

NORTHERN UFO NEWS

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JUNE 1993

All the news, views and up to date cases £7 for six
Editor:- Jenny Randles



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J. R. Comments ... It is almost traditional at this time of year to write an editorial about crop circles. But this June saw a significant event, the publication of a terrific new book which (inside sources tell me) cereology is desperately hoping to wish into oblivion. However, I suspect, most of its practitioners will find this all but impossible to live with or to live down. It is important enough to warrant extensive editorial comment.

I once called Jim Schnabel the 'Lex Luther' of the crop circle world, when discussing his involvement in the now infamous 'Swagate' phone call deceptions, his media exposure of hoaxing teams or even his own efforts, winning single-handedly the second prize in the 'hoax a pictogram' competition last summer. He has by now upset most fellow researchers (which makes a change as I usually corner that market). We all knew his book was coming for some months now, but how would it handle a field dominated by ever expanding circle shapes desperately struggling to keep pace with the rapidly inflating egos of those who chase blindly after them?

Well, now you can find out, because 'Round in Circles' is here (Hamish Hamilton, 294 pp hardback, priced at £16.99). There is little prospect that it will win warm admirers in the crop circle world, but those less chained to the sinking ship of cereology might correctly judge this a classic.

Firstly, let me make clear what 'Round in Circles' is not. Unlike every other book written on the subject so far - from polar opposites like 'Circular Evidence' to 'A Mystery Solved' - this is in no sense an attempt to answer what the circles are, nor, despite media pronouncements to the contrary, to explain them all away as trickery. From talking to its author I suspect he is himself probably not fully convinced they are all fakes, but you would be forgiven for assuming that he does think that as he says little here to leave much of an alternative. That was disappointing.

However, having said that it was probably an inevitable consequence of what the book sets out to do - explore circle-watchers rather than circles. It is devastatingly witty and often an hilarious insiders look at the cereology movement - a sociologists dream come true, as Crop Watcher reader and UFO investigator Roy Sandbach called it in a recent note to me.

All the names with which you are familiar, from Colin Andrews and Pat Delgado to Terence Meaden and George Wingfield are here, as are 'Meadenites' (a term conjuring up images of feuding tribes) such as Ian Mrzyglod, Paul Fuller and, to a small extent, myself. We are players in some comic tragedy. The story unfolds across a decade of time and Schnabel second guesses motives and recreates events and (sometimes) conversations as if scripting a play. Indeed, that is how the book works most effectively - it is virtually - 'Crop Watcher: The Movie' told on the canvas of the big page.

I mean here that Paul Fuller's magazine (quite uncharitably dismissed by Schnabel as having just 60 readers - when its rather more than that!) has become the whipping boy of cereology for its uncompromising attacks against the bizarre excesses of the field. I happen to believe this has been essential, which is why I have stood by the one source of real information readily available on a regular basis, despite its hard-bitten and outspoken stance. Equally, it was this personalisation that set many against both 'Controversy of the Circles' (in 1989) and 'Crop Circles: A Mystery Solved' a year later. The latter, incidentally, becomes the first circle book to be semi-revised and re-published post Doug and Dave, when it appears in paperback in August. But if you hated our 'tell it like it was' approach in these books, you will doubly hate what this American journalist has done in 'Round in Circles'. But if you respect what we did, you'll really love this!

I suppose Paul and I can afford to be quite magnanimous as we come out of the book relatively intact, as does Ian Mrzyglod, whose original research in 1980 created cereology, despite contrary pronouncements by those who have since laid claim to that title. In truth, we escape to some extent because we figure so little - and given more words I dare say we might have had some come-uppance due. But the same cannot be said for virtually everyone else - including Terence Meaden, who really does not come through smelling just of roses, at least as he is pictured here. However, his problems pale into nothing when compared with the image incited of Andrews, Delgado, Wingfield and the more esoteric style cereologists. How accurate the frequently destructive word-pictures are when talking about these people I cannot say, as I do not know them well enough to judge, but they will be far from happy and we may even hear the sound of rubbing hands from lawyers offices.

Schnabel recreates conversations in pubs and the middle of circles, paints images of seances and squabbles and belittles subtly with the concealed artistry of a poisonous snake. He sneaks up on his victims, catching them unawares. You suspect he has entered the hallowed world of cereology, befriended many and (in some eyes) will have betrayed them through this book. Most reviewers imagine him an unbeliever pretending to be a convert, being thus invited to join the chosen few and, taking careful notes as he goes along, revealing the terrible truth through his writing. He was a spy, in effect. The conspiracy theorists that dominate the field will love that metaphor, but I think it is way too simplistic. I was in little doubt that Jim Schnabel's three years in cereology (from 1989) were spent primarily as a journalist after a good story; albeit one with some genuine interest in the subject he was researching. From what I heard, most others also worked this out soon enough, so they should remember that fact before bleating about being conned by a demon dressed as a lamb.

I have to say that the parts of the story I saw first hand are portrayed on the whole accurately. The coverage of the genesis of the Mowing Devil story, for instance, is told correctly here for the first time. It has been misrepresented several times in other books and magazines.

But there are errors. For instance, (p. 123) he says that I phoned up the Gloria Hunniford show to spar with Colin Andrews. In fact, Gloria Hunniford's show invited me on and, whilst true that I was not in the studio with Andrews it was nonetheless not a case of my phoning the show or an impulse to attack him. Later (p. 221) Schnabel also says that Terence Meaden was the 'designated judge' in the Sunday Mirror competition. In fact there were four judges, myself included, who were all sent the complete dossier of hundreds of entries. 'Crop Watcher' has published quite a lot of this material and some of the eyewitness accounts, eg the 'solid tube' case from Kent (featured in TCW and also in the new edition of 'Crop Circles') was followed up by us and is better evidence than here cited by Jim Schnabel.

