

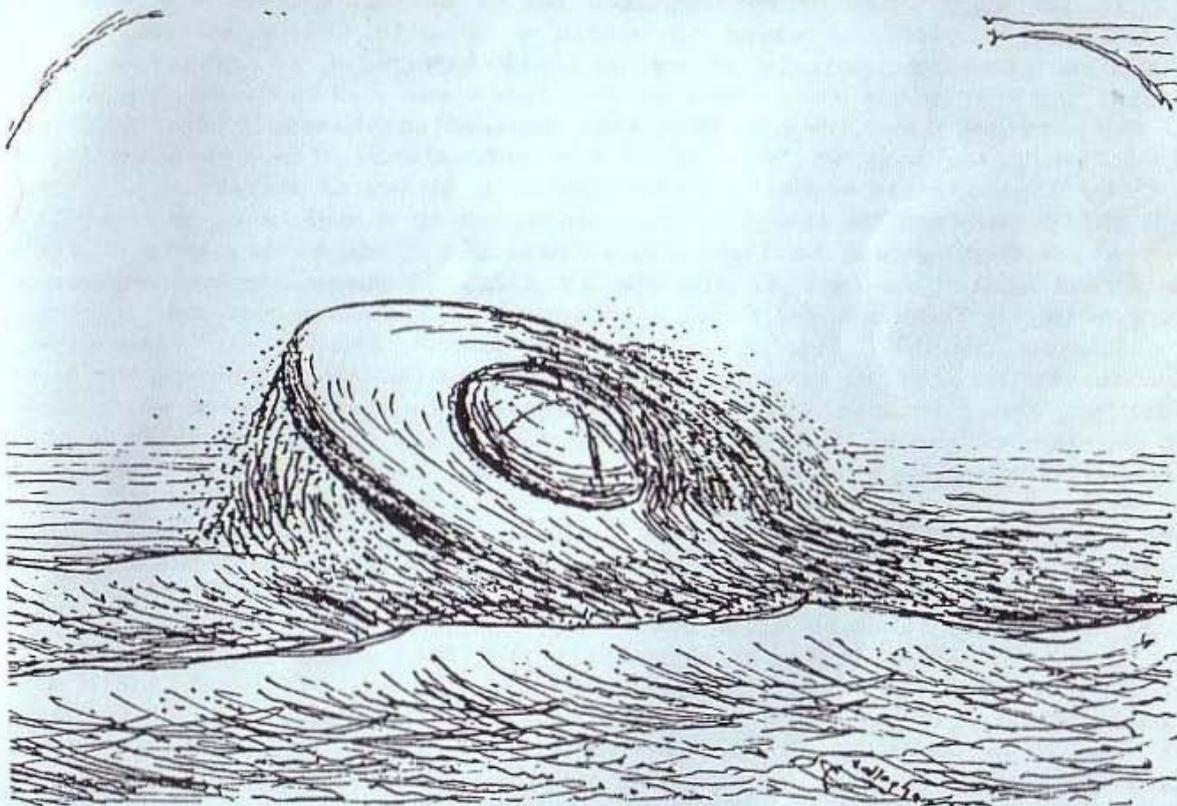
NORTHERN UFO NEWS

160

APRIL 1993

All the news, views and up to date cases £7 for six

EDITOR: - JENNY RANGLES



COVER DESIGN AND LOGOS BY: BILL CALLAGHAN

CONTENT: - Usual features plus; Where is Britain's hottest hot spot? pp 2-3...Circular Logic...p.6... More on the sceptics ...p.8 ...The Alitalia encounter...p.11 . . . Cases from Clwyd ,Greater Manchester, Scotland, Shropshire, Staffs and South Yorkshire (including an animal disturbance and a landing) pp 12-14...Case History... Huge UFO over three countries - BUFORA and the MoD join forces ! ..pp 15-16.

37 HEATHBANK ROAD CHEADLE HEATH STOCKPORT CHESHIRE SK3 0UP

APOLOGIES AGAIN FOR A DELAY IN PUBLICATION. THIS TIME, ON TOP OF THE USUAL HASSLES, MY TRUSTY ANCIENT AMSTRAD PCW FAILED, LEAVING ME PROBING FEEBLY INTO THE TERRIFYING WORLD OF MORE POWERFUL COMPUTERS WITH HUGE MEMORIES (AND MATCHING PRICES). LET'S HOPE I CAN AFFORD THE JUNE ISSUE TO BE ON SCHEDULE!

J. R. Comments ... Recently I was asked to prepare some detailed statistics for London Weekend Television as part of work on a new pilot show called 'Strange but True'. Sadly, you'll only see this if you are in the London area (due late May/early June) unless the series gets taken up by the networks later. The odd choice was to film Britain's hottest hot spot for UFO activity. That decided, where else would we send them but Todmorden...?

The idea of filming the story of a UFO window was stimulated by 'UFOs and how to see them' (incidentally republished in June at a new low price - £9.95) The research team wanted to know where historically in Britain the most close encounter cases had taken place and the answer, to me at least, seemed self evident. Still the facts had to be checked. So I scanned the NUFON and BUFORA records to come up with some figures.

It turned out that something like 10% of all unresolved UFO activity in the north could be traced to within a 10 mile radius of this small Yorkshire town. For Britain it was a still impressive 6%. When you took account only of close encounters of the third and fourth kinds around 12% of the national total came within this zone, which certainly struck us as impressive given that it is a relatively unpopulated area. Indeed we found no fewer than 5 solid abductions within 5 or 6 miles of Todmorden.

Whilst working on the programme and spending a couple of days in the area a sixth case came to light. The witness, who lives in an isolated farm house and wanted no part in the the TV film, did share her extraordinary story with Roy Sandbach and I and I'll report this in the next NUN.

However, for the filming of the 15 minute item itself there was opportunity for LWT to interview the usual (such as Alan Godfrey), the less usual (eg Jenny from Walsden) and a couple of more routine cases which have had no real attention. We tried to create a portrait of what makes Todmorden special; though others became involved after work began, so the original plan was diluted. The crew were obliged to listen to all opinions, and I'll say more when we see the final production. However, I think the idea of filming a window area had merit and it is ironic that both Granada and Yorkshire, who could (indeed *should*) have made the item, let a London regional station send their team up north to suss out what was going on in 'dem dere hills'.

