"SPACESHIP" FILM AND WIGAN "LION" MYSTERIES CLEARED UP

The "Spaceship" film, which received so much publicity, was investigated by a BBC team for the programme, "Tomorrow's World." They took off in a plane similar to the one flown in by Mrs Oldfield, and shot a surprisingly similar film. The illusion was caused by reflections of the tailplane in the glass of the porthole.

The Wigan "lion" mystery ended some weeks ago with the capture of a large Alsatian dog which had been running wild. It seems that all the witnesses were mistaken after all, as there have been no reports since.

Q U E S T I O N S O N F L Y I N G O B J E C T S

(from the Bebington News & Advertiser, June 4th)

Dr Edwin Brooks, M.P. for Bebington asked the Secretary of Defence, in the House of Commons last week how many separate pieces of man-made equipment now circling the earth outside the atmosphere had been detected by tracking stations under his control.

Mr Merlyn Rees, replying, said more than 400 were observed during May.

Dr Brooks also inquired how many reports of unidentified flying objects were reported by his department throughout Great Britain during 1964 and 1965 and how many of these had since not been satisfactorily explained.

Mr Rees answered that in 1964 there had been 74 reports, four of them unexplained, while in 1965 there had been 56 reports, 14 of them unexplained.

In the cases that had not been satisfactorily explained the information given had generally been too imprecise or inadequate to support any further investigation.

S I X S A U C E R S S I G H T E D A T S T H E L E N S

A policeman and his wife at St. Helens (Lancashire), claim to have seen six UFOs, according to reports appearing in several newspapers on May 17th. Unfortunately the newspaper reports do not give the date of the sighting.

The incident took place early on a dull, grey morning. The policeman, Donald Cameron, looked out of the back window of his home at 25 Chiltern Road, St. Helens. He saw six glowing, white objects, hovering above the houses at the end of the housing estate.

P.C. Cameron said: "One was obviously the mother ship as it was bigger than the rest. The smaller ones were oval shaped, but the large one had a cup-shaped dome,

"I shouted to my wife and she watched them with me for half a minute before they disappeared at a great speed towards Manchester.

"No one else on the estate that I know of saw them, but it was early in the morning and our house is the only one that faces in this particular direction."

The Chief Constable of St. Helens, Mr A. Atherton, described P.C. Cameron as "a reliable policeman."

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Since page 3 was set up, P.K.Haythornthwaite has provided the Editor with details of his investigation of the St Helens sighting. The item on page 3 was compiled entirely from newspaper reports, which contained several inaccuracies. It provides a good example of the dangers of relying too heavily on press reports as a source of UFO information.

Investigation

The sighting took place at Parr, St Helens, Lancashire, on May 10th, 1966, at 1030 BST.

The witness was visited in his home on two occasions, firstly on 16th May, 6 days after the sighting, and secondly on 23rd May. On the first occasion time was a little short, and the second visit was made to clear up one or two points, and to make more accurate estimates of some of the sighting parameters.

A letter in the St Helens Reporter shortly after the sighting, appealing for any further witnesses to come forward, produced no relevant replies.

Behaviour of Objects

The objects were first noted moving from right to left at a steady speed, their angle of elevation dropping. This carried on for about 15 seconds, at which point the objects hovered for about another 15 seconds. They then set off at high speed and disappeared behind a nearby house in the space of about 2 seconds. The objects moved all together and did not appear to alter formation during motion. As they moved away rapidly before disappearing, their angular size reduced very rapidly, being at least halved. The objects gave the impression of disappearing quickly into the distance, or of melting away, before being finally obscured by the house.



Appearance of Objects

All the objects were elliptical. The dome on the larger object was a figment of some newspaper reporter's imagination. At the time of the sighting the witness assumed that the objects were three-dimensional, but more as a result of the objects' formation than of any shadowing or other evidence of solidity on the objects themselves.

Data

When first seen the objects were at an elevation of 10° , and their direction was 67° (W of N). When hovering their elevation was 5° , bearing 74° . At disappearance their elevation was 4° , bearing 75° .

The apparent sizes of the objects at a distance of 2ft. 7ins. (arm's length) were 0.3 inches for the group, 0.17 inches for the large object and 0.09 inches for the small objects.

Weather at Liverpool Airport, 1020 BST: - Cloud, $\frac{5}{8}$ at 2500 ft. Surface wind, 260° (true), 04 knots. 2000 ft. wind, 300° (true) 18 knots.

Calculations show that, as the objects were seen against the clouds, their maximum distances were, at A, about 3 miles, and at B, about 6 miles, and that the maximum distance of travel between A and B

was about 3 miles. This is equivalent to around 700 m.p.h. Taking a distance of 3 miles as representative, the sizes were, Group 145 ft, Large object 80 ft, small objects 40 ft. The direction of motion of the objects was roughly against the wind at 2000 ft.

The witness was certain that at St Helens at 1030 BST the sky was completely overcast. This does not tie in very well with the weather report however. It would seem to be still an open question whether the objects were self-luminous, or were reflecting the light of the sun.

The witness stated that he had very occasionally seen planes in the part of the sky in which he saw the objects, but that these moved much more slowly than the objects he witnessed.

The observation was made through window glass, but a check revealed nothing in the room which might have given rise to reflections, and there were apparently no faults in the glass.

The Witness - P.C. Cameron, 25 Chiltern Road, Parr, St Helens.