Equally, Schnabel might have noted that I tried to persuade the Mirror to pay up to entrants under the terms of their competition for the best theory, hoax and eyewitness evidence. They refused, which probably explains why my (not exactly praise-filled) quotes about the way they ran the competition (see NUN 154) did not feature in the summing-up, alongside the quotes from other judges such as Terence Meaden and Archie Roy which did.

These are all minor matters. But there was more that I thought the author should have expanded on. For instance, he creates the clear impression that all 'Meadenites' tried to accommodate pictograms into the vortex theory until forced not to by the Doug and Dave admissions in 1991. This is simply not the case, as 'A Mystery Solved' and NUN articles in 1990-91 both show.

Sadly, 'A Mystery Solved', which (perhaps egotistically) I think should have been discussed is all but ignored by the author. He tells me this was an oversight edited out when the manuscript was cut down. He promises to correct it at paperback stage. Nobody can fault such integrity, but I do consider it important that readers know there were cereologists who said that the pictograms were fake and insisted well before Doug and Dave made them do so that there were fewer real circles than most, Meaden included, were willing to admit (and, indeed, these left were only the simple ones).

For now readers get the false impression that everyone fell into the hoaxers trap and nobody argued rationally. I have seen reviewers of this book talking of silly UFO buffs, now with egg on their faces, when, in fact, it was some of those self same nutty UFOlogists who saw the truth but were ridiculed and ignored by the media for saying so. I believe that the record deserved to be set straight on this critical point as many historical sources will judge the crop circle affair from Jim Schnabel's book and its failure to mention these important facts is (for me) its worst error.

It should not be forgotten that in 1986, when BUFORA brought together in London (for the first and last time), Delgado, Meaden, Fuller, etc. (now, Schnabel reveals, Andrews was also in the audience - and, Doug and Dave tell us, they were there too!) this amazing gathering to debate the circles in a world without mass publicity and before all circle books, societies and magazines began, reached a dramatic outcome. The audience, largely made up of committed UFOlogists, split pretty evenly between weather effects and hoaxing as the cause. Hardly anyone supported the then embryonic ideas of unknown intelligences or weird forces. Schnabel mentions the meeting, but not its outcome, and this also does UFOlogy a slight dis-service, in my opinion.

True, there were many people saying daft things during the decade of cereology. I applaud the reporting of all of that. But it should have been tempered with a clearer awareness that there were serious UFOlogists who were not doing this. The author argues strongly in the early years, but from 1986 onwards loses the thread to focus on the 'juicy' bits (eg the battles between Andrews/Delgado, Wingfield and Meaden). There is virtually no hint that UFOlogists (eg from BUFORA or in sources like NUN and UFO Brigantia) kept plugging away at the fantasies and speaking out, to a chorus of ridicule, against excessive theories and to demand more moderate approaches. I feel the author has rather let serious UFOlogists down by this silence.

I hate quibbling, but it is not nit-picking. For in general I can offer nothing but total praise for an outstanding book. As a terrific read it says a lot that others probably would have liked to have said (but would never dare). Indeed it performs open heart surgery on the cereology movement.

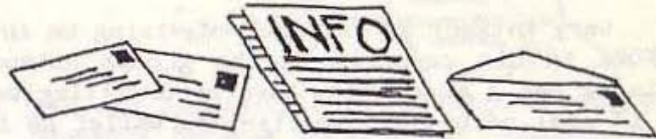
Whether the patient will survive remains to be seen. I think it will, because there is (and always has been) a small, naturally induced, 'real' phenomenon. It was simply lost amidst a tidal wave of fantastic hoaxing and fantasy mongering. I believe this is supported by strong evidence and UFOlogy must establish this as fact. But we did deserve a bit more help.

Meantime, be warned, Jim Schnabel has already written his sequel - and that will lay bare the alien abduction field. Some researchers may want to make arrangements to be out of the country when that appears next summer!

NORTHERN UFO NEWS GROUP OFFER

In response to requests from groups we will now offer multiple copies of NUN (if all sent to one address) on a discount basis. Two copies will cost £10, three will cost £14 and extra ones at at £4 each (up to six in all).

NEWS ROUND - UP



:: For those missing UFO Brigantia, I was pleased to see it (finally!) back late June with a bright orange 44 pp bumper issue wonderfully dated 'the last two issues of '92 rolled into one and a bit late' (must try that next time NUN gets behind). The design is a vast improvement and there are some excellent pieces in there (eg long interviews with John Keel and Bill Moore, some hot stuff on the 'Manhattan Transfer' abduction case (which Budd Hopkins will be updating at the Sheffield conference in August - see p.16) and me on why I believe in aliens (...yes, that is not a misprint!) Joint subscribers should have had this by now, others can contact Brigantia at :-
84 Elland Rd Brighouse West Yorkshire HD6 2QR

:: If you read French, also out and well worth a shuftly is 'Acts des septiemes rencontres Europeennes de Lyon' (I guess if you have to ask what that means there's not much point in buying it - but its basically the papers presented at the seventh annual European UFO conference held in Lyon in April 1993). It has 60 pp A4 and photos (eg of the 1992 Hungarian crop circles), with papers from Britain (Hilary Evans), Canada, Norway, Hungary as well as France. This is France's top conference and the UFOlogy of that country, in terms of sophistication and quality of production, knocks spots off Britain, so if you can read French you should tune in. Price is 100 FF (around £10) from: - SOS OVNI BP 324 13611 Aix-en-Provence France

:: Lots of book catalogues have come our way. Artcturus (1443 SE Port St Lucie Blvd Port St Lucie FL 34952) (T: 407-398-0796) is your best bet for new US books (most of which never make it here). They have monthly booklets updating the latest and you can write or phone for postage costs and delivery times to here. You can get everything here from the latest by top US writers to weird stuff like 1000 pages of interviews under regression hypnosis with people in past lives who met Nostradamus and asked him to decode his own prophecies, er... (!!!)... Excalibur (1 Hillside Gardens Bangor Co Down N. Ireland BT19 6SJ) (T: 0247-458579) has some rare things; eg the US paperback of Karla Turner's abduction, Into the Fringe (£4.50) or for the same price Ed Conroy's inside look at Whitley Strieber and his life, plus half a dozen others I have never heard of with titles like 'The 6000 year old space suit'... Midnight Books (The Mount Ascerton Rd Sidmouth Devon EX10 9BT) (T: 0395-515446) has a neat 32pp catalogue of lots of bargains, across a range of unexplained topics, most second hand and some real hot rarities. There are pages of UFO titles, some you won't get anywhere else now. Is there a message in the fact that the section after the one listing all these UFO writers is headed 'strange and eccentric people' ??