Given the above, it was interesting to see that in conjunction with the two or three recent 'Sky News' documentaries wildly different facts and figures about UFO activity in Britain got bandied about in promotional articles. These varied from one to the other, certainly did not fully match the data I compiled from the NUFON data base (over 2500 cases) and the BUFORA one (around 10,000) and had some curious anomalies about them too.

A TV magazine reporting on the Sky screening of its second programme in March noted that the series producer, despite months of research, trawling half Britain's investigators en route, is amazingly misinformed.

He argued, for instance, that 50 years ago UFOs were saucer shaped but recent examples have been triangular. This seems a spurious comment. There have always been a multiplicity of UFO shapes and saucers have, in fact, never been especially common. True there have been individual waves of triangular objects in recent years, probably because a lot of what is seen in them relates to new technology military aircraft with that configuration.

I felt that the transmogrification offered here was just as invalid as the astonishing claim that when aliens are seen they are 'invariably described as humans with pointy faces' - a statement which, if accurately quoted, makes you question where Sky TV have been doing their research.

With such curious data on offer it is not surprising that this article further alleges that the MODs Air Staff 2 A is a 'top secret UFO unit' (potty) and over 33% of all British sightings are made near Fylingdales in North Yorkshire (which, based on the records that I have seen, is even more absurd). One can only assume that this last fact was offered by Yorkshire researchers who have played a prominent part in the Sky shows (possibly explaining why the less vociferous BUFORA and MUFON have been noticeable by their near absence). This may well explain how statistics so lopsided could be offered, as lots of local cases from around their own area always come in to UFOlogists. But to extrapolate from that to a national trend, as this magazine piece did, one assumes at Sky's suggestion, looks quite ridiculous.

The News of the World colour supplement plugged the first Sky show just before Christmas. It did so via the Linda Jones case from Manchester, a Quest case I was not familiar with and the Alan Godfrey saga, even citing MUFORA (although no MUFORA member was interviewed by the paper). It then explained what 'UFOlogists believe'... And you will be delighted to know that, as a UFOlogist, this includes you arguing that 'an (alien) spaceship is spotted somewhere in the world every 15 seconds' (ie - over 2 million sightings a year - or, to put it another way, cobblers). You also claim that aliens snatch the unborn babies of women three months pregnant, that if you see a UFO it is 'highly likely' that instead of it being an IFO, as most are, of course, you have really been abducted. Also that the government cover-up exists to prevent mass panic (a hoary old argument that Peter Hough and I showed in 'Looking for the aliens' to be quite untenable - if, as possible, there is a cover up of key data, its basis must be different).

Whoever supplied the paper with this sort of tosh on your behalf wants asking for an explanation (they do not, of course, name themselves).

As for the main areas of UFO activity in Britain, well, the paper said, that it's (er, well) Britain! At least the areas cited (most of Wales, Scotland, Wiltshire, Derbyshire, Bristol and North Yorkshire seems to leave little out - apart, of course, from East Anglia or Essex, the two hot spots cited by other contemporary media sources - or, indeed, aside from some real areas where the statistical records actually show there are more sightings)

The March Sky offering was far better than the first, focusing to some extent on the Rendlesham Forest case (the first such attempted documentary - albeit only 12 minutes long - to do so in the UK). Most of the main players in the investigation were on camera, the tape was aired, but no witnesses spoke directly and the producer never even bothered to read 'From out of the blue', despite my offering to let him do so, so huge chunks of new data got missed out. Still you can't have everything, I suppose.

The Sky show (or 'UFOs -2', as some dubbed it) was really called 'No defence significance', the throw away line used by the MoD, taken from my (brief) screen appearance. I also compiled stats on the MoD files, although these were unused (LWT dropped them too). They show that from 1959 to 1991 some 12,275 cases have been received at Air Staff 2 A and its predecessors (that's around 400 a year on average). Mind you, despite Sky's suggestion that in Whitehall there's a whole lot of faking going on, in this NUN you'll see that never in the field of UFO endeavour have Air Staff 2A been as helpful as at present. Ironically, UFOlogists are cooperating wonderfully with the MoD on what is a very fruitful liaison. So secrecy - what secrecy?

NEWS ROUND - UP



:: One group rises, another departs... Vince Johnston writes to inform us that SRUFO has disbanded; although, of course, Scotland still has SPI and Ken Higgins research team to keep it busy.

Meanwhile, Dave Taylor of Para-Search asks me to remind readers that this West Midlands group is healthier than ever. They have regular monthly meetings/lectures at the Haden Hill House in Cradley Heath and have an active investigation team. The Para Search address is, as usual, on p. 16, but if you want to find out more about the meetings call 0384-296445.

:: Excalibur Books have a new second hand listing out which even has my first book, UFOs: A British Viewpoint (very rare these days even though there were 20,000 hardback editions back in 1979). Send an SAE to them at:-
1 Hillside Gardens Bangor Co Down N Ireland BT19 6SJ

:: If you fancy a weekend break UFO spotting, the Mountain Hall Centre in Bradford are running UFO courses and field trips in June and August for £95 all in. Not sure who is teaching them or what they'll be teaching, but if you just want to look at the Pennines anyway, call the hotel on 0274-816258.

:: Did anyone see Debbie Horsfield's wicked comedy series (The Riff Raff Element) on BBC-1 lately? Set in the Pennines it had a main character who, rather incidentally, was a UFOlogist. I loved the part where he became in charge of CLUFOS (ie the Clitheroe UFO Society) (good job they stuck that L in or lawsuits might have been winging to Broadcasting House across the Atlantic). Debbie (who earlier wrote 'Making Out') obviously knows her UFOlogy, which living in the Pennines is no big surprise. Aside from various references to real cases, she explained how this job at CLUFOS was obtained when the prior occupier disappeared. Police, evidently, were still searching for him, as was the building society where he worked (and where all that money went missing, Debbie's script casually added). They thought there was some connection, but our intrepid, rather dim, yet fairly sweet teacher cum UFOlogist explained, how he and the rest of CLUFOS knew the man was really on planet Beta somewhere or other, being enlightened by the aliens before returning to lead the north-west into a new era... As if any UFOlogist would really think stuff like that (where do these writers get their ideas...)

