

NORTHERN NEWS



Summer Report

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J.R. Comments...

In 1983 Northern UFO News has entered a new publishing phase, litho producing its six copies (four full-sized magazines and two Summer and Winter 'Reports', of which this is the first). But what of the general state of the British UFO literature?

Britain has always had a healthy magazine industry, with a wide variety of titles led, of course, by FSR (Flying Saucer Review). In more recent years it has also begun to produce excellent UFO books too, eg Paul Devereux and EARTHLIGHTS. The next six months or so will bring four more major serious works (two by myself and long awaited books in the "Evidence For..." series, on UFOs, by Hilary Evans, and on Abductions, by John Rimmer). We have much to look forward to. But where do we stand with regards to magazines? Are things still as rosy here?

FSR, our flagship, has begun to lose its bearings and steer towards the rocky shores where many a ufologist has foundered. John Rimmer (in the current MAGONIA) tries to show some of the difficulties, enhanced by the very sad illness of Charles Bowen and the consequent editorship of Gordon Creighton, who is a very nice, gentle man with voluminous intelligence. However, Gordon himself admits to being a little 'out of touch' with the UFO scene. And it remains for the next month or two to reveal whether anything substantial can be done to help FSR regain the position of respect it has held, and deserved, in the UFO field, and the enormous prestige it has brought the UK.

As FSR faces rough seas a 'new' publication (that is now 4 years old) has entered the waters and cheered many a heart. PROBE REPORT, edited by Ian Mrzyglod (who did the cover design of Northern UFO News and has done some illustrating for my new book UFO REALITY). This is the kind of magazine that is vital to ufology; cut and thrust, not afraid to expose untruths, but also not afraid to stand up for mystery where mystery remains. BUFORAs executive took a bold (and I think positive) step in arranging a deal whereby PROBE REPORT's four annual issues are made available to members as part of their subscription, alongside their BULLETIN and the research-paper orientated JOURNAL OF TRANSIENT AERIAL PHENOMENA. This brings P.R. to an audience of several hundred, and also makes BUFORA membership much more attractive. But sadly the subscribers to P.R. have not been forthcoming and there are serious doubts about the future. I hope PROBE REPORT can continue in some way (beyond its contracted obligations which it will fulfill). But that depends upon support from YOU for what is a vital part of ufology.

On the skeptical side of the fence we have had in the past excellent publications from FUFOR (UFO INSIGHT) and NUFOLS (UFO RESEARCH REVIEW). Sadly, the former disappeared amidst the OSEAP merger and (so far) has not been replaced (although the infrequent OSEAP JOURNAL offers some hope). NUFOLS has gone through a quiescent period and UFO RESEARCH REVIEW has appeared less and less often and with less and less content. Its current issue offers little promise of immediate improvement, which is a shame. However, COMMON GROUND, edited by Kevin McClure and distributed under the auspices of ASSAP reaches several hundred readers and regularly features UFO articles. It is cross-disciplinary and general in outlook but features healthy debates and stimulating pieces and so does offer at least some compensation for the element we lack. cont.....

In the Jul/Aug Northern UFO News (16pp as usual) all the regular features plus... the alien who shops at Tesco! (No - not Robert Carrier!) I bet you can't wait.

MEDIA MATTERS:-



A look at UFOs in the public eye

Media reportage of UFOs has all but dried up over the past couple of months. Press cuttings received by BUFORA are 50% down on the same period for 1982 which in itself was very quiet compared with most years. Less than 100 have come in for 1983 up to mid-May when approaching that many a month used to be the rule.

LANCASHIRE/CHESHIRE/YORKSHIRE LIFE (April) did feature an interview with your editor previewing "The Pennine UFO Mystery". The reasonably factual article (for a change) was largely due to the reporter being Francesa Turner, who helps to run the Todmorden UFO Society and so has a vested interest in presenting the truth.

The Weekly News (Mar 19) reported how Pat Phoenix (alias Elsie Tanner in Coronation Street) caused a panic in Bradford (where UFO waves are nothing new). She switched on a new advertising system that beamed a green laser onto low cloud. Police received calls from witnesses terrified about an alien invasion! When I saw the cutting date (Apr 1) I was a bit dubious about this next cutting. It allegedly comes from the "Skyrack Express" (Garforth). Has anyone heard of it? The heading is "UFO Grant Zapped". Supposedly a group called 'UFO Watch' applied to the City (Leeds?) community chest scheme for £500 towards research. It was rejected on the grounds that it was not of clear benefit to the inner city. The application came from "a young person".