:: If you visit Florida this summer (as around 1 million British people will, it seems) look out for the UFO Museum (pictures, press cuttings, books, T-shirts, etc) at 7227 International Drive, Dowdy Plaza, Orlando.

:: Fancy a free cocktail party ? I can offer UFOlogists and witnesses a chance to chat at a party to be thrown in central London on Friday night, 6 August to meet the winners of the Paramount 'Fire in the Sky' competition over from the USA... VERY limited space so write to NUN ASAP if interested.

Snippets from readers...

Gary Anthony is currently devising an invaluable data base of IFOs for BUFORA in his capacity as the groups astronomical consultant. As part of this he has a major data base on orbiting satellites from NORAD that will be of real value to investigators. Whilst he is preparing the project he is offering copies on disk to BUFORA members to whom this will assist in their case work. There are some restrictions (eg you have to register use of the data) and because of size you need minimum hardware requirements of IBM & Compact (286 cpu upwards preferably) with 512k RAM and MS DOS v2 or higher. To receive the data send BUFORA membership number plus two 3.5" 1.44 MB disks with a Jiffy bag for safe return and adequate postage to:-
BUFORA ARP 119 Askew Avenue Hull Humberside HU4 6LT

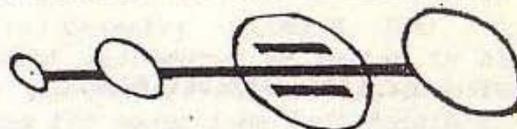
Thanks once again to the ever reliable Nick Redfern of the West Midlands for two items this issue. Firstly, the news that Orford Ness (the island with the infamous lighthouse and who knows what experimentation near RAF Bentwaters) is, like that base, being closed. In fact, the island (described in one media source as 'once one of the most secret places in Britain') has been sold to the National Trust for £3.5 million. Its official history is said to begin with armament aviation research in 1915, followed by development of the first radar system, then the 'bouncing bomb' of Dambuster fame by Barnes Wallis and now 'atomic weapons research' (plus, of course, who knows what in connection with the 1980 incidents in the forest). This notorious five mile long spit will soon be opened up to public visitors in gradual phases. How many will know its true status? Maybe we should suggest to the NT they open a UFO museum there. Would be rather apt!

Nick also tried to coax the MoD into releasing the famous 'cover letter' sent by Squadron Leader Donald Moreland (British base commander at Bentwaters) in support of Lt Col Halt's memo about the case in January 1981. All past attempts have failed, even though I got a verbal admission in August 1983 (whilst at the MoD) that the letter WAS on their files. But with the new liberalisation from current Air Staff 2A officer Nick Pope it was worth a try. Sadly, Nick P told Nick R that all pre 1985 records have gone to the archives and will reach the public records office in the usual way. Unless they come up with another excuse first that means a lot of eager UFO buffs will queue around the PRO on 31 December 2009 (see you there!)

Victor Kean from Berlin suggests that case 9123 (NUN 159) reminds him of a UFO shown earlier this year on ITV World News. The sighting was video filmed over Dodge County, Wisconsin, USA on 30 January 1993 and was a 'round disc with tail and nose bays'. Hopefully, MUFON Journal will carry more on this. If they do we'll let you know how it matches up to case 9123.

Tony Bell from Yorkshire is interested in the odd goings on around Preston Brook/Daresbury in Cheshire, scene of the unusual car accident in 1990 when I was investigating a crop circle. My paper ('Wonderland') at the Sheffield conference will examine the extraordinary events in this strange zone - home to the writer of Alice in Wonderland. See also 'Mysteries of the Mersey Valley' by Peter Hough and I (coming this autumn from Sigma). On 20 March 1993, there was a serious accident at Preston Brook which made some national reports. A truck exited the motorway suddenly here and plunged onto a rail track where it exploded catastrophically. Presumably a coincidence.

CIRCULAR LOGIC



So far the 1993 season is thin and disappointing (although around 20 circles were known mid June), probably because only a few hoaxers are continuing in the face of almost zero publicity. The general view clearly is - amongst all bar cereologists - that the mystery has ended and was just a con. This is not true, but the vanishing media is, in fact, very good news.

'The Crop Watcher' 16 is out (£9 for 6 from 'Paul Fuller' at 3 Selborne Ct Tavistock Close Romsey Hants SO51 7TY). It has a new, neater, columned appearance, but is the same mix of venom and hard facts. There is the final part of the highly important interview with ace hoaxer (or spy - depends whether you still have your feet on planet earth) Doug Bower, making clear what he thinks of cereology, and why. There is also more on the Swangate affair and material on swirled ground circle cases collated by Ted Phillips of CUFOS from all around the world 20 years ago - long before D & D were even remotely dreaming of how to cook up insectograms.

I was recently criticised for plugging 'TCW' and ignoring other journals. Since George Wingfield took over 'The Circular' from Bob Kingsley it stopped coming, so I stopped reviewing it. Under Bob, as I often reported, it was a good, open-minded magazine. If I see it again (as I might thanks to changing circumstances and Wingfield's transfer to 'The Cereologist' - is this cereology or the Premier League?) then it will get fair coverage.