:: If you thought that was taking liberties, beware. Pinewood studios start work this month on shooting the movie 'UFO'. We have learnt the startling truth via an actor who applied for a small role and who reads NUN (thanks, Patrick Swayze, I think that is how you spell your name?...). Anyway, if you are expecting a blockbusting realistic plot the synopsis talks of 'comedy as a group of aliens who land on earth try to change the behaviour patterns of the human male' - I wish them lots of luck with that!

Problems still with UFO Brigantia. I repeat for joint subscribers that this is a fully independent magazine over which we have no control. We entered a joint subscription deal to give you better service, but this appears not to be happening and subscribers are understandably angry at us when Brigantia doesn't appear. If you feel we should scrap the deal, let me know. But PLEASE TELL BRIGANTIA what you think at:- 15 Rydal Street Burnley Lancs BB10 1HS

Snippets from readers...

Stewart Robertson of Tyneside sends a brief note about a weird CE 3 from Gateshead, which happened in 1941 (or 1942) when witness Bob Hall was just 5. He was watching soldiers march along Saltwell Road when his attention was drawn to a 'large egg shaped balloon falling from the sky'. He felt great fear and then on walking home he and ten other children were surrounded by 'alien looking men'. Wartime officials later confronted him and he was interrogated by military personnel and had to spend weeks talking to psychologists. He and the others were warned not to discuss their sighting. Other details are sketchy but he has apparently broken his 50 year silence because he is still haunted by the terrifying alien faces and hopes that some of the other children will now come forward. Interesting...

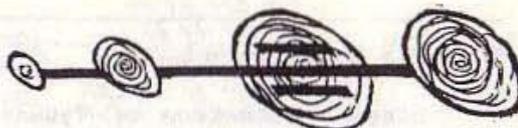
Thanks to Tim Good and Ralph Noyes who sent a copy of a letter from Nick Pope at the MoD dated 19 March 1993. It was a reply to a letter from a man from Herefordshire in which he appears to have enquired whether Tim Good was to be charged for revealing secret data in his recent books like 'Above Top Secret' and 'Alien Liaison'. The ever helpful Mr Pope, who seems to have a personal interest in UFOs, perhaps explaining the dramatic increase in cooperation from Air Staff 2 A since he has been there, replies that the MoD have 'no intention of taking any action' because '(TG) has not divulged any classified information; he has simply made statements about his own beliefs and repeated stories that he has been told about UFOs.' Nick Pope adds that he is stating that 'none of the allegations made about secret government studies into UFOs are correct...we are not aware of any evidence that would support the existence of extraterrestrial spacecraft.' He concludes that the MoD have 'no objections to Mr Good or anyone else saying whatever they like about UFOs - even if we do not agree with what is said!'

Ralph Noyes (the former head of the equivalent MoD department, of course) adds in a covering note to me that the MoD line 'remains as I last saw it when I left the Department in 1977. I shall congratulate Mr Pope on his irrefragible consistency when I next write to him about crop circles.'

I thought Nick Pope's response was very reasonable. It seems quite akin to the reaction I got in August 1983 when I took to Whitehall (with Brenda Butler and Dot Street) the just released Halt memo regarding the Bentwaters/Rendlesham Forest incident. The MoD had twice denied this to me but they had released it to UFOlogists in the USA via their USAAF under that countries freedom of information laws. I asked then if I was contravening Britain's official secrets act by possessing and, as intended, publishing the document. After much deliberation (under armed guard inside the MoD) I was told that the report 'appeared' genuine and there was nothing they could, or intended to, do to stop me publishing the memo.

Finally, Nick Redfern of the West Midlands reports a talk he recently had. A man contacted him after reading his article on the Topcliffe case in Tim Good's 1992 Report. The man refused to give a name but was an American and claimed to know things about the Rendlesham case. He said it was certain that 10 separate events took place, the first as early as 16 December 1980 and the last on 2 January 1981. In fact, this matches a quite strong rumour that circulated soon after the incidents and is noted in Sky Crash but has never since been confirmed in any documentation or eyewitness accounts. There were supposedly quite a few airmen and wives skywatching in the woods

CIRCULAR LOGIC



The 1993 crop circle season has begun very quietly as I write (Mid May) with just a couple of fairly simple hoaxes. Researchers are being extremely restrained and predictions generally seem to suggest that we should expect the lowest number of cases in years. We shall see.

However, Andy Collins has sent details of an interesting discovery at Eastwood in Essex. A reader of his fascinating book 'The Circlemakers' has written to describe a circle there in July 1964, long predating Doug and Dave's hoaxing extravaganza. He has since interviewed her and her husband.

The circle was some 40 feet in diameter, swirled anti-clockwise in perfect symmetry and within a field of wheat just off Snakes Lane (OS Ref TQ85008863). There were no tram lines at all in the field or signs of how anyone could have gotten in to fake it. The field was left fallow the next year and then sold. It is now a school football ground. On close inspection the couple said that the centre of the circle seemed scorched and devoid of stalks. Their dog also reacted violently to the mark the first time it was seen (seemingly within hours of its formation).

I expect The Crop Watcher will include a full report on this useful case, since it continues to print the stories others will not touch. TCW is never one to mince words (perhaps sometimes seeming over strident in its criticism; even if it is nearly always valid). In the Jan/Feb issue (£9 for 6 from 'Paul Fuller' 3 Selborne Court Tavistock Close Romsey Hants SO51 7TY - single issues £1.50) there is the usual heady mix. This includes more on the Swangate farce, an insiders story of what happened during last July's predicted 'alien contact' amidst the crop fields around Woodborough Hill, Chris Rutkowski reports on Canadian circles 20 years ago and Andy Collins describes his plans to test for Orgone energy at 1993 circles.

The most dramatic and important article in TCW, is the first half of a detailed and exclusive interview by Clas Svahn and Hakan Ekstrand (concluded in the Mar/Apr TCW). It was video taped last July with notorious trickster Doug Bower and is extremely forthcoming as a significant step to understanding what part Doug and Dave played in forging cereology.

The Winter issue of 'The Cereologist' is also out (£7.50 for 3; St Aldhelm 20 Paul St Frome Somerset BA11 1DX). I am bemused by how UFOlogists the world over still rave about this magazine. It is every bit as vituperative in its own way as 'Crop Watcher', but never gets criticised. A recent Fortean Times (whose handling of circles leaves much to be desired for such an excellent magazine) was amazingly smooth in its appreciation. Yet in this Cereologist's editorial Paul Fuller is called a 'madman' and it implies that, although Fuller (and 'his partner Jenny Randles'!) were more suspicious of hoaxing than Terence Meaden we still accepted the pictograms and it was a heavy blow when in 1991 the vortex theory collapsed.