Finally, to prove that the silly season must be on the way, you no doubt are all aware of the hunt for the great British cat. The TV has been full of soldiers hunting for the poor creature as if it were public enemy number one. As the Reading Evening Post (May 3) advises there is a link with UFOs. A reader (in jest?) called A. REASON, from Stratfield Saye, finds "the idea that the earth is at present being surveyed by a race of super-intelligent pumas oddly plausible". He advises that research has shown a link between sighting dates and the Great Pyramid proving their origin as Saturn. But as the UFOs have all been in the same part of the sky as venus this validates his hypothesis that venus is a Saturnian space station manned (catted?) by the pumas to watch our primitive nuclear experiments.

Purr...sonally I think the Lynx are spurious and the chap is Lion.

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A LA FRANCE... As promised, news from the Boulogne conference. More next issue.

Psychologist Claude Mauge has very kindly given me a copy of his original paper presented at the conference (HOW GOOD ARE TODAY'S ARGUMENTS FOR A FUNDAMENTALLY NOVEL UFO PHENOMENON?) It is to be published (in French) in the journal INFORSPEACE but is important enough to warrant some summation here. It gives a nice flavour of radical French thinking.

Mauge has defined a potentially useful system for describing cases in various phases of investigation, which might be adopted I think. He calls a PRE-UFO any observation which anybody terms a UFO before investigation and which may or may not turn out to be one. If the PRE-UFO is explained it then becomes an IFO. However, observations by competent witnesses that do not become IFOs remain as the "limited" UFO phenomenon. They still have potential of being explained and he calls them a QUASI-UFO. Only those cases which stand the test of time and defy all attempts to explain them form the strict UFO phenomenon, what he calls a TRUE UFO. This classification makes much sense.

Mauge argues that reducible TRUE UFOs are very limited (maybe a few thousand in the whole history of the subject) and we tend to interchange QUASI-UFOs with them. Since so much of our work is based around a plethora of dubious QUASI-UFOs he finds little substance for our basic belief in a novel physical enigma. Indeed he parades what he calls the "pro" and the "con" argument and suggests the "con" argument (that there is only a socio-psychological answer) must hold sway. He cites the essential indistinguishability of UFO/IFO cases and the many 'classics' that crumble upon adequate re-evaluation. He attacks lack of critical thinking and scientific knowledge of even scientists who are ufologists. And he pounds the faulty logic of what

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he calls the "Residue hypothesis"...viz..."unexplained cases equals unexplainable cases, equals True UFO, equals (very often) ET vehicles". He speaks of how the ufologist often catalyses the myth by assigning consequences to the illusionary UFO and not the witness... "many ufologists seem to be trapped amidst a system of belief where everything reinforces everything else, and in which the pregnancy of the ET myth plays a fundamental role - whatever the reality of ET visits on earth".

His paper is critical but very thought-provoking. How do you see it? Let me know?

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BRIEF CASES



:- Some Current Investigations

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Investigations continue at a very low ebb, despite ET. The 1982 case total rests at 46, which is dismal. But four and a half months into 1983 we still only have TWO (2) cases on the NUFON files; although a number of others are in the offing including CE 3s (see page eight). But one might be justified in wondering where the decline will end; especially as three new UFO groups have sprung up in the NUFON area during the past year and had no marked impact on the case totals. Nor indeed has my weekly series on RADIO CITY (now into show 19) which reaches a potential audience of 1,500,000 listeners. Despite regular appeals for cases just a trickle have flowed in, and most of these old ones. This global situation is indeed fascinating and COMMON GROUND have promised a debate on it in their June issue.

The new "Code of Practice" (very unfairly and quite uncritically attacked by NUFONIS in their current magazine) came in for its first test recently, at least so far as I was concerned. The situation developed like this.