As for 'The Cereologist'. I tell it like I see it. I know it is praised highly by almost every UFOlogist (some of whom I am surprised by as they usually know what they are talking about). Equally, from what I have seen, I know it has produced some very good articles. No question about that. But you only need to read the TCW 16 editorial about the (reportedly now departed) editor John Michell's extraordinary claims that THEY 'pioneered' hoax theory when, it is also absurdly alleged, TCW, Paul Fuller and I doggedly wrote only of vortices, to see that something is deeply awry somewhere.

Almost every issue of TCW, from day one in mid 1990, has carried hoax exposes and discussion. Many Cereologist readers will not realise this, of course, but commentators and magazine reviewers who see both journals must and, if integrity means anything to them, should now speak out against this amazing distortion. Whatever you think about TCW (and you may hate its aggressive style - I would certainly understand that) you must see it has clearly been the only source discussing hoaxing, eyewitness testimony and historical data from woe to go, following up these same themes from 'A Mystery Solved'. In my view these were the three critical issues that cereology faced, despite understating, or more often ignoring, them, hence my full support for 'The Crop Watcher'. Ergo I will not stand by whilst they are finally acknowledged (which is more than welcome, of course - however late) alongside arrant nonsense about who was saying what in the days before hoaxing snuck up and bit most cereologists on the nether regions.

SKY'S THE LIMIT

The recent Sky News UFO specials were combined (with new footage - eg on Bonnybridge) into a prime-time Sky One epic 'No Defence Significance' which ran for an hour on Saturday, 6 June. Ratings show it got over half a million viewers (beating new series of 'LA Law' and 'Star Trek' and second only in all UK satellite TV ratings to 'The Simpsons'). Who said UFOlogy was dead!

FOR YOUR PERUSAL



Major articles elsewhere

EXCLUSIVE: THE MIBs ARE UNMASKED AT LAST !!!

Welcome to Skylink from the London UFO Studies group (£4 for 4 'Roy Lake' 10A Tudor Rd Barking Essex IG11 9RX) - a 22 pp A 4 duplicated mag in old fashioned style. The group began in 1991 and seem very active. It is ET orientated, frequently alluding to Tim Good, Alien Liaisons, Communion, etc. There is also a curio protesting at a MUFORA investigation which explained some lights over Heywood in May 1989 (in NUN at the time), seeming to accuse the group of a cover-up and referring to three men-in-black seen at the local ambulance station. Sadly enquiries revealed that these MIBs were in fact Peter Hough and two other MUFORA members suitably well dressed for witness interviews (always suspected something fishy about that lot).

Even so, I enjoyed this new magazine. It this comes over as a lively, well stocked journal filled with diverse sightings, letters, ideas, etc. You will not be bored by reading it, which is more than half the battle.

UFO Times May (inc BUFORA sub:- 2C Leyton Rd Harpenden Herts AL5 2TL)
Interviews with the Quantock Hills witness who claims to be dying after an abduction. Plus a brilliant Cynthia Hinde expose from right on the spot of the South African 'shot down by laser canon' UFO crash case.

SPI Enigmas May (£10 for 5, 41 The Braes Tulliboddy Clackmannan FK10 2TT)
The usual cracking stuff over 40pp in Scotland's top para-mag. Muchalls and Bonnybridge UFO updates. An interview with Sue Blackmore. Linda Moulton Howe on cattle mutilations, plus ghosts, poltergeists, Nessie, etc.

BI Journal May (£3 each from PO Box 3070 Whitehall Dublin 9 Eire)
BUFORA Ireland's second issue, still with the smart plastic cover, but bigger (20 pp) and, sadly, more expensive too. Plenty more to read, though, this time, with Irish cases, reviews and updates on Roswell, etc. A very neat look.

World UFO Issue 3 (Price ??? 16 Newton Green Great Dunmow Essex CM6 1DU)
Much neater looking than before with lots of photocopied articles plus notes on crashed UFOs and a piece by Brenda Butler bemoaning those who are grabbing fame and money out of Bentwaters without crediting her and Dot.

MUFON Journal (\$30 for 12; 103 Oldtowne Rd Seguin TX 78155-4099 USA)
Apr: Some new abductions and Walt Andrus backs Linda (the Manhattan Transfer abductee) against the furious assaults beings launched against this case.
May: A very interesting piece from Jim Schnabel (he of 'Round in Circles') linking Munchausen's Syndrome, much in the news these days, with motivations for fabricating abductions. Plus some horrible cat mutilations linked with Canadian circles - this phenomenon is getting nastier by the minute.

BAE Jun (\$25 CAN mon order; 2 St Clair Ave West, Ste 607, Toronto, ONT M4V 1L5)
Unchallenged as THE journal of abduction research. Way ahead on the cutting edge and in import. Has abstracts from the psychology press, debates, etc. If you investigate CE 4s and don't read this then you have one eye shut tight.

Just Cause Mar (\$20 for 4; CAUS PO Box 218 Coventry CT 06238 USA)
A detailed discussion of the 'Pentacle Memo' introduced by Vallee in his recent book 'Forbidden Science'. Typical of how Fawcett and Greenwood do for the cover-up and documentation what BAE does for abductions. Indispensable.

J. Meteorology May (£24 for 10; 54 Frome Rd Bradford on Avon Wilts BA15 1LD)
For those who thought Terence Meaden had quit cereology, here's his latest position statement - plus lots more in an excellent issue; eg snow circles in Iran and Turkey, various ball lightning reports and some intriguing evidence for car stop and similar effects triggered by lightning activity.

Anomaly May (£2 each: ASSAP 20 Paul St Frome Somerset BA11 1DX)
Poltergeist, AURA, plus Hilary Evans updates street lamp interference cases.