Such junk does not befit a respected writer like John Michell. The vortex theory, far from having collapsed, has strengthened and is I feel more relevant than ever (see updated edition of 'Crop Circles: A Mystery Solved' coming in August). Also anyone who reads my comments in NUN (144 and 150, for example) must know that I rejected the pictograms as hoaxing very early on, well before Doug and Dave arrived. It is this willingness to change history to suit an argument that gets my goat about 'The Cereologist'. If you criticise other people's work then you have got to read what they say!

FOR YOUR PERUSAL



Major articles elsewhere

A newcomer to report is BUFORA (Ireland) Journal. Neatly produced by DTP with good graphics and a nice touch (a plastic backed cover to keep it free from creases) the first A4 8 pp issue has sightings, reviews and other news from Eire. Even with its mild ET bias it looks a very promising arrival onto the UFO scene. It is free to Irish branch members or £1.50 per issue otherwise (from BUFORA Ireland PO Box 3070 Whitehall Dublin 9 Eire).

FATE magazine seems to have temporarily dried up (no April or May issues here yet). March is a 'fairies' special, with a couple of reports and investigations. Jerry Clark's UFO column looks at recent books. FATE costs £1.90 exclusively from Enigma Design 15 Rydal St Burnley Lancs BB10 1HS

UFO Times Jan (inc BUFORA sub:- 2C Leyton Rd Harpenden Herts AL5 2TL)

Ken Phillips has taken over editorship to bring it back on schedule but the blank cover does it no favours. With Ken you can be sure of some very strange contact cases upcoming. The first is in here, plus a panorama of recent European cases from east and west that is most illuminating.

Magonia Mar (£4, or 7 ECU! (Europe) for 4; 5 James Terrace London SW14 8HB)

Peter Rogerson reviews 25 years of socio-UFOlogy. Chris Allan dissects the two recent books about the Roswell crash and John Rimmer summarises the flood of pirate documents circulating around UFOlogy from the USA attacking the heart of Budd Hopkins 'Manhattan transfer' (observed abduction) case.

SPI Enigma Feb (£10 for 5; 41 The Braes Tullibody Clackmannanshire FK10 2TT)

As usual, packed with Scottish goodies; a Canadian abduction, Linda Moulton Howe on mutilations in 1992, a poltergeist case, plus part one of a detailed report on the Bonnybridge UFO wave from last autumn. Consistently excellent.

Pegasus Summer (£2 per copy 126 Grange Rd Guildford Surrey GU2 6QP)

Some interesting pieces in here, including a reflective on the Herb Schirmer case (although oddly not mentioning its extraordinary parallels with the Alan Godfrey affair) and Ralph Noyes tells his own story. Worth a look.

IUR Jan & Mar (\$30, for 6: 2457 W Peterson Ave Chicago IL 60659 USA)

Jan: Walter Webb with a detailed look at his contact with Allen Hynek over 31 years and VJ Ballester Olmos on the opening of Spanish Air Force file.

Mar: An excellent study of the Manhattan Transfer case with contributions from all sides of the (hoax, reality or something else) debate, including Budd Hopkins, Willy Smith, Jerry Clark, John Mack, David Jacobs, et al.

MUFON Journal (\$30, for 12: 103 Oldtowne Rd Seguin TX 78155-4099 USA)

Feb: Paramount and Travis Walton both write about 'Fire in the Sky' and screen writer Tracy Torme disowns some changes he had to make to the script

Mar: Interesting article from Willy Smith asking why UFOs have lights.

BAE Apr (\$25 CAN mon order: 2 St Clair Ave West, Ste 607, Toronto ONT M4V 1L5)

A highly impressive journal reviews what's new from psychology ref close encounters. False memory syndrome and the abduction/abortion link assessed.

Annals Jan (£6, for 4: Gerry Lovell 8 St John St Wells Somerset BA5 1SW)
A good ramble over many phenomena a bit like Fortean Times but in short doses. There are always interesting items missed elsewhere and it is fun.

J. Meteorology (£24 for 10: 54 Frome Rd Bradford-on-Avon Wilts BA15 1LD)
Terence Meaden's meteorology journal does look at relevant items (eg ball lightning and crop circles) plus more standard fare. April has an important statistical review of Russian BL cases. Student/OAP discount on request.

Folklore Frontiers Feb (£5, for 4: P. Screeton 5 Egton Dr Seaton Carew TS25)
Modern folklore, including topical look at strange broadcast pick-ups in these days of Dianagate. Nigel W strikes again on the Sheffield conference.

Wild places 6 (£6, for 4: K. McClure 42 Victoria Rd St Austell Cornwall PL25)
A fascinating piece by Kevin McClure linking bus spotting with UFOlogy (a lot more interesting than it sounds - as is bus spotting, of course). Where have all the Leyland PD3s gone and why are swathes of Stagecoach stripes turning each new Volvo Olympian into a clone? Send for Arthur C Clarke. If I lost you all there, worry not - I understood what I meant and so will Kevin!

Ley Hunter 118 £5.25, for 3: Empress Box 92 Penzance Cornwall TR18 2XL)
New thinner paper has a nice effect. There have been a lot of changes in earth mysteries research lately, especially Paul Devereux's concept about leys as spirit paths rather than energy lines. You should keep up, and TLH is easily the best way to do so. Good piece on Aboriginee dreamtime beliefs too

PSI Researcher Winter (£7.95, for 4: 20 Paul St Frome Somerset BA11 1DX)
Excellent paranormal digest from the SPR with serious debates from top researchers on key topics, often of UFO relevance (eg NDEs and OOBES).

The Skeptic Mar (£12, for 6: The Skeptic Dept B Box 475 Manchester M60 2TH)
Continues its rewriting of circle history and also see below regarding its credibility. That said, in general I still think it is a must read magazine.

THE SKEPTIC: Smoke without fire?

I discussed The Skeptic magazine last issue. No comment as yet, but any response I will gladly print. Peter Hough and I were asked for an interview only days after that NUN went out. The interviewer knew nothing of the matter, wanting to discuss our book 'The Afterlife'. This has more sceptical comment than most coffee table books, but references too few Prometheus titles, it seems - so the Skeptic interviewer brought us their catalogue as if a sales rep! We gladly accepted some omissions to add to the paperback.