Late on the morning of May 2 I had a call channelled through from Jodrell Bank from a man in Huyton, Merseyside, describing a close encounter in the early hours of that morning. He said this involved a large cigar-shaped object which had terrified him at about 4.00am. This was at Whiston, a nearby town. The man was clearly upset (and I suspected drunk!) so I took his address and promised to pursue. On the news that afternoon I learnt that a dreadful accident had taken place at Whiston. Indeed it made the majority of the national newspapers on May 3. This involved two boys (aged around 19) who had for some reason left their motorcycle amidst a storm and fled across the railway line straight into the path of a Liverpool to Manchester mail train. Both were killed instantly.

I had wondered if the two incidents were connected and visited the RADIO CITY news team on May 3 to obtain all the teletypes about the case. I was greatly disturbed to discover three things from these: (a) The accident had occurred at the same time as the reported UFO event; (b) the location in Whiston was more or less precisely where the UFO was reported and (c) the UFO witness, who lived in Huyton remember, lived just a few blocks from the two boys who also lived in Huyton!

The police were appealing for information for the inquest and it did occur to me that either this was a sick joke or a most curious coincidence. Certainly the time of the accident was not public knowledge at about 11 am when the UFO report was made to me - and why call Jodrell Bank, not a newspaper, if it was a joke? Not being able to check with the witness (he not having a phone) I was in acute distress until I decided to let the code make up my mind. Its clause regarding cooperation with the police resolved the issue and sheepishly (and using my RADIO CITY hat rather than that of a UFO investigator!) I spoke with the CID.

The CID officer was surprisingly helpful and did not dismiss the idea. Indeed we had quite a chat about UFOs, which he said many of his colleagues had observed in the area. Apparently why the boys had abandoned their seemingly healthy motor-bike and fled onto the track without hearing the train was a great puzzle. He seemed to think that the option that they were running away from a UFO was not inconceivable. Police investigations are continuing and NUFON is keeping a watch on the situation. We will report on anything definite to emerge (one way or the other).

THE CURSE OF THE DANCING GNOME Investigation: Jenny Randles (MUFORA)

The witness is now aged 62 and a former nursing officer. We shall call her Mrs McD. She lives in Higher Bebbington on the Wirral. Her story is a complex one. It begins in 1926, when aged 6. She would often see a bright round light outside her bedroom window which she took to be the moon. On one particular night it appeared and beamed a 'ray' through the window onto the wall where it formed a round patch of light. Suddenly, silhouetted within this light, appeared the figure of a gnome (ie an elf-like creature just a couple of feet tall) It smiled at her and she did not feel afraid (although interestingly she says she was afraid of her father, who was seemingly very strict with her and her brothers and sisters). The 'gnome' now proceeded to dance, gently at first and then vigorously. After some moments of this she did become alarmed and cried out "a bogey man is in my room". The 'moon' vanished from her window, as did the beam and the gnome, before her father arrived... who, of course, told her she had imagined it. However, some minutes later she felt the bedclothes being tugged and yelled out again. When her father arrived and switched on the light he found the clothes in a tight roll at the foot of the bed. She was moved to another room and although the 'moon' came again the gnome never did... although even now Mrs McD believes she will meet the little man again under much more harrowing circumstances.

This experience (objective, subjective or quasi-conscious) left its mark in the form of a total fear of garden gnomes! Indeed she came to regard these ornaments as being cursed and when her mother purchased some she begged that she throw them away. Her mother refused such silliness and, allegedly, became victim number one of the curse; dying at just 39 within a few months. Her sister-in-law was the next to obtain gnomes. She also dismissed the curse and had both legs amputated shortly afterwards (age 40). Then her neighbour became the final person (so far) to decide to put gnomes in her garden. Her husband was rushed to hospital for a serious operation, but she did not part with the gnomes even then. Until she became ill and the gnomes were consigned to the bin. Mrs McD adds that she no longer mentions them because, "I feel the bad luck may come from me taking note of them."

As with many other witnesses to such strange phenomena (whatever their origin) these childhood events were just the start. Nowadays she is plagued particularly by a sound (a sort of constant pulsating) that fills the air outside her present flat almost every night after midnight. There appears to be no environmental source for this and others do not hear it. The "humadruz", as it is called elsewhere, is a well-known experience with which she seems unfamiliar.

Mrs McD has also seen many UFOs, as large football shaped white objects that float outside her window (she believes literally outside). It hovers around for 15 minutes and then silently climbs the wall into the sky. She first saw this in 1980 whilst at the hospital she worked at, but it has reappeared several times by her flat.