Fortean Times Jun (£2 in shops or £12 for 6 sub; Box 2409 London NW5 4NP)
Schnabel (yes him again!) has a review of hoaxers in the circle world - a sort of top ten fakes! Plus an interview with David Jacobs on abductions.

GEM 15 (£5.75 for 3 from PO Box 258 Cheltenham Glos GL53 0HR)
Gloucestershire Earth Mysteries covers UFOs and circles as well as leys, etc, and there is lots of each in this well designed mag. Plus a report on the Kogi indians warning about the desperation of the earth spirit.

UFO Nyt (197,00 DKr for 4; SUFOI Postboks 6 2820 Gentofte Denmark)
In Danish but always with an English translation summary to help you interpret the pictures. Nice idea that.

Phenomena Apr (150 FF for 6: Box 324 13611 Aix-en-Provence Cedex 1 France)
This issue has an interview with V-J Ballester Olmos on Spanish AF files.

FIRE IN THE SKY : THE MOVIE

As you must know by now the Paramount movie 'Fire in the Sky' came into cinemas mid June and will hit your town before the autumn (and then TV screens later). It dramatises the 1975 'Travis Walton' abduction in Arizona (with a few liberties taken) but is it worth going to take a look?

UFOlogists have been busy taking press conferences, etc, and if you tuned into UFO Call on 0898 - 12 18 86 (sorry - it was the only way to get the short notice news to you in time) you had chance to see the film free and first, as Paramount gave us a 300 seater cinema in Piccadilly Circus on 6 June. One national newspaper offered a trip to Arizona, with 50 second prizes of the new edition of my book 'UFOs and how to see them' (far better than a week in the desert any day!) Hard work procured UFO exhibitions at major cinema complexes, eg in Liverpool, with the biggest by far at the Salford Quays multiplex visited by an estimated 25,000 people in June-July.

On the whole the movie reviews were very poor. Only the News of the World liked it. The rest thought it would bore believers and sceptics alike. This did not prevent it doing moderately well in box office takings.

The problem stems from the way 90% of the movie is treated as a straight mystery (ie 'did they do Travis in or not'), handled really well and showing better than any other movie to date the human side of being a UFO witness. Unfortunately, viewers knew the answer - that Travis wasn't dead - from the billing as an 'alien abduction' movie, wrecking this strategy.

Most who go to see the movie no doubt expect something different (eg light shows like 'Close Encounters'), but see just a few effects up front then near the end when the hyped up, exaggerated alien horror sequence appears. This bore no relation to Travis Walton's real story and was ludicrous and false. In my view it spoilt what was otherwise a good film.

On Radio 5 I said; 'Most of the time this is an excellent, realistic portrait of the struggles UFO witnesses go through after telling their story. But it would have been far better without the sub-Stephen King sequence near the end. That was unrealistic, over gorey, inaccurate and gratuitous. They did not trust the audience, who are sophisticated enough to have treated the story as serious rather than as an episode of Star Trek.'



BOOKS OF THE MOMENT

Not out in the UK but well worth a mention is 'Unexplained!' from Jerry Clark. Easily his best mass market book yet, if it reaches here or you can scrounge a copy from a US pen-friend, do so. Its a cracker. The sub-title says '347 strange sightings' (I did not count them!). But its a superb review of maybe 100 mysteries in alphabetical order (from Airships to Yowies) covering all things UFological, cryptozoological and phenomenal. The chapters are expertly researched summaries that vary from a page to several pages in length penned by one of the world's more erudite researchers. They also have oodles of references. Even the book's lengthy introduction is a classic piece of prose on mysteries in general. I have few reservations. There are limited illustrations, missed a bit in a 450 page book. Some sections are mildly iffy (eg the SHC one is short and dismissive; although I am probably over sensitive given my interest here). However, overall its one of the most useful new books I have read in ages. Do whatever you can to get a copy. It retails at \$14.95 from Visible Ink Press at 835 Penobscot Building Detroit MI 48226-4094 USA.

The SLI effect by Hilary Evans 52pp ASSAP £3.35 (\$7 US) (post inc)
From: - 'ASSAP' c/o 20 Paul Street Frome Somerset BA11 1DX England

Not a study of Arnie Schwartzenger's movies - something far more interesting. Hilary has been coordinating a project with ASSAP that when I first heard about I thought was meant to be a joke. But it's for a real and represents (apparently) a new phenomenon for the 1990's to soothe the brows of all those missing the pioneer excitement of the days when crop circles were known only to the initiates, not the readers of every tabloid on earth.

SLI means 'street lamp interference', which, like vehicle interference cases, means basically that they conk out in some still unexplained way - as noted by folk who walk under them and tend to assume its their fault. In this booklet, which is tastefully designed and typeset, Hilary provides all the facts, figures, stories, theories and suggestions as to where to go from here. This is real frontier phenomenology, linked with who knows what (from UFOs to PK) and if you fancy a challenge don't hesitate. Worth £3 any day.

Some readers have asked for an update on my coming books (they'll be sorry they did!) A new (cheaper) edition of 'UFOs and how to see them' is now out from Anaya (£9.99 - hardback), as is a £4.99 Bantam paperback of 'Spontaneous Human Combustion' by Peter Hough and I. (A US hardback is also out from Barnes and Noble). August sees an updated paperback of 'Crop Circles' by Paul Fuller and I (from Hale) and (also from

Hale) 'The Paranormal Year' - my new book that reviews progress across the paranormal research field during the last year. In September a Piatkus softback of 'The Afterlife' by Peter Hough and I emerges (both this book and 'SHC' will have a US paperback from Berkely early in 1994). September also has a new book by us published by Sigma Press entitled 'Mysteries of the Mersey Valley' (about - well, mysteries of the Mersey Valley, sort of). In October Hale also publish my new UFO book 'Aliens: The Real Story' examining the trends in alien contact cases. I said you'd be sorry! Anyone who even thinks about getting that lot deserves a medal. As you can see this is a bid to enter the 'Guinness book of records' for the most titles in 3 months.