Since the last issue, Transworld (ie Bantam) have confirmed to us that they are the mythical 'Universal' publishers cited by Wendy Grossman in her astonishing critique of an unnamed and, seemingly, unread book about spontaneous combustion (see The Skeptic (Jan)). That book is ours (Bantam publish in June). Even more amazingly, they told us about the sales launch mentioned in the Skeptic article, noting something the magazine forgot to tell readers and which seems to make quite a difference. Ms Grossman stated that Bantam staff 'rolled on the floor with laughter' when the book was announced. What she did not add, according to Bantam, was that this was thanks to a prearranged stunt to send smoke rising into the room as a gimmick!

We gather Bantam are less than pleased and will tell you what happens.

BOOKS OF THE MOMENT



The Berkley paperback of my book about the Rendlesham Forest case, 'From out of the blue', has now been released in the USA. Still no sign of a UK edition (we haven't given up) but some copies should filter over here as did the excellent Randle and Schmitt book on Roswell. You may also get it here via specialist mail order outlets. ISBN number to quote is 0425 -13803 8 and the US price is \$4.99 (\$5.99 in Canada). It is tidier than the large format Global edition and there is an 8 page update chapter added.

Secret Life by David Jacobs 336 pp h/b from Fourth Estate Price £14.99

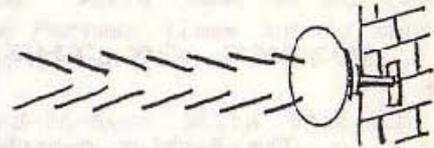
From this title you might imagine private confessions of a radio DJ (NB: David Jacobs is a well known media personality in Britain). Well, of course, it isn't, or we would not be reporting on it here; even though THAT David Jacobs does, ironically, make a brief appearance in 'Sky Crash' following his October 1983 sighting of what was almost certainly a meteor.

No - rather, this is the American David Jacobs, a history professor, who wrote an excellent treatise from that unique perspective on the first 30 years of 'The UFO controversy in America'. That was almost 20 years ago. Since then, rather than complete volume 2 of this (which I for one would love to see him do), he has become ensnared like so many of us by a sort of abduction fever. The secret lives under review are, therefore, those of 50 or 60 abductees in the USA with whom he has worked in the past decade.

This book is both in depth and shallow at the same time. It is in depth in the sense that it probes cases with minutiae, eg huge chunks of transcripts from hypnosis sessions which will either electify you or send you to sleep (depends on your predisposition). If you want to know intimate details about the surgical instruments used by the 'greys' or what shape a table is inside a spaceship, then this is the book for you. If you expect some sort of overview or assessment of theories other than the straight interpretation of these cases as 'fact' then you will see this as very lightweight. One of the few mentions of Britain (or indeed anywhere outside the USA) is a sentence noting my book 'Abduction', indicating that British cases exist too - but, sadly, missing that books more vital message that British cases are not the same (eg the greys are by no means as dominant). Indeed, more so, that there seem to be global cultural trends strongly undermining any easy attempt to interpret these cases as absolute reality.

On the other hand, (pause for personal gripe) influential places will read the book, thanks to intellectual snobbery pervading British literature. Several highbrow media reviews have devoted waves of ink, assessing it as reflective of UFOlogy and noting its omissions. Such sources have, of course, ignored prior British books like 'Phantoms of the Skies', 'Phenomenon', 'Perspectives' or 'Abduction', indeed probably do not even know that another breed of UFO writing exists. The sad truth is that these were not written by someone with a 'Doctor' in front of their name and somehow that matters.

Having said this, Secret Life certainly adds to our knowledge and is a heck of a lot better than 'jump on the bus' potboilers that will cash in on 'Fire in the Sky' in future. Yet it does not ask (let alone answer) the key question. What would happen if we suggested to that other David Jacobs he had a time lapse and then regressed him to his meteor sighting in 1983....

MEDIA MATTERS
A look at UFOs in the public eye


Typical of the extensive reviews given to 'Secret Life' (see page 9) was the Sunday Times (14 Mar), including a still from 'Earth girls are easy' to set the tone. The big article called it an 'insane and possibly insanitary work' and went downhill fast from there; albeit making some apt points. Sadly, the Sunday Times have no clue other UFologists are well aware of these and it hopes that one day someone will ride in from science to sort out crackpot UFO buffs and fantasising abductees and so provide a 'serious evaluation of the material to hand'. Of course, unless such a book is then written by sceptical Dr What (or Dr Who?) the Times will promptly ignore it.

Exactly coincident with the above, the day before Sky News discussed the Rendlesham Forest case in fact, the News of the World (14 Mar) headlined 'You unidentified LYING objects'. As up to date as ever it told how Ralph Noyes had now backed 'their' exclusive story from 10 years ago. The case (the sorry - News of the World report) was presented as if the paper alone discovered it and Ralph Noyes' important words (that the MoD had covered up the sighting) was a sudden Sky News scoop. The fact that Ralph has said this in just about every lecture he's given or article he's written, indeed first did so at the press conference to launch Sky Crash (in October 1984) and that these have been extensively cited in UFology ever since, all meant nothing in that land of truth, virtue, and fair credit known as tabloidville (whose national emblem seems to be the cloud cuckoo).

Interestingly the East Anglian Daily Times (15 Mar) also made Ralph's words into a news story but asked the MoD to comment on them. Their unnamed spokesman noted that he would 'treat all this with some caution' before giving the usual spiel about only investigating threats to national security which, as Ralph's important comments imply, appears not to include unknown aerial phenomena smashing holes through the pine tree canopy right outside a NATO base or being chased by senior officers all over the woods.

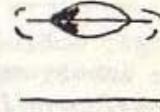
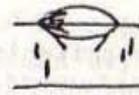
The fact that these events might have been a terrorist attack could never have been discounted by any authority without serious study. So how come the MoD continue to insist they made no investigations because the UFO was 'not hostile'. And how exactly how did they know it was not hostile?

