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PROBE

REPORT



THE STRANGE CASE OF MISTER 'X'

THE BERLITZ/MOORE
ALIEN UNMASKED

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

(Issue 6)

WHAT'S IN A NETWORK ?

On Saturday 8th August, PROBE resigned from the southwestern UFO group network, MAUFOG (Members of the Affiliation of UFO Groups). This was not a decision taken lightly nor was it a hasty action on our part. Since the inception of MAUFOG, one or two things have never seemed to function, and perhaps highest on the list was co-operation. MAUFOG (or at least a handful of the group within) was aiming to set itself basic minimum standards for the various avenues of ufology, such as investigation sighting reports forms, and a written monthly progress report on group activities intended to follow a set guide-line. The groups who formulated these ideas adhered to them, but the negatively-orientated groups ignored them, and because they were never present at meetings they never had to answer for themselves.

The UK, as in every other country I imagine, has a wide range of local UFO groups, all varied in their outlooks. Firstly, there is the active, serious investigative group who apply rigorous standards to their work, and produce high quality objective reports. On the other hand, there are the 'club' groups where the members are not individually active and there is no real investigation done; more of a social gathering than anything else. Some groups fall into an in-between category, where there is a small nucleus who do carry out some level of investigation whilst other members look on. Of course, all of these serve useful purposes, catering for the wide range of interests in ufology, from the 'amused' level to the 'dedicated' stage. Unfortunately, there is also the category of groups who claim to be investigation/research/study groups, or whatever. They claim to be conducting investigations, and also claim to adopt strict standards. They also pledge allegiance to other groups, networks and affiliations yet do not support them actively, and it is this kind of group: this attitude of apathy which has led to MAUFOG's trouble. Some networks may choose to operate in this fashion, with a hard-working core producing the output. MAUFOG did not: it set out to have an all-group workforce, with the admin chores switched quarterly on a voluntary basis. Naturally, with only a few groups present, this rotated between a small number and became a burden.

PROBE did not wish to be involved in this anymore and so resigned, but we feel just as strongly as before about the need for inter-group communication. We do, however, not support any such networks/affiliations based on MAUFOG or NUFON, because the chain is only as strong as its weakest link..... and some of these appear very weak. The future lies only in a new network, built upon strict standards and rules, and possibly equally important; trust. An organisation cannot function to full potential when certain factions do not trust others, and any future association will have to be built upon solid foundations with the right ingredients. ASSAP, an organisation in its embryo stage looks promising, and so do faint whispers concerning UFOIN and BUFORA. PROBE await with anticipation any developments in these quarters and are putting on an optimistic front. What about NUFON and MAUFOG? Well at the moment, NUFON is still going strong and MAUFOG has not yet had the final nail hammered into its coffin. At the time of writing (Aug. 20th) SCUFORI have opted to take over the remnants (BFSB and UFO International having also resigned at the same time) and are hoping to make a go of it. To be honest, they deserve more than the groups left have got to offer, and we wish them all the luck in their effort. Our interest however, is not with communities that waste time at the expense of those who are seriously devoted to understanding the UFO phenomenon.

NEWS ROUND UP

10th June 1981 marked the birth of a new organisation, ASSAP, the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena. The range of topics to be studied is vast and therefore ASSAP requires membership from groups and individuals who specialise in these fields and who also maintain strict standards, and the research work carried out by these groups/individuals will be built into libraries, files and archives for reference. Investigation procedures and ethical standards will also be established. (Perhaps the work currently being done on the Code of Practice for UFO investigation will be of interest here.) ASSAP also hope to publish a journal with the first issue out by the end of September. All the details are available on a five-page introduction from: Hilary Evans, 11 Granville Park, London. SE13 7DY.