Alien Update (compiled by Tim Good) 296 pp Arrow Paperback £4.99

It seems almost superfluous to review this as the book is everywhere and it made the best-seller lists almost as soon as it came out, following on the success of 'Alien Liaison'. I may write more books than Tim, but he more than makes up for it in terms of huge popular appeal. There's no doubt he has found a big audience who support the stance he takes on UFOs.

In effect, this is a slightly reworked 1992/3 version of his earlier 'UFO Report' series. That appeared annually, but was last seen in late 1991. Unlike the three editions of this that emerged, we have a straight paperback right away more readily accessible on station bookstalls and in smaller shops. This is one UFO book you will have no trouble at all finding.

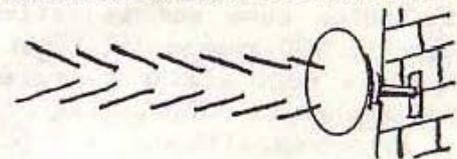
As in the earlier, bigger format, books it has a collection of pieces by different authors on a range of topics and Tim basically edits and adds a section of case profiles from mid 1991/mid 1992 (culled from specialist UFO magazines such as NUN around the world). The articles themselves are, as always, of varying calibre. There is conspiracy theory/ET contact material updates (eg by Oechsler and Deardorff) to fulfill the slightly misleading PR tag that this book is really a 'sequel' to 'Alien Liaison', plus some usually pretty interesting reports from around the world put together by local researchers on what's going on there (eg in China, Russia, Puerto Rico, etc). The theme is usually alien; although, as a bit of an anomaly, John Spencer features in here talking about his ideas to further research. Interesting (and welcome) as this is they somehow look a bit out of place.

However, I cannot believe that Tim has persisted yet again with George Wingfield for an update on crop circles. This stuff is like something out of a time warp and will stir up real trouble because it starts accusing plasma vortex supporters of faking circles to desperately attempt to salvage their dying theory. Hungry lawyers please take note! Its time Tim woke up to the fact that there are any number of people out there to give a less polarised overview of what's what in the circle world than we thus get here.

Still, I suppose these books would not be the same if all the chapters were serious, hard hitting investigative UFOlogy. For one thing nowhere near as many people would buy them and magazine editors like me would have nothing to moan about. There is, undeniably useful material to be found in these pages and it is, without doubt, always fascinating to read anyway. How much you take seriously is up to you, of course, but who cares? Probably not Tim or Arrow (nor, indeed, their respective bank managers)... C'est la vie.

MEDIA MATTERS

A look at UFOs in the public eye



Aside from all of the TV features about UFOs centred around 'Fire in the Sky', there has been quite a bit of press coverage too.

The big theme has been on UFOs as a fashion item (yes, no misprint). Esquire (June) had a feature on the culture art of the Weekly World News, whose stories are as daft as the Sunday Sport's - and claim to provide UFO watchers with what they want, selling 1 million copies in doing it. But do we really want highly iffy photos of men dressed in white suits escorted into a car by the CIA under the headline 'Alien captured by US agents!' 'W' also had a piece in May on how new UFO activity in Czechoslovakia is translating into art forms and, of course, John Lundberg's Rotherhithe gallery exhibition based on 'UFOs and how to see them' in June further makes the point.

However, fashion wise, you know you've arrived when UFOs get an article in Vogue - as was true in May. It seems that, as they so kindly phrase it, UFOs are no longer 'the preserve of throwaway sci-fi novels, paranoid fifties TV shows and kids comics, consumed by 12 year old nerds and escapist middle aged boffins' - (er, right) - but instead are 'fast becoming a sign of cool for the hippest youths'. A British fashion expert cites something 'bubbling up in the collective unconscious' as the cause. You might also not realise (I didn't) that the drug DMT is being used by 'UFOrites' (eh?) because 'Terence McKenna - a Timothy Leary for the nineties character much revered in UFO circles' has praised it. If anyone out there can translate this for someone never having heard of either DMT or this 'revered' UFO buff, I'd be grateful (I DO know who Timothy Leary is/was by the way, because the Moody Blues once sang about him flying on his 'astral planes').

Anyhow, aside from this (to me rather dangerous) set of allegations the UFO fashions, from lamps to T-shirts to baseball caps and dresses that Vogue displays look, ah, interesting. If this really does reflect reality this years Sheffield crowd should replace Ascot as the place to be to see whats in.

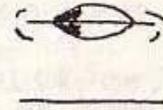
More seriously the Todmorden Times (21 May) told its readers (all 5,333 of them) that it is now an aptly named 'UFO Epicentre'. This was a preview of the LWT documentary about why the Pennine town was such a hot bed of UFOlogy, as LWT had discovered from 'UFOs and how to see them' and when I spent several days working with them as consultant on said feature. The show was well fronted by Mike Aspel, but, nobody in Tod could see it, of course, as it was (oddly) only shown in London!

The paper reported that the TV shows editor had 'studied statistics' to reach this conclusion (no mention that it took me hours to compile and then study them for him, so that he could read the results!) There then follows a detailed account of the earth stress theory, which comes from the interview I gave on film. Oddly, the newspaper includes him discussing this theory in some detail from said interview, but when the programme aired days later all bar about 15 seconds or so was cut. I ended up rather misleadingly implying as a result that witnesses dreamt things up. As the theory was obviously well understood, the near word for word rendition of my interview in the paper showing that, its tight squeeze on air was a bit puzzling.