Of course, aside from these two sources nobody else picked up on any of this. Yet almost every paper in Britain went to town on the delicious scam pulled by the Cheshire police a week later. The Times and the Guardian (23 Mar) (the latter with 'crashed spaceship snoopers get shock from the blue') tell how several amateurs using illegal scanners to listen in to police broadcasts were arrested in a field at Appleton near Warrington. They had rushed to the site of a crashed UFO that police radio messages had reported. Radioactivity was said to be scattered about the scene and the duped hams risked danger, but only found for their trouble several waiting bobbies. The story was a trick. It is a sign of the times that when a real object smashed from the sky and left real radiation in woods 8 miles from Ipswich nothing like this level of serious attention was devoted to it.

Meanwhile, the Sport (21 Mar) had the big story - 'Zombie aliens kidnapped my missus'. Police apparently believe a Bilbao man who claimed that his missing wife had vanished at the hands of skateboarding aliens wearing purple robes and with skin like prunes. No doubt they had to, as the vanishing prunes must have ensured that police had nothing else to go on.

BRIEF CASES

Some current investigations

The Alitalia encounter

Thanks to Leyton Williams-Davies from Gwent for sending a full report on his investigations into this case (first mentioned in NUN 149). He included a copy of the 'Air Traffic Incident Report'.

The MD 80 jet (call sign Alpha Whisky Charlie) was on flight AZ 284 from Milan (Linate) to London (Heathrow) on 21 April 1991 at about 20.00 GMT. It was at 22,000 feet heading 320 degrees, passing 30 miles south of the Biggin Hill beacon on a descent into London at around 2000 feet per minute.

According to Captain Zaghetti's report this was a near collision with a 'flying object very similar to a missile, light brown coloured, with a track opposite than mine. It was higher than us by about 1000 feet'. Zaghetti recalls crying 'Look out! Look out!' to his co-pilot who also saw the object (which had no exhaust flame). He adds; 'As soon as the object crossed us I asked to (London radar controller) if he saw something on his screen and he answered - 'I see an unknown target 10 NM behind you.'

B H Dale of the Safety Data and Analysis Unit told the investigator (25 July 1991) that 'after extensive civil and military investigations it has not been possible to identify positively the object.' But he adds that a missile was not ruled out. The MoD had no 'space related activity' to offer as a solution but the 'description did not correspond with that expected had the object been a meteorological balloon'. That is, of course, important given the balloon solution proffered by most authorities for the whole spate of mid air encounters involving British aircraft that occurred (more covertly) during the same summer (1991). The CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) end by candidly admitting; 'We have therefore closed the investigation and listed the sighting as an unidentified flying object.'

Using this data, Leyton asked his MP (Paul Murphy) to probe the MoD. The Earl of Arran (under secretary for the armed forces) replied on 26 Aug 1991 that the MoD (slightly contradicting the CAA) 'have been able to rule out the possibility that what was seen was a missile from Army firing ranges in the Lydd area' then repeats what the CAA said (but does not infer that it could have been an untraced missile). The usual waffle about the incident being no 'threat' was next presented, adding that it was, thus, not intended 'to undertake further investigations'.

To his credit, Paul Murphy was not satisfied and on 5 September told Lord Arran that he was 'still very concerned that the MoD does not know what the UFO was...' noting that it could have been from a USAF or RAF base and asking what criteria the MoD use to judge whether such cases are a threat (and if indeed any UFOs have been so judged), plus was the air defence warning system set off by the UFO in April 1991 and was it not possible that such a UFO might 'trigger a hostile response with potentially disastrous consequences?' He concludes this brilliant riposte with the comment that, whatever UFOs are, there must be cause for a review as a threat to air safety over Britain is implicit in this case (plus, of course, as Paul Murphy presumably did not realise - this was just one of FIVE similar encounters over Britain in a 3 month spell, making it even more critical).

In his reply (17 Oct 1991) Lord Arran assured there was no USAF involvement. The criteria are '*based on military expertise and an analysis of available information*'. At no time ('so far', Arran adds) has it been judged that a threat was represented by a UFO incident. He further notes that the incident triggered no response and that the UK warning systems have built in safeguards to '*ensure that any response is appropriate to the circumstances*.' The MoD cannot justify spending money reviewing UFO data where no defence implications have been identified and air safety questions are '*a matter for the CAA*'.

All of this was remarkably reminiscent of Ralph Noyes, MP David Alton and myself pressing then under secretary Lord Trefgarne in 1985 over the defence implications of the Rendlesham case (see 'From out of the blue'). They evidently have all this off to a fine art. But does it hold water?

Shropshire Surprises

Just before Christmas I took part in a Radio Shropshire phone-in on UFOs and two interesting cases emerged from that. Both are independent and there was no opportunity for the callers to copy from each other, yet there are intriguing comparisons, especially given the dates.

Case 1 occurred in late evening on a day in 1942. Mrs S (who now runs a village post office in the county) was returning home to Ellesmere (about 5 miles north east of Oswestry) after a dance. It was 23.30 and, being war time, very dark. It was a fine, dry night and she cycled as usual. At 'tunnel bank', leading to Welshampton, she had to disembark and push the cycle as it was too steep to ride up. The area was very wooded with a steep descent into a canal on one side and the very high banking on the other. Yet two white lights, like car headlights, were traversing at speed along this gully, hugging the ground low down. They made absolutely no sound and came within feet of Mrs S. When they passed beside her they simply disappeared in an instant. They were extremely bright, blocking everything else out and were in view under a minute. But they so frightened her that she rode up the bank for the first time ever and got away as fast as possible.

Case 2 comes from Mrs V who lives in Shropshire now, but the experience occurred in Basingstoke, Hants in Summer 1943. It was about 23.00 and she had been to a war time youth club dance with her boyfriend (sadly killed later in the war). Suddenly a brilliant light appeared on the track that they were walking and started to head straight at them. It moved at such speed they were unable to get out of the way, rooted by fear. As it passed within a few feet of them it resembled a big white oval with dazzling light making a weird noise like a buzzing or sucking. They were both either thrown by the wind blast or dived sideways to escape it but ended up on the floor in a ditch beside the lane. Mrs V briefly recalls looking up and seeing the thing now hovering directly overhead about 10 feet away as if inspecting them. She turned to make sure her boyfriend was alright and when she glanced back the object had vanished. About 48 hours later they both developed red, blotchy and itchy rashes on their faces. These were dismissed as coincidence or sun stroke by those they talked to and Mrs V feels they may have been brought on by fright. They lasted only a couple of days. The similarity between this case and its physical effects with the incident in Tibet in 1947 (see 'Abduction', p. 99) is quite marked. However, it also has a suggestion that it might have been an unusually close encounter with 'super' ball lightning.