The second annual PROBE UFO Exhibition held at Melksham's Rachel Fowler Centre on August 8th was another success. We suffered no ridicule from the press and approximately 300 people attended throughout the day. Besides the giant working model flying saucer, there were 3D mock-ups of famous UFO encounters plus field research equipment. Unfortunately, due to lack of space this issue, the full details plus photographs will be included in the next. Thanks go to SCUFORI for supporting the venture.

Due to vast quantities of UFO INFO EXCHANGE LIBRARY Data Sheets (large A3 information sheets) taking up too much room, we are giving the pesky things away free! Please just send a large Stamped Addressed Envelope (20p) and we will throw in half a dozen or so. If you require specific sheet numbers (for those who have part-collections) please specify clearly and we may be able to supply them. Write to editorial address.

Thanks to Keith Knight of Worcester, this little snippet of information reached us:- The REVEILLE, on 9th May 1975, reported on an article in which Prince Philip is a supposed 'out and out fanatic' on UFOs and charts all important sightings on a giant wall map. The Palace denied this but did point out that he is not totally uninterested (sic) in UFOs. Since then, the DAILY MIRROR on 12th May 1981, has reported that Prince Philip has asked the House of Lords Society (correctly called the House of Lords All Party UFO Study Group) for advance notice of their meetings in the hope that he might attend one.

Finally a special notice from our West German colleagues, CENAP: CENAP sucht deutschsprechende Leser des PROBE REPORT, wer ist bereit für uns ehrenamtliche Übersetzungen englischer Berichte anzufertigen? Es besteht die dringliche Notwendigkeit eines europäischen Informationsaustausches, wer kann uns behilflich sein? Bitte schreiben Sie an: Werner Walter, Eisenacher Weg 16, D-6800 Mannheim-31, West Germany!

This notice is aimed at anyone who can aid CENAP with translations. If you don't understand it, then you probably couldn't help them anyway.

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ROTATING 'BALLOON' OVER BRISTOL

Investigated by Mike Seager and
Terry Chivers.
Report written by Ian Mrzyglod.

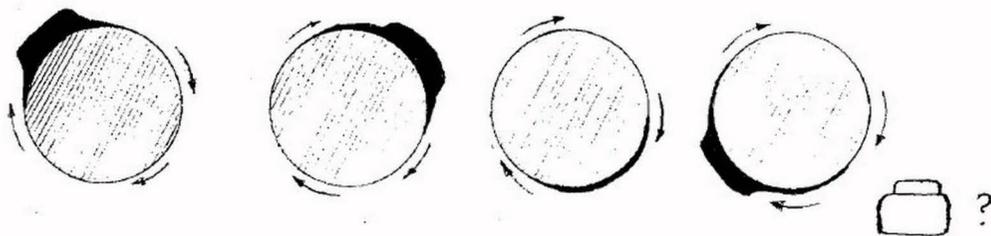
Case Ref: P7-81/U.

Introduction:

This sighting first came to light through a fortuitous article which appeared in the Bristol Evening Post newspaper on 17th February 1981, in which PROBE were mentioned as requesting sightings in the area. This article took us completely by surprise, and when the witness, Rodney Holbrook, telephoned in response to it, we had no idea what was going on. A quick check revealed that Terry Chivers had written a letter for publication to the country edition of the Evening Post, requesting sightings from that area (as we operate in the west-Wiltshire/Somerset region), and this in turn was published as a small article in the Bristol edition as well. As the letter asked for sightings from 'this area', the Bristol populace treated that as meaning Bristol also. Subsequently, we followed up the reported sighting which described a black, balloon-like sphere moving slowly across the sky over the Westbury-on-Trym district of Bristol.

