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AUGUST 1978

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EDITORIAL

WALKING THE TIGHTROPE

Since its formation 12 years ago, Sigap has always maintained the role of an independent investigation group. This decision was not made as the result of trying to act as a 'secret society', but because in our opinion, larger organisations have failed to act in what we consider to be a scientific manner.

The big question has always been: After the investigation of a UFO incident has been completed and the report fully written up in every detail, what then? Should it be passed onto a larger organisation, which may not even have the resources that are available to ourselves? It is more likely to be filed away to gather dust in some corner. Would it not be wiser to make it available to the world at large or to a scientific body? The aim of our group has always been to investigate the UFO event *fully* and then to pass on the report for *further study*.

In recent months, members of our group have had the opportunity to listen to the executives of other larger UFO investigation organisations. In most cases the story is the same - what to do with the UFO reports. Unfortunately, it is often the case that the investigation of UFOs' takes second place to the power struggles which have been a regular feature of the larger groups. This has bred conflict, and inter-group rivalry has drained the life blood from some of the larger organisations, an event that we have watched with deep regret.

However, life must go on, and although we too have had our ups and downs, any differences have been quickly settled and the search for the answer to the UFO mystery goes on.

So, what do we do with the UFO reports? We believe that our present course is correct and that by passing reports to the Center for UFO Studies which is run by Dr J Allan Hynek and to *Flying Saucer Review* for publication, we have done our best to make our reports available for scientific study.

We have for many years co-operated with other groups and often pass on interesting cases for comparison and information, and we shall continue to do so. However, we believe that the particular 'tightrope' that we have chosen is the right one.

Omar Fowler

* NEXT MEETING 8.00pm ADMISSION FREE *
* Wednesday 9 August at the PROSPECT COUNTRY CLUB, Ash Vale, Aldershot *
* SUMMER EVENT will include a report by MIKE PREWETT on his recent visit *
* to the US. Movie films of a recent satellite launch will be featured. *
* Peter Hicks from Guildford's RADIO LION will be telling all. *

OPEN REPORTING

We reproduce an item which appeared in a recent issue of 'Today', Florida's daily newspaper.

NAVY TRACKS UFOS NEAR OCALA

OCALA (AP) Unexplained lighted objects in the night sky over a remote sector of Florida forest were sighted and tracked on radar at a Navy electronic warfare centre, naval personnel have confirmed.

They say one object hovered in midair, then sped away after eluding computerised tracking gear with a hairpin turn.

"The computer wouldn't handle it," said Lt Commander John Sullivan, base commander of the Navy's Pinecastle Electronic Warfare Range in the Ocala National Forest of North-Central Florida.

Sullivan was not involved in the series of reported sightings that took place over a two-hour period Sunday night. But he permitted detailed interviews of three base personnel by the 'Ocala Star Banner' on Monday.

One was SK-1 Robert J Clark of Detroit, duty officer Sunday night when a civilian called at 10.05 pm to ask if the base was using any flares.

Pinecastle uses sophisticated electronic equipment to train pilots to evade enemy weapons in combat.

"I told her there were no flares in the area, and that the range wasn't operating at the time," Clark said.

The phone rang again, Clark said, and a man who wouldn't give his name reported that he and seven others travelling on route SR 19 near Silver Glen Springs had also seen something strange.

The man described the sighting as an object 50 or 60 feet in diameter with flashing lights, Clark said. The caller said it flew right over the top of the vehicle he was driving, close enough to get a good look before it disappeared.

Clark logged the second call and contacted the Naval Air station at Jacksonville for details on all known aircraft currently over Pinecastle area. Jacksonville reported no known aircraft currently over Pinecastle area.

"So we got out the binoculars and went up on the tower," Clark said. "We located an object due north, approximately 1500 feet above the trees. We watched it for 15 or 20 minutes and it looked like it was pretty stationary".

Mr Timothy Collins of Cambridge, Mass, a navy radar technician for eight years was manning the radarscope. "I've never seen anything like it and I don't want to see anything like it again," Collins said. "First it was heading south and then it was heading north. All in the split of a second... planes just don't have a turning radius like that."