Case 9224 25 June 1992 Llangernyw, Clwyd Inv: Margaret Fry A3-5

A retired police officer, interested in astronomy, observed a yellow light moving at constant speed from E to W in the northern sky. Thought it was an aircraft or star but took 20 minutes to cross sky above Glan Colleen valley. He tried to watch it via his telescope but failed to find it. At the exact same time (23.45) the very next night and in the same village Margaret Fry herself saw a 'bright gold object' above mountains in the north west. It sent out 'shimmering fins' and reminded her of an angel fish as it 'swam' slowly eastward. The nose was cherry red and there was a white patch in the fan tail. It then arced upwards over the hills and was gone after 3 or 4 minutes. Margaret says 'this filled me with wonder, though (it was) the 44th time (I have seen a UFO)'.

Case 9225 9 July 1992 Douglas, Dundee, Scotland C4-5

Mr T, a storeman, was skywatching in his garden with his wife and three friends. After more than 2 hours, observing satellites, etc, at 01.00 they saw an 'enormous orange triangle' with no flashing lights or sound glide overhead. The next day, in the garden with binoculars, Mr T saw a triangle rotating around a circle in the sky. He thought this was a weather balloon until they split apart and flew away. They see many odd things over Douglas.

DOG WRECKS CAR TRYING TO ESCAPE: ANIMAL DISTURBANCE IN THE BARN?

Case 9226 30 August 1992 Butterton, Staffs BUFORA B6-6

Mrs D, her adult daughter and a friend and two others who were uninvolved (all from Nottingham) were 'barning' (ie camping out in a converted barn) over the Bank Holiday weekend. They were at Waterslacks, about 5 miles south west of Arbor Low stone circle between Leek and Bakewell. This in the Manifold Valley some 1.5 miles from the nearest habitation. The night was wild and windy (typical bank holiday fare!) but at about 03.30 Mrs D awoke to go to the toilet. Unable to find the flashlight she groped her way down the steps and into the toilet area. But in the kitchen she realised it was now oddly light and that this was coming through the window. Looking out she was amazed to see a huge oval object speckled with dozens of white lights. It remained stationary for 3-4 minutes before Mrs D decided to wake her daughter. She could now see her way back quite easily by its glow (the moon was only a thin crescent at this time, so not the cause). Yet when she reached the sleeping area the light had moved and, looking out, it was clear that it had passed eastward into the river valley and was dipping out of sight. Ms D and a friend both confirm hearing Mrs D describe all of the above and they saw the strange light through the window (but not the object causing it). The other two women remained asleep. Next morning the dog, who was locked in the boot of their large estate car, had caused a terrible mess in there and the door was half off its hinges as a result of evidently frantic efforts to escape. The D's are seasoned campers and the dog sleeps in the boot unfazed. She had never reacted like this on any previous trip.



Case 9224 Clwyd



Case 9225 Dundee

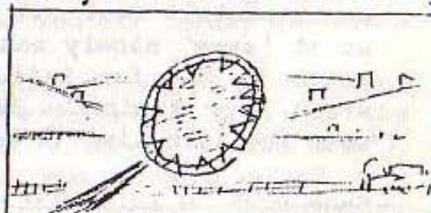


Case 9226 Staffs

THERE'S A UFO AT THE BOTTOM OF MY GARDEN

Case 9303 10 January 1993 Broomhill, S. Yorks Claire Upton, BUFORA B4-5

Mr M is age 46 and unemployed with some interest in, and knowledge of, UFOs. He also claims to have seen a ball with spikes coming out over Lake Lucerne in Switzerland whilst riding on a mountain chair lift on a school trip about 30 years ago. He lives in a six storey house in this hilly district on the edge of Sheffield. At 22.10 on a dry, slightly hazy night, with a strong wind, he was in the kitchen washing bottles to leave out for the milkman when he saw an object on a patch of soil in the garden at the back of the building. It was wine red in colour and about the size of a drinks tray. He felt it was infra-red in colour but his friend told him you could not see infra-red so he now doubts this, but it had that effect. It remained on the ground for some minutes and he tried to figure out what it was but did not go outside. Then suddenly it took off, like a coin being flipped, and spun up into the air, revealing its underside with a series of 'reinforcements' on the rim. It headed straight for the window and issued a blue 'flash'. Thinking this might be a beam he ducked behind the sink as it passed over the house and vanished towards Crosspool. He suffered no ill effects and there were apparently no obvious marks on the garden. The possibility that springs to mind is something blown by the wind catching ambient light, but Mr M seems sure the object was not this. Any other ideas to offer him??



Case 9306 22 March 1993 Blackley, Manchester Vic Sleight/MUFORA A3-5

Mr E (a student with a Maths degree) reported via Jodrell Bank that at 22.20 he was walking over the golf course when he saw three white lights emerge from clouds. These were joined by many others (minimum 24) and over the next twenty minutes they drifted slowly west. MUFORA suggested the theory of birds reflecting moonlight, but he rejected the option.

Case 9308 16 May 1993 Mow Cop, Staffordshire Roy Sandbach B3-3

A party of youths and a senior supervisor from a Cheshire childrens home had been for a day trip to Alderley Edge and were returning by car over Mow Cop at 00.55 after a late night ride. Suddenly they saw a huge white light plunge out of cloud and pass silently over them. It gave them a fright before it disappeared to the north. They reported it via Jodrell Bank 24 hours later and we were at first of the impression that this might have been a searchlight associated with a mountain rescue helicopter; although there have been several earthlights over the sandy outcrop that rises on the Cheshire/Staffordshire border. Luckily Roy was able to talk to the air traffic controller on duty at Manchester Airport at the time. The almost certain identification emerged from this. A passenger jet from Glasgow to Ibiza hit trouble over the area at about this time and did an emergency turn and made a full-alert approach to Manchester Airport (the incident actually delayed the start of the new rail link to the airport which opened for business that night). There was heavy turbulence over the Pennines and the crew decided to abandon the diversion and climb back up to return to Glasgow, where they made a safe landing. No doubt the passengers and crew had no idea they had provoked a UFO flap!