Investigation:

After reading the completed Sighting Report Form which Rodney Holbrook had returned on 20th February, Terry Chivers and Mike Seager paid him a visit that evening and conducted an interview lasting about 90 minutes. He related his account as per the completed form and described how a black, near-spherical object silently floated directly overhead at about 5.00 pm on Saturday 14th February 1981, watched from Canford Park, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol. This object appeared to be rotating slowly as a tottering spinning-top would, not rolling over on its self, but around a central axis. The rotating, however, was not perfectly true, as an appendage on the top of the object could be seen as it turned. (See illustrations). Rodney had been placing items of machinery and tools into a shed in Canford Park ready to leave for home, as he is a groundman at the park, when he caught sight of the black object, thinking at first it was a hot-air balloon. His notion soon changed when he observed that there was no basket hanging beneath, and the strange 'block' on top did not appear to be a characteristic of normal hot-air balloons. The object eventually disappeared over some trees after having watched it for an estimated minute. There was only one other witness, a gentleman watching some 80 yards away and Rodney never spoke to him. In fact, it was this other man continuously looking upwards that made Rodney look closer.

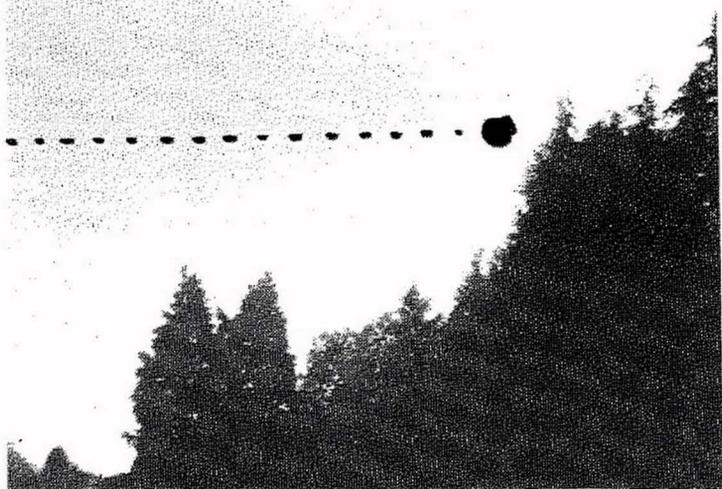


Based on Rodney Holbrook's sketches, this shows his view of the object.

Rodney Holbrook, aged 32, seemed a fairly genuine fellow, having no past interest whatsoever in the UFO phenomenon. Yet he was particularly eager to assist us as much as possible, as it seemed very important to him to get at the truth of the matter, and establish just what he had seen. He was also relieved that a weight had been taken from his mind, in that he now had someone who would listen to him and who could possibly help him.

A visit then to the site immediately followed and Rodney guided the investigators to the spot from where the object was seen. Of course, by this time it was getting dark (being February) and the night's investigation had to end there. Rodney was dropped off back at his Southmead home.

We then contacted all the local airports and flying clubs over the next few days to try and establish whether anything had been flying at the time of the sighting which could have even remotely resembled a large black sphere. According to Rodney, the sphere was fairly large but he could not put it in words as to exactly how large it was, or anything that it could be compared with, so the task of enquiring was made that much more difficult. We did, however, have his estimation of height, speed, and direction of flight. His testimony stated that the object was travelling at a speed of 25 mph whilst maintaining a height of between 350 and 550 feet. From compass readings, the object seemed to have followed a HNS path over Canford Park. This information, especially the air speed, ruled out any hopes of aircraft, and the results from the airports were not surprising. The West of England Air Ballooning Association was contacted, and their representative, a Mr. Thorn, was extremely helpful. After listening to the details of the Holbrook sighting, he himself became intrigued and, on our behalf, made his own investigations via different ballooning clubs. He also checked up in his diary the weather conditions suitable for ballooning on that day, and these were far from favourable. In his estimation, no balloons would have been up on that day. He also enquired whether or not there were any balloons in existence that fitted Rodney's description of the object, but this drew a blank.



From Rodney's vantage point, tracing the path of the object.