('Today', Wednesday May 17 1978)

Here we have a most interesting report. Seen both visually and on radar, the sighting was reported on the front page of Florida's most important daily, serving as it does, the Cape Canaveral area. The report is similar to hundreds which have found their way into the files of UFO investigators.

But there are two significant points about this report. First, it has been treated as a serious news item by the paper, and does not carry the sly and clever innuendoes so often seen in British newspapers. UFOs are taken seriously in the States, and the media appears to treat them as such. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the case, had it occurred in Britain would NEVER have seen the light of day. In the first place the MOD would just not have released ANY information about such a report. If the story

had leaked out to the press, the Government would have slapped a 'D' notice on the information. And press interviews with military witnesses would invoke howls of laughter from Defence Press Offices. "We have nothing to say", would be the only statement.

UFOs are just one example of the restrictions in our freedom we face in this country. The Official Secrets Act, brought in during the First World War to stop soldiers from talking about the true position, is now used to gag millions of employees, from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Post Office.

It is often said that the UK has less spectacular sightings than the US or France. In reality, the only difference is that witnesses in the US or France can be supported by official evidence. British UFO witnesses do not have the basic freedom to ask for support, and requests are often met with derision by the authorities. It is not surprising that the media treat the subject as a joke, when they get nowhere with those who hold the key to the evidence.

The sooner this country gets a Freedom of Information Act, the sooner we shall solve the mystery of the UFOs.

Many thanks to Mike Prewett for supplying the press cutting.

AN UNUSUAL INCIDENT AT CHURT

CASE s817

6 APRIL 1978 - THURSDAY EVENING - At about 2100, two local girls, one 13½ and the other 14, were walking down a road in Churt, near Farnham, when they both saw an oval-shaped object in the sky. It had green, red and white flashing lights, and was hovering over some nearby trees. After about five minutes, both girls ran back to the home of one of them, and told her parents.

Before long, they returned for another peep. The object, they estimated, had been hovering only about 400 yards from the house, which is situated in wooded country. By now, it had moved further away, and could be seen lower through the trees, glowing and completely silent.

This time, before running away again, they were able to study the object in more detail. It was silvery and glowing, and the green lights were flashing faster than the other (red and white). Both girls described "windows" around the top of the "saucer" as appearing like "flies eyes", that kind of insect-like structure. (See sketch overleaf). The girls did not see the object move away as they ran back to the house a second time.

Later, both girls described the object as shimmering, similar to light shining on silver, and they also mentioned that the green lights were flashing faster than the others. The windows were unusual in having the "insect - eye" features, which is something we have not come across before. The incident occurred during the April 'flap', but no other witnesses have yet been traced.

Note: The light features were as follows: Red, top right. White, top left. Green, bottom.