The witness seemed a sensible individual, and not likely to imagine things. (Note that his wife also saw the objects, and confirmed the details given by her husband.) He was co-operative, and took trouble to give the information required as accurately as possible. He had no strong views as to the nature of his observation. The conclusion that he had seen "flying saucers" was given, not dogmatically, but as a result of his being unable to think of any other possible explanation.

The witness had been mildly interested in the subject of UFOs before his sighting, but admitted to having very little knowledge of it, having been unable to obtain suitable reading material.

An inspection of the witness's bookshelves showed that he had an enquiring mind and wide interests. In short, he seemed a very much above average witness.

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THE SQUARE SAUCER OF BOLAZEC, or the Flying Tractor

The March, 1966, issue of Phénomènes Spatiaux, the quarterly journal of G.E.P.A. (Paris), carries an excellent report of an alleged UFO landing at Bolazec (Nord-Finistère), on January 16th, 1966, at 4 o'clock in the morning.

There was one witness, a Mr Eugène Coquil, who was driving in his Dauphine car along the Morlaix-Callac road. As he was approaching the Bolazec-Plougras crossroads, he noticed lights on a hillside which he at first thought were those of a tractor. As he knew the area very well he knew that only such a vehicle could get to the place where he saw the lights. Thinking that a farmer might have met with an accident, he stopped his car and went to investigate.

He had only gone a very short distance when he saw the "tractor" moving in his direction. He was surprised to hear no engine sound and the lights seemed too high up for something on the ground. Then the object passed over a mound less than ten metres away from him and he saw that it was flying, in complete silence, at an altitude of 4 or 5 metres.

This was too much for M. Coquil and he panicked and ran back to his car. The object followed him and hovered over his car as he opened the door. When he got in the object set down gently on the other side of the road.

The witness noticed that the object had four luminous columns with a luminosity similar to that of neon signs. He was almost certain that he saw portholes on the side.

Investigations of this incident were conducted by G.E.P.A. and by the magazine, "Noir et Blanc."

Supporting testimony eventually came from inhabitants of houses near where the incident took place. They admitted, with some reluctance, that they had seen strange lights on the night of January 15th-16th.

The witness was definite that the object was square in shape, measuring at its base 3.5 x 3.5 metres. Viewed from underneath there were no projections on it. The witness's sketch, published in "Noir et Blanc", suggested that the object's sides sloped inward towards the top, whereas the sketch which he sent to G.E.P.A. showed perpendicular sides, 1.2 metres high.

The article in Phénomènes Spatiaux points out that a square UFO is something new in ufology. Also, the investigators were greatly impressed by the witness.

Readers may care to compare this sighting with the one reported in Vol. 12, No. 2 of Flying Saucer Review, on page 35, under the heading, "UFO takes to the Cotswold roads."

EXCHANGES RECEIVED

UFO SIGHTER (Winter 1966, Spring 1966), Edited by Allen H.Greenfield, 2875 Sequoyah Drive, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30327, U.S.A. 2 dollars a year (quarterly). PROBE, the Controversial Phenomena Magazine (Sept-Oct '65, Nov-Dec '65, Mar-Apr '66) Editors, Joseph L.Ferriere, Armand Laprade, 48 Great Brook Valley Avenue, Worcester, Massachusetts 01605, U.S.A. 2 dollars, U.S.A., 3 dollars, foreign, a year (bi-monthly). CFSIB NEWSLETTER? (March-April 1966), published by the Civilian Flying Saucer Investigations Bureau, Steve A.Windover, Sec.Treas. CFSIB, 6101 Sturgeon Creek Parkway, Midland, Michigan 48640, U.S.A. 1 dollar (bi-monthly). UFOLOG Information Sheet, published by the Isle of Wight Unidentified Flying Object Investigation Society, edited by J.W.Feakins 1, Hill Top Cottages, High Street, Freshwater, Isle of Wight. (29/4/66, No. 26). PHÉNOMÈNES SPATIAUX (March 1966), journal of the Groupement d'Etude des Phénomènes Aériens et Objets Spatiaux Insolites, 69 Rue de la Tombe-Issoire, Paris 14e, France. Edited by René Fouéré, 30 Francs a year (quarterly). GESAG BULLETIN (no. 7 1966). journal of the Groupement pour l'Etude des Sciences d'Avant-Garde, edited by Jacques Bonabot, 17 Rosendal 17, Bruges, Belgium. Benelux 60 Belgian francs, Europe 80 F.B., other countries 100 F.B. (quarterly).....

UFO PETITION

----- by the Editor

The Midland Interplanetary Association is getting up a petition to the Prime Minister, asking the Government to set up a National Investigation Committee and to release all UFO data to the public. They hope that all groups will participate and that the occasion will be attended by a great deal of publicity.

On our front page, Mr Haythornthwaite has given his views on UFO publicity. I believe these views reflect those of most MUFORG members.

Considering that M.I.A. is associated with some rather odd organisations, including the Japanese "Cosmic Brotherhood Association", it will be seen that the publicity attending this petition could be very damaging to the progress of serious UFO research. This is a great pity, as M.I.A. itself is engaged on what could be a very useful project, the holding of regular skywatches in co-operation with other groups.

It will be interesting to see what BUFORA will do to attempt to forestall any harmful effects of this ill-advised petition.

M U F O R G B u l l e t i n

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CONTRIBUTIONS Articles, letters, comments, reviews, press cuttings welcome. Contributions published in this Bulletin are the responsibility of their authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of MUFORG. Letters and articles should be written in English or French.

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