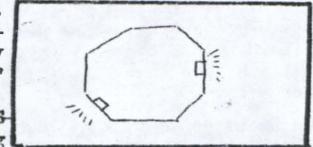
Evaluating this case is difficult. Clearly there is a strong subjective element about these experiences; and this is emphasised by her most recent report to me. On April 15, around midnight, she reported a brilliant white "star" that was there most nights "watching me". Although she claims this suddenly began to move like an aircraft and flew away it was without question Venus she was watching. She may have seen an aircraft as well, as planes were being diverted from Manchester due to a strike. The Wirral was, therefore, unusually active late at night so far as lights were concerned. Her ready willingness to ascribe supernatural origins to natural events has to detract from the credibility of her account. But the dancing gnome is an intriguing bedroom visitor case from the days before UFOs and may show what a CE 4 was like in the pre-WFH world of 1926.

A MOST INTERESTING OZ FACTOR CASE... CE 1 Unidentified Case 8242: September 14 1982 18.45 Huyton, Merseyside Inv: MUFORA

This is an intriguing case, for reasons which will become apparent. It concerns 31 yr old DM, who is a fork-lift truck driver. His mother is an invalid, confined to a wheelchair and his sightings have all been similar, over a several month period

culminating in the above date. They occurred whilst he took his mother for walks. The object viewed is of the unusual shape (octagonal) depicted and coloured black, except for shiny silver windows on each side.

The object is first seen in the NE as a very bright light and then moves north. Instantly it appears "very close" whilst "in another sense a million miles away" (DM has great difficulty expressing this dichotomy - a very common feature of the "OZ Factor", eg Gaynor S underland, who described her experience as like being "half in this world and half out of it".) I think we are to presume that the light is still high in the sky but he somehow "melds" with it and sees it as close up. He claims that during the several minutes of close encounter he feels very calm and peaceful with a warm tingling sensation. All sounds around him vanish except for a gentle humming emitted by the object. These are, of course, classic OZ Factor symptoms. (If you want to know what the "OZ Factor" is see THE PENNINE UFO MYSTERY) The object eventually shoots away "in a flash" leaving him suddenly cold and shivery. You might wonder about his mother during these experiences. Allegedly she sees nothing! On the first two occasions he pointed out the object to her and she failed to see it, despite its apparent proximity (to him at least). Since then, for fear that she would think he was going mad, he has not mentioned it to her, but his behaviour (stopping their perambulation) has made her suspicious. The only deviations in what have been five sightings in all are these. On the first occasion he was initially terrified and the calm sensation washed over him very suddenly. (He has since felt calm all along). On the last occasion bright flashes came from the two "windows" on the object which he interprets as the object taking photographs of him. He seems very worried about what might happen in the future.



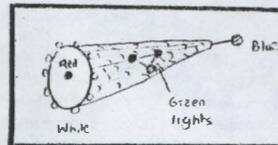
This is an interesting and classic repeater case which could be very instructive about not just the OZ Factor but the state of consciousness which the percipient is clearly in whilst the close encounter takes place.

***** OUTSIDE THE DOG AND DUCK! Assorted LITS Identified Case: 8243 Oct/Nov 1982 Walkington, N Humberside. Level D *****

I tend to be suspicious of cases that begin "As I left the Dog and Duck Inn..." But the witness claims he only had one shandy as he was driving. Leaving at about 21.30 he saw assorted bright white flashes in the east over the Humber. He regarded these as "terrifying", although his description gives no reason to presume they could not have been aircraft strobe lights. Remembering all his UFO stories (he has several books) he scanned the heavens and saw a meteor (or as he put it a red ball-shaped UFO with a blue tail that streaked across the sky in less than a second). This persuaded him to rush back to the pub, drag out two friends who "were drinking" and go for a skywatch. On this watch, over an hour or so before it got too cold, they saw a yellow light over Hull (briefly) and a blue triangle overhead (briefly). Both are presumably just as explicable as the other non-events. The case is an interesting testimony to how easy it is to see "UFOs" if you really want to.