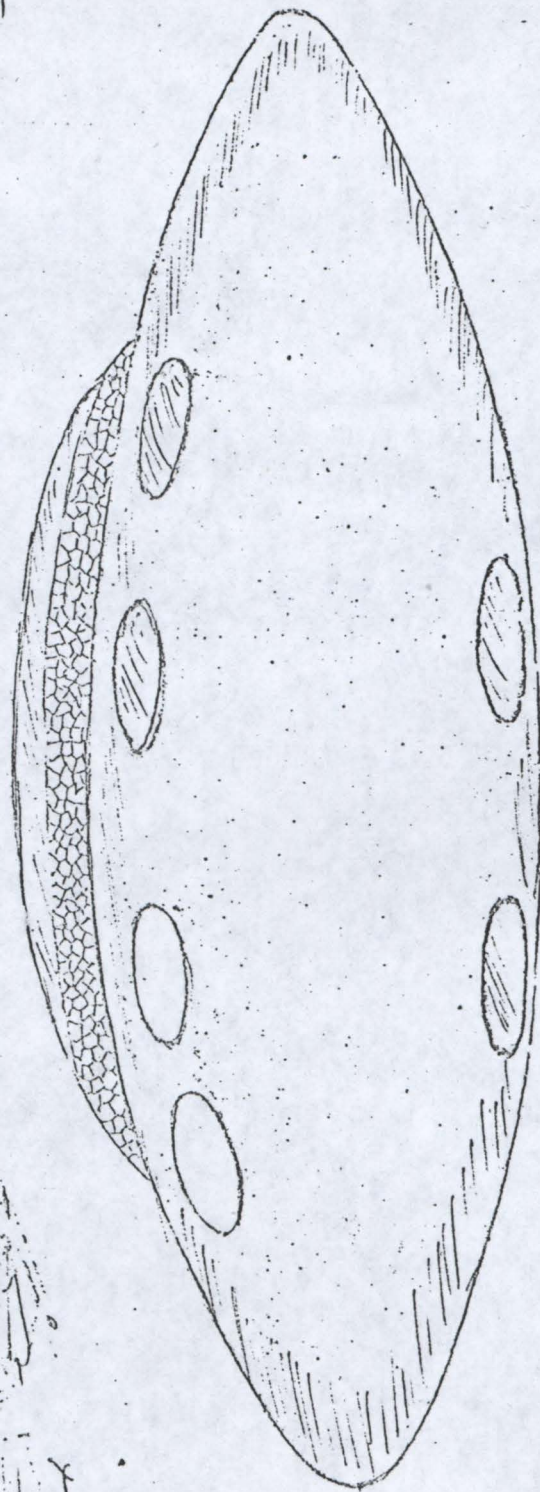
INVESTIGATED BY OMAR FOWLER

STAND BY FOR CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF A PUBLISHING KIND

Watch out for Penthouse Publication's latest offering - Nova.

Gerard Van der Luen describes Nova - due to reach our magazine racks late September - as the first magazine of the space age, and the first major magazine to combine science fiction and science fact.

"Nova isn't going to be a nutter's magazine" he says. "Its going to be written by some of the world's best science writers and will present a totally balanced view of all aspects of the future".



OBJECT SEEN BY TWO GIRLS AT CHURT, NEAR FARNHAM - SEE PAGE 3

SUMMARY OF SIGHTINGS (JANUARY - MAY)

Number	Date	Details of incident	Remarks	On tape
801	11/1/78 (2135)	Two boys saw a glowing square object which followed them. (Mytchett)	CE1	Yes
802	19/1/78 (2000)	UFO flew along next to a car on main road (Hanworth)	CE1	Yes
803	25/1/78 (2105)	Cigar shaped object seen flying from direction of Blackbushe. (Farnborough)	LITS	Yes
804	30/1/78 (2000)	Two boys playing on skateboards had encounter with UFO (Basingstoke)	CE1	Yes
805	25/1/78 (0738)	Black strip seen crossing the face of the moon. (Farnborough)	LITS	No
806	8/2/78 (2030)	Multicoloured light in sky. (Yateley)	Sirius	No
807	7/2/78 (0250)	Lights moving over Basingstoke	LITS	No
808	10/2/78 (1830)	Glowing light moving backwards and forwards over Wimbourne	LITS	No
809	23/1/78 (2035)	Object flew low and appeared to hover and then flew off at high speed.	CE1	No
810	10/3/78 (1547)	Lights seen descending to the ground, (Dorking)	LITS	No
811	6/2/78 (2315)	Metallic pie-shaped object, hovered and then flew off. (Chertsey)	CE1	No
812	30/3/78 (2345)	Driving down M3, witness saw orange light falling slowly from the sky. (Winchester)	LITS	No
813	25/11/77 (2030)	Light, changed colour and fell to the ground. (Basingstoke)	LITS	No
814	24/1/78 (2300)	Red ball seen travelling West to East. (Bristol)	LITS	No
815	19/1/78 (1700)	Light seen near moon, observed through binoculars. (W Byfleet)	LITS	No
816	27/3/78 (0010)	'Mexican hat' UFO seen low over Farnham.	CE1	Yes
817	6/4/78 (2115)	'Saucer' UFO seen over Churt. (Near Farnham)	CE1	Yes
818	6/4/78 (0030)	Metallic wingless object flew over Farnham bypass. (Farnham)	CE1	Yes
819	5/4/78 (2000)	Cigar shaped object with windows seen over Farnborough.	CE1	Yes
820	5/4/78 (2150)	Bright light changing colour seen over Ash.	LITS	No
821	6/4/78 (2145)	Bright object flickering in sky seen over Farnborough RAE (Aldershot)	LITS	No
822	15/4/78 (2110)	Bright multi-coloured light in sky (Basingstoke)	Jupiter	No