Finally, news from the Glasgow Times (29 May) that UFOlogist Ron Halliday is teaming up with singer-songwriter Allan Forrester to write a song about the wave of sightings in Bonnybridge. It also features the Livingston case and is titled 'Riddle of the Sky at Night'. Copies are going to UFO groups (If I get one I'll review it for you - hint, hint!) and they are next aiming to release a single. No doubt given the title when they appear on 'Top of the Pops' they will be accompanied by Patrick Moore on xylophone, although Cedric Allingham may have to be a substitute. I understand that Ron and Allan are hard at work on an album to follow containing tracks like 'Every Gulf Breeze seems to whisper Louise', 'He ain't heavy, he's a martian' and 'We all live in a yellow UFO'.

BRIEF CASES

Some current investigations



Case 9125 26 February 1991 Maltby, South Yorkshire

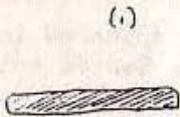
Passed to IUN

Mrs G observed a series of green flashes of light in the sky at 01.10. For three minutes these were seen to cross the sky on a long dark silhouette shape with an accompanying sound akin to thunder.

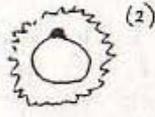
Case 9126 25 April 1991 Upper Team, Staffordshire

MUFORA C5-5

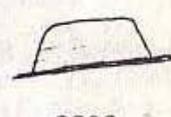
Mrs M, her husband and young son (then aged 6) were getting into their car in this district of Stoke when the boy cried 'there's a flying saucer'. They bundled him into the seat but he kept shouting so they looked where he poi-



9126



9305



9308

-nted after they drove off and saw a red cigar shape above the bungalows. There was a curve at either end. It was stationary for a few seconds then shot away at speed. The husband slowed the car down and saw it move away. When they got home the son drew what he had seen. This was different, a white oval with a red light on top and surrounded by a white haze.

Case 9228 28 October 1992 Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear

Gloria Dixon B5-2

Several people around 18.30 this evening reported three blue globes of light whirling in a circle. They were thought to be below rooftop height and the size of the full moon. Newcastle met office were contacted and claimed not to know what this was but had had several reports, confirmed when Gloria Dixon contacted them. They added that the case was later solved as our enemy laser powered searchlights (at the Metro centre in Gateshead) bouncing off low cloud - ie being far higher than a rooftop and showing the fallability of witness guesstimates in this regard. The sightings were 12 miles from where the lasers were operating, showing the power of these lights. However, one of the witnesses claims that in March 1992 she 'felt a kind of atmosphere' sweep into her living room and heard a 'soft gentle female voice' tell her mind that it was 'from another planet out in the universe and there were many of them...it was like a source of energy that we draw from. The earth is in great danger because of what we are doing.' It also told her to 'follow the light and there is a darkness'...Curious.

Case 9227 13 December 1992 Penkridge, Staffs

BUFORA

B4-4

Mr M observed a yellow/orange 'star' beside some houses at 22.40. It moved towards the witness, silently flew overhead, made a sharp 90 degree turn and then accelerated away north. Moments later an aircraft passed over, but this was clearly audible.

Case 9304 18 February 1993 Prescott, Merseyside MUFORA B3-2

Mr S went to put the rubbish bin out and spotted a 'bright silver light in the south'. He guessed it was a star as it moved very slowly and that this was an illusion caused by moving clouds. But it was the only star then visible (18.50 hrs). Through binoculars it looked elongated. An hour or so later the area where the UFO was had cloud cover but other stars were visible in part of the sky where they would have been seen had stars been visible at 18.50. At 20.55 Mr S went outside and saw an identical UFO to the first but in a different part of the sky (now SW). Again this was elongated when seen via binoculars. I have dwelt on this as it is an excellent observation of an IFO. All is described as it would be seen, but the UFO was venus - very bright at the time, so seen before any stars were visible, moving across the sky faster than a star but still at star-like pace over several hours and seeming elongated via binoculars, telescope or window glass due to optical distortion. Many an IFO becomes a UFO in this same way.

Case 9305 27 February 1993 Eccles, Lancashire MUFORA B4-4

Mr F, computer programmer, was at a friends at 16.00 when a light appeared in the west. It was at first assumed to be an aircraft heading from Barton but it moved slowly and silently and passed toward the north west. As it did so it pulsed slowly from red to white, the whole object changing colour, and it resembled a rounded stud as worn by a biker on their jacket. His friend only saw the start point, ie as a light. During the sighting a very brief snowfall occurred. After the object had gone the sky was seen to be completely clear.

Case 9307 25 March 1993 Leicester, Leics BUFORA B3-5

At 09.00 on his way to work Mr B saw a bright light over the town centre. He thought it was an aircraft but it resolved into a dark cylinder with a light reflection. He then saw there were 7 identical objects in a 'V' formation. They were weaving about and swapping places as they moved across the sky. Then they suddenly vanished. I mentioned on the phone to the witness that I thought these were birds in formation reflecting the low angle sun and just beyond resolvability. I have seen the same effect myself. It is best seen in spring time. However, the witness did not agree with this suggestion.

Case 9308 26 May 1993 Alsager, Staffs Roy Sandbach C3-4

Mr M is retired and was in his garden at 14.00 on a sunny day. The wind was from the east as he watched a kestrel via binoculars. He saw an object pass higher than the bird. Focusing on this it had a domed top and flattened base, with a rim rather like a hat, pulsating from bright emerald green to white and back at about one cycle per second. He estimated the size to be about half that of a jumbo jet (familiar on their way to Manchester Airport) and yet moving faster westwards. Taking the binoculars away he found he could not see it unaided, but quickly relocated it with binoculars once more. It took about 20 seconds to vanish into the distance. There was no vapour trail, although other high flying aircraft that day were leaving one. The ATC at Manchester had nothing odd on radar and no obvious explanation. Mr M had seen what he thinks was an earthlight, an orange ball running along Congleton Edge, Mow Cop at 2.30 am in about 1983 some 10 days or so prior to a local earth tremor. After a few seconds it simply went out.