CASE HISTORIES

UFO SEEN OVER THREE COUNTRIES Reports from Doug Cooper & Leyton Williams

This case is sure to reach UFO journals around the world, so it was important to provide a report here as soon as possible. It began when at 02.20 on 31 March 1993 BUFORA AI, Doug Cooper, received a call from a police Sargeant F who at 01.10 had seen 'two very bright white objects hovering' north of his position at Liskeard, Cornwall. Two other officers had seen them first and radioed through, showing that the duration of the event was long enough (eg a couple of minutes) for this sequence of events to occur, ruling out meteors. The first two PCs had seen the object come from the north west. F then saw the two lights move away and ascend in an arc towards Plymouth.

Doug immediately contacted the police HQ at Exeter to learn that several other reports had come in, many from police patrols around east Devon. The same thing was being described. Doug tracked down Sargeant M at Ilfracombe who had been driving into Lynton with a PC when two very large lights crossed the Bristol Channel from South Wales and flew silently overhead. The two officers saw a structure joining the lights (although most of the other reports did not make any reference to such a thing).

Later that day Doug plotted the objects course and spoke with police in South Wales and east Devon. Two police officers at Treharris in Wales saw the same two lights at the same time head towards the west country. In Exeter he found Sargeant L and two PCs who had seen the phenomenon from Paul St. Nearly all the witnesses described a vapourous trail (but not like an aircraft vapour trail - more like a flourescent light tube). This dissipated behind the lights that flew parallel with one another.

By now the BUFORA office were getting calls and channeled through to Doug. They followed the same pattern (eg a woman in Pentregaral, Dyfed on the south west Wales coast. On 2 April Doug published letters (minus key data) in the local press (later on local TV) appealing for more witnesses. These flooded in, eg from Taunton and Minehead.

There were anomalies that seem likely to be different cases on the same night trawled in by this widespread search. These included two separate reports from fishermen on the River Parrot near Bridgewater, Somerset, who saw an object like a huge catamaran with two lights on the side. This was at about 02.00. A similar object (described in fact as like two concordes joined together) came from an off duty policeman with a Scout troop on the Quantock Hills, Somerset at 21.00. That was 4 hours before the main event. In addition there were several reports of military activity soon after the 01.10 incidents, including three military helicopters dropping flares at Bridgewater (01.30) and independent reports of two jeyt fighters with afterburners on going east to west across Devon at the same time.

Doug established a strong rapport with Nick Pope at the MoD and they exchanged data and had several telephone conversations in a full and frank cooperation. Air Staff 2A had received quite a few sightings that night and were equally intrigued by the data. The MoD oddly advised that no military jets were registered as flying on that date over Devon - perhaps then USAF?

Meanwhile, Leyton Williams-Davies had been collating reports in Gwent where the same objects were seen between 01.10 and 01.15. We had concluded from the wide spread and duration (too long for a meteor - despite a Devon scientist claiming this) that the phenomenon must be space debris. Yet both the MoD and Doug Cooper seemed dissatisfied, noting the 'catamaran' reports.

Then we discovered that identical reports had been made over southern Ireland at the same time (in fact timed at 01.13, proving the simultaneity and virtually establishing that the object had to be very high in the atmosphere and almost certainly space debris). Air traffic controllers at Shannon saw it. The crew of a garda (police) patrol car at Churchtown, Co Limerick, spotted the lights. A military plane flying from Baldonnel to Donegal had them fly right across their path. So impressive was the Irish data that their Department of Transport launched an enquiry. Apparently, NORAD (the American space command radar in Colorado) affirmed that 138 bits of space debris passed Ireland between midnight and 04.00 but NONE re-entered. There was now rife speculation in the Irish press that our old friend (the weather balloon of the 1990's) - ie a secret USAF Aurora stealth jet - might be the cause. This was, of course, flatly denied.

However, something seems to have gone awry with NORAD's calculations because we have now established that a Soviet launch, Cosmos 2238, went up that night and a booster did burn up on returning into the atmosphere. This almost certainly must be what was seen by most of the witnesses. However, Doug tells me that in his most recent conversation with Nick Pope at the MoD they agreed that problems remain and that some of the reports do not fit this option. This is a rather unusual, but most welcome, joint evaluation!

FINAL WORDS

You've heard of the book of the film (or film of the book) but how about the exhibition of the book? Artist John Lundberg is putting on a multi media art display on the UFO theme loosely built around my book 'UFOs and how to see them'. It is hoped to be the first in a series and this one will run from 7 June to 4 July at a gallery in Rotherhithe, London. His work will be sold at the conclusion; although I am asked to warn you that it won't be cheap! If you want to visit call 071-482-5577 for further details.

To remind of this summer's big conferences. On Sat 24 July / Sun 25 July the BUFORA event is at the University of Bristol (send SAE to 26 Leyton Rd Harpenden Herts AL5 2TL for information pack). Then on Sat 14 Aug / Sun 15 Aug at the Sheffield Polytechnic on Pond Street is this year's IUN bash (send SAE to IUN address below). Big speakers are lined up for both.

NUFON Regional Groups

SPI	(Scotland)	41 The Brees, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire	FK10 2TT
NLUFOIG	(Cumbria)	89 Bare Lane, Morecambe, Lancashire	LA 4 6RN
LAPIS	(Lancashire)	58 Torsway Ave, Blackpool, Lancashire	FY 3 8JZ
MUFORA*	(North & West)	6 Silsden Ave, Lowton, Lancashire	WA 3 1EN
IUN	(North & East)	1 Woodhall Dr, Healey Lane, Batley, W. Yks	WF17 7SW
SSPR	(S. Yorks)	17 Old Quarry Ave, Wales, Sheffield	S 31 8RV
PRA	(Derbyshire)	12 Tilton Grove, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston	DE 7 46R
EMUFORA	(Notts)	8 Roosa Close, Bulwell, Nottingham	NG 6 7BL
PARA-SEARCH	(W. Midlands)	79 Sandringham Rd, Stourbridge, W. Mid	DY 8 5HL
LUFOIC	(E. Midlands)	12 Unicorn C/van, Unicorn St, Thurmaston	LE 4 8AX
NUFORC	(Northants)	46 Occupation Rd, Corby, Northants	NN17 2EF

* NUFON archive files held in central Manchester accessible c/o MUFORA T:0942-604265

You can visit the files by tram getting off at the St Peter's Square Station in the Manchester City centre. Bona fide researchers are welcome but calls in advance to the above number are essential.