Number	Date	Details of incident	Remarks	On tape
823	16/4/78 (0105)	Cone-shaped fiery object in sky over Basingstoke/Aldershot/Guildford/Bookham. Travelling West to East	-	No
824	30/3/78 (2115)	Light hanging in the sky Seen near Churt (Farnham)	LITS	Yes
825	11/4/78 (1930)	Silver-grey "column" in sky near Leigh, Surrey		
826	23/4/78 (0230)	Glowing magnesium type circle seen in sky near Odiham.	-	No
827	5/4/78 (2000)	Bright lights in sky at Epsom Downs	LITS	No
828	-/8/75 (1600)	White balls seen in sky, like meteorological balloons, but did not move. (Hook, Hampshire)	CE1	Yes
829	5/4/78 (2320)	Bright object moving in sky	LITS	No
830	10/4/78 (2150)	Crescent-shaped object seen moving across the sky. (Dunsfold)	-	No
831	4/5/78 (1930)	Cloud-like object moving fast across sky. (Basingstoke)		No
832	9/5/78 (2155)	Cigar-shaped object with lights passed over Tongham, Surrey. Traced from Kent/Sussex earlier in evening.	CE1	Yes

A further list will be published in a later issue of *Sigap News*.

REPORT OF THE LAST MEETING (17 MAY)

GUEST SPEAKER - KEN ROGERS, Chairman British UFO Society.

Report by ANN DENT

Two vivid lights in the night sky seen by Mr Robert Stevens, of Tongham, sent him rushing for powerful binoculars. This is just one of the Surrey UFO sightings being investigated by the Surrey Investigation Group on Aerial Phenomena.

A first-hand account of the engineless and silent object was given by Mr Stevens (32) to a meeting of the group.

Mr Stevens said that on May 9 at 2155hrs he spotted the two lights in the direction of the Hog's Back. Being a keen aircraft spotter, he thought at first it was a low-flying plane and dashed for his binoculars.

He rushed out of his house in Grieve Road on The Laurels estate and caught a different view. He explained: 'As it turned I saw it was cigar shaped with two lights at the front and two at the back and a red static light in the middle.'

He watched the UFO for four minutes before reporting it to the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough and to Mr Omar Fowler, of the Surrey Investigation Group. It was seen also by Mr Stevens' wife, Janette.

An account of another recent local sighting came from Peter Inwood (50), caretaker of Walsh Middle School, Ash. He told of a bright white light that changed colour to red and blue. It was seen also by Mr Inwood's wife, Barbara, daughters, Jacqueline and Christine and PC Alan Craggs, of Ash Police.

Mr Ken Rogers, chairman of the British UFO Society, guest speaker at the meeting, gave a list of reported sightings on April 5, the same day as Mr Inwood's.

These came from Kent, Sussex, Oxfordshire, Farnborough, Chilworth, Farnham, Staffordshire and Lancashire. He felt that all sightings were worthy of scientific investigation but felt there were too many amateur associations trying to tackle them.

Mr Rogers said: 'I envisage one national body divided perhaps into counties and regions with evaluation panels' He would like to see all sighting reports sent to one central source and the publication of one periodical on sale to the public. He felt there was a great deal of interest in aerial phenomena but that all organisations should be linked.

Mr Richard Beet, a member of the Surrey Investigation Group, felt it would be impossible to get people to report sightings to one centre. 'People have different theories so there are always differences of opinion. The trouble is we do not know what we are investigating.'

Mr Rogers said this was because ufology was followed only as a hobby but Mr Beet answered: 'Science is advanced by the interest of amateurs.' Mr Inwood said he had no idea who to contact, he did not know what organisations existed and would like there to have been a central phone number.