CASE HISTORIES

RETURN TO WOODBRIDGE

Report by Ken Phillips

Most readers will know about the famed events in Rendlesham Forest, near Woodbridge, Suffolk, late in December 1980. According to teacher Ms T there was a possible rerun of these at 01.15 on 25 May 1992.

She was staying at Grundisburgh, 2 miles north west, in a family bungalow and was awoken by a bright light that she took to be a star in the SE (ie towards Rendlesham Forest - 5 miles or so away). For 2 hours she watched various activities going on, involving this light and other objects - most notably a disc like mass with a flat base and a dark inverted saucer studded with many bright lights on the base. There were also countless strobe like flashes in the sky. Although she had a camera she was too absorbed by what was going on to take pictures with it.

In conclusion one object moved away towards Ipswich and another vertically. The activity sounds remarkably reminiscent of the long encounter with lights that was recorded on the infamous tape by Colonel Halt in 1980.

The MoD were very helpful, noting that they had no other sightings for this date. Nick Pope of Air Staff 2A told the investigator that the lights seen 'do sound as if they might be aircraft and helicopter lights' and added, ironically... 'I doubt that this case will become as high profile as a slightly more famous case in the Woodbridge area!' In the same letter he comments about a CE 4 that Ken is also investigating that 'it sounds like a fascinating case and does bear a resemblance to some of the 'missing time' experiences that have been associated with some close encounters.'

You have to blink and remember this is not a fellow UFOlogist discussing a case but the MoD. Things certainly have changed for the better! In any event, Ken Phillips has accepted the MoD evaluation of these events.

VIDEO FILM UFO OVER SOUTH WALES

Report by Leyton Williams-Davies

On 16 January 1993 Mr P, a gardening contractor, observed a UFO whilst walking his dog at 22.00 at Ynysddu north of Cardiff. He described it as a big orange round glow that moved slightly one way around Wattsville Mountain, then seemed to circle back. He reported it to the police who investigated but found no explanation. However, this was merely the start.

Exactly 7 days later, at the same time, Mrs B from Wattsville spotted a bright red light flooding through the curtains. Her husband and son saw it too. It did exactly the same slight circuit as the object seen by Mr P but was reported by Mrs B after he had told police but before the press recounted his story. So the two events were fully independent.

More witnesses came forward, including a woman from Risca who saw it on the same night as Mr P but an hour later, saying it hovered by the mountain for a long time. These sightings formed the backdrop to what was to come.

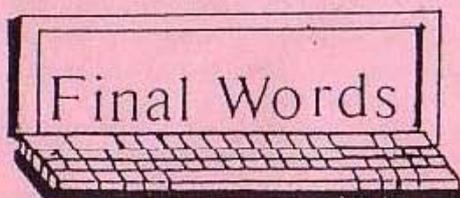
A retired gas fitter, Mr C, spotted a brilliant light over Croesyceiliog, Cwmbran with neighbours on 8 March, around 18.30. The following night he was ready when it came back. He took 30 minutes of film with his video camera, enlarging 36 times and offering proof of the weeks of UFO activity to the startled Gwent police. They admitted being 'amazed.' The video clearly showed a huge hovering light ('like looking at a car headlight on full beam') and at one point an aircraft passed in front. There was no doubt that it was there in the sky... although observent readers of a page or two back might already be getting a twinkle in their eyes on this!

The witnesses add that the UFO remained visible until 20.00 when the sky clouded over and obscured it, ie for 1-2 hours plus on two consecutive nights. This should have given the game away despite the CAAs absurd suggestion that rapidly followed in the press, ie that it was a Russian space station! This daft theory was taken seriously and pronounced THE answer by TODAY (11 March) in the only brief national comment on the video.

By wonderful irony, at the exact moment (and I mean exact) that Mr C and his neighbours were video filming their UFO Peter Hough and I were in London walking to a restaurant to have dinner and plan the LWT 'Strange but True' UFO item with its production team. We all saw the UFO gazing down at us from above and I recall saying, in words that seem a bit eerie now, 'I can tell you that someone, somewhere will be reporting that thing as a UFO right now.' The man from LWT laughed. Everyone knows what it is, he commented.

Fortunately, Leyton Williams-Davies, now of BUFORA, was contacted by Gwent police immediately and quickly realised what (surely) most of you have figured out by now. These UFOs were just bright spottings of venus. He told police, witnesses, media, etc, but they carried the story anyway. There is proof that he did say this, which makes it doubly annoying that when the truth was revealed (ie the local paper took the video to astronomers in Cardiff who identified it right away) they got the credit, UFologists got none and readers commented to the press that this was an object lesson in how all sightings probably had solutions if they got proper investigations.

Well done Leyton. Your efforts should be applauded by all UFologists.



Just a reminder about the up and coming conferences this summer. On Sat 24 July / Sun 25 July at the University of Bristol School of Chemistry is the BUFORA event (with Walt Andrus talking on 'Fire in the Sky' and reports on UFOs around Europe. Then on Sat 14 Aug /

Sun 15 Aug at the Sheffield Polytechnic on Pond Street is this years IUN (northern) event which includes Budd Hopkins (abductions) and Linda Moulton Howe (mutilations) from the USA and lots of good papers from the UK as well; eg from Paul Devereux, Hilary Evans and more. Finally, a one day event is being staged on Sat 7 Aug at the Brookside Community Centre, Northampton with abductees Elsie Oakensen and Graham Allan, Gary (the alien) Harlow of 'UFOs: A British Viewpoint' renown and researchers John Spencer & David Barclay. Details for all events obtained by phoning 0924-444049 (24 hrs)

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 8RW
PRA	(Derbyshire)	12 Tilton Grove, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston	DE 7 4GR
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