***** "A GROSS INTRUSION OF IMAGINATION" MED Definition Insufficient Data Case 8244 October 24 1982 04.00 Beaumont Leys, Leics Inv: Clive Potter UFORM *****

The quote above is taken from this excellent case report and describes how the investigator views the testimony of the 10 yr old witness who saw the UFO from his bedroom. This is based on the fact that there were many alterations in the testimony over the course of investigation (including change of duration from one minute to fifteen minutes) which Clive Potter considers exaggeration. The precise description (as an ice-cream cone of greyish 'platelets' with red, blue, green and white lights) should, he feels, be treated with some reserve. The witness was allegedly awake because of the cries of a younger child (parents confirm) and went to the window "for no obvious reason" where he saw the light by the moon. It then descended, rose again and flew off, traversing 90 degrees of arc. No precise explanation has been found but the investigator suspects an aircraft.



A CASE OF CONSPIRACY? MUFORA Investigation by Mike Sacks

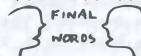
The witness (Mrs RS of Haslingden, Lancs) originally came to MUFORA to tell of her UFO sighting whilst Christmas shopping with her children at ASDA, Rawtenstall. Mike, who has chased the Rossendale anomaly for several years, interviewed her but was less than satisfied with her credibility. However, for the record here is her tale.

On December 22 1982 at 18.30 they were waiting for the "free bus" back to Haslingden, unaware it stopped running at 17.00. For an hour (until they caught the normal bus home) they observed a white light that flew silently in circles over the town making no noise. She told the children it was an Anson aircraft waiting to land at Manchester, but it seemed to get lower each time. On arrival home at 20.00 it was still there with two red lights at the fore. Suddenly it switched on a ring of blue lights at the front and, convinced now it was a UFO, they fled inside. There were no other reports of this phenomenon from the Rossendale valley.

Mrs RS tells of two (dubious?) childhood experiences involving her father, who was supposedly a security-cleared government scientist. The family were then living at Lochabriggs, near the Calder Hall power station in Scotland. Incident one (in 1954) involved her brother aged 7. He awoke (he said) to see an aircraft just having left the Heathfield airfield (which was adjacent to them). Following it was a large white ball of light. Instances like this are not uncommon (there are several on the MUFORA & UFOINI files) but the sequel seems unique. The ball "entered into" the aircraft which allegedly broke up spilling the two occupants to the ground. The parents calmed the boy and told him he had been dreaming. But next day the media reported the crash (which had not woken them?) and blamed it on metal fatigue. Now convinced the father wrote to RAF Lossiemouth about the incident and was reminded that he was party to the 'Official Secrets Act' and that he must say nothing.

The second incident (in 1957) involved Mrs RS herself. She saw a small torch-like object with a red clock face dial on the front. It was about 2 feet long and supposedly 'floated' slowly towards her from out of some bushes. She brought her father to watch and as it came right up to them she was about to grab hold of it but was instantly stopped by her father who dragged her indoors and made an urgent phone call. He said nothing at the time but much later advised his daughter that the MOD had been trying out a new germ-warfare dispenser! She did not (and still does not) believe this - presuming it to have been a mini-UFO.

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FINAL WORDS

At last we have some new CE 3 cases on hand! (The first since November 1980). And there are some intriguing parallels between these two (seemingly) independent reports. They both come from January 1983. The first (dated the 27th) involves a man walking along a canal bank at Willenhall, West Midlands when he saw a UFO and met entities who asked him to go with them (he said no). The second (received some weeks later through a different source) refers to a man at Cadishead, Gtr Manchester who left his motorcycle by a canal bank when a landed UFO appeared and two entities inspected the machine (leaving silver powder on it). The powder is in our possession and both cases are under investigation, from Stephen Banks and Ron Seargent respectively. I gather UFOINI also have a Jan 1983 case involving a UFO seen over a canal bank. It is amazing how the phenomenon throws up these crazy 'coincidences'!

Readers who can face the prospect of three JRs!... should keep an eye on the Channel Four TV show "TELL THE TRUTH" (Sundays, 8.15pm). This panel game involves three people all claiming to a panel of investigative journalists that they are the same person. The panel have to find out the real one. Only that person (who is usually someone who has done something unusual... eg gone to the moon, escaped from Golditz) tells the truth. The two fakes have been instructed by him or her in how to respond to fool the panel. Sounds crazy I know, but it is good fun. Your editor is filming a show in late May (for screening an unknown date from early June onwards)... in which three Jenny Rendles, ace ufologist, will hit the TV screens. Perhaps it's just as well Channel Four audiences are quite small!