Mr Rogers felt ufology was amateurish and underfinanced. 'Its groups are like secret societies - too many societies collecting too many reports and where are they going?' he questioned, 'I do not wish to be disillusionary, but they only go into filing cabinets.'

He said that if the UFO subject was going to be solved it could only be by working efficiently both locally and nationally together.

'People want information.' Mr Rogers said. 'If they are bold they ring the police or a newspaper so it seems the only source of publicising sightings is the press.'

'From the point of view of investigation societies this meant a time lag and a cold trail. If there was a central number then members could be alerted and get out on hillside watching, Royal Air Force bases and airports could be asked if there is a normal explanation and so we would be on top of the situation.' he said.

Mr Rogers felt that if ufology was given a government grant, it could be properly organised. 'At present the Ministry of Defence is only interested from the point of view of security.'

But the Surrey members did not favour his suggestion and Mr Beet said: 'The trouble with commercialisation is that concentration would go to the more spectacular aspects and we would lose our scientist members.'

The chairman of the Surrey group, Mr Omar Fowler, said there had been 32 substantial reports in the county during the year and of those, 11 were close encounters in which people were able to give details of shape and size.



Omar Fowler & David Furmage discussing the script during the shooting of the SIGAP film.

IT WAS REPORTED IN AN EARLIER ISSUE OF SIGAP NEWS THAT A SHORT DOCUMENTARY WAS BEING MADE OF THE WORK OF OUR GROUP. FILMING IS NOW COMPLETED, AND WE ARE AWAITING THE RESULT.

THE FILM WAS PRODUCED BY STUDENTS AT THE TELEVISION PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT OF FARNHAM COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN.

CIGAR SHAPED OBJECT TRACKED ACROSS SOUTHERN ENGLAND

TUESDAY NIGHT - 9 MAY 1978 - CASE S832

An unusual cigar-shaped object was reported travelling quite slowly across Kent, Sussex, Surrey and was last seen flying across North Hampshire.

The first report was received from a newspaper journalist, who first saw the object at 2105hrs from Lamberhurst (Kent) and described it as a bright white light in the distance. Fifteen minutes later, the journalist, who was driving home, passed through Hurst Green, where he again stopped his car and watched the object as it passed overhead which he estimated as 2,000 feet.

The object could now be seen more clearly, and apart from the white light, a red light was also visible. The lights did not blink and there was no sound. The craft was last seen flying in the direction of Ticehurst. He rang up Gatwick Air Traffic Control, but they could not explain the sighting.

Thirty five minutes later, and a further fifty miles away (it was by now 2155hrs) at Tongham, near Aldershot Hants, a 32 year old man was sitting at home watching television, when he noticed two bright lights, side by side, approaching from the direction of the 'Hogs Back' (a part of the North Downs). Based on this second report, the flying 'cigar' had been travelling at about 85 miles per hour. If it had proceeded in a straight line across the country on a bearing of 280 degrees, it would have passed over East Grinstead, Gatwick Airport and Godalming, in Surrey.

This second witness had been a keen aircraft spotter for many years and because of this, took a keen interest in the flying object approaching his house. He ran upstairs to get a 'fix' on the object with his binoculars, but what he saw shocked him - the craft had no wings, it had a body about the size of a BAC 111 jetliner, a red light on the top and two bright lights on the front and rear similar to car headlights. The lights at the rear were evident when the craft turned while passing overhead. It changed direction slightly and headed off in a straight line just south of Aldershot (heading NNE).

The object was completely silent and was flying at an estimated altitude of 1,000ft. The flying cigar was also seen by his wife and was viewed for about four minutes before finally moving out of sight into the distance.

The witness, an experienced observer, viewing the object with binoculars, described it as oblong and having a sharply-defined shape. We accept the report as fully substantiated and one which cannot be explained by conventional standards.

INVESTIGATED BY OMAR FOWLER

Illustration of object on next page

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IMPRESSION OF OBJECT TRACKED OVER
SOUTHERN ENGLAND ON 9 MAY THIS YEAR