Bill Ryder, PROBE's met. man, obtained weather conditions as follows: Wind light and variable, good visibility; 12 km, temperature 1.7°C, and a pressure reading of QFE 1024 mb. Cloud was one octar at 1700 GMT which increased to 6 octars by 1800 GMT. The clouds were patchy Stratocumulus. An anticyclone over Denmark maintained a light North to North Easterly flow over the area in question. These figures bore out Rodney's description as per his form, namely 'cold, sunny, clear sky and no wind'. There were a few high altitude winds and these were following the North to North Easterly direction, but at ground level, this was very slight.

Taking into account all the information we could gather on this case, a few facts

did become apparent. Firstly, his description of the weather conditions was extremely accurate. Secondly, no known aircraft were present over that area of Bristol at that time. Thirdly, the conditions, according to the West of England Air Ballooning Association, were unsuitable for ballooning, and what's more, no balloons as far as the spokesman was concerned, could fit the description of the object. This was taking into account the wide range of shapes of hot-air balloons that are being manufactured nowadays, particularly for advertising purposes. In Bristol, we have the Don Cameron business which has been responsible for numerous oddly-shaped balloons. It is not uncommon to see the Robertson's 'Golly', the Gas Board's 'flame-shaped' balloon, a famous peanut company's 'peanut man' and a balloon shaped like a pipe gently drifting overhead amongst other assorted shapes and sizes. Yet none had been manufactured that were black with a 'block' type appendage on the top. The fourth fact, and certainly very interesting, is that the object was travelling (or drifting) in the direction of the wind. Since no noise at all was heard, we could assume that the object was being carried by the light wind and was not under its own power.

The estimation of size and height now took an important part in this investigation. According to Rodney, the object's height ranged from 550 feet to 350 feet as it flew overhead, losing height as it did so. Bringing our size test frames into operation, he gauged the object as being 1.5 cm at a distance of 49.5 cm (arm's length). This kit, although different, is based on the apparatus that FUFOR employ on such cases. PROBE's version consists of two frames each containing a transparent perspex sheet. On this sheet is stuck varying sizes of coloured plastic ranging from 2mm to 500mm. Size test frame 1. has circular shapes whereas 2. has ellipsoid. Size test frame 1 was used in this case. Calculating the projected size of the object at Rodney's suggested height (an average of 450 feet was taken), the overall diameter appears to have been roughly $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet, which makes it probably far too small for a balloon anyway. But, if we reduce his estimated height down to say, 200 feet, the then apparent size of the object becomes somewhere around 6 feet. Moreover, his estimated speed of 25 mph would also be reduced down to about 10 mph, which it would have to be to maintain Rodney's estimation of the duration of the sighting.

Could this then have been some debris, for example a black plastic dustbin-liner floating above the treetops? Or some other kind of flotsam? It is difficult to try and imagine what could have glided over Canford Park, and without another witness testimony to verify any details we can do very little. Of course, as Rodney never approached the other gentleman, there was no way to speak to him.

Conclusions:

We are not in a position to tamper with the information supplied by Rodney Holbrook on this case, and therefore we can only play around with them lightly. Estimations of distance and of height can be so far out it is incredible. Very few people can distinguish between a distance of a hundred feet and a hundred yards, at least not without some considerable thought, and it is even more difficult when looking upwards. Just how high is that aeroplane flying overhead. Is it hundreds of feet, or thousands of feet. Or miles? We can assume Rodney got it all wrong on his estimation, and that the object may have been only six feet wide. That would of course brought into a better perspective with regards to the windspeed, and that of course could have gone a long way to explaining it as windswept debris, such as black dustbin-liners caught in a gust. But, we have to read what Rodney said: 'I thought it was a hot-air balloon at first', and it seems difficult to believe that someone could mistake a dustbin-liner for a hot air balloon. Did Rodney actually see anything? We are certain he did because of the other gentleman. No-one else reported anything to the Bristol police so was it an ordinary mundane object interpreted wrongly by Rodney? But what kind of mundane object fits the bill? We have done all we feel we can on this case and left it as unexplained, until such time as someone comes up with a suggestion. That of course may be never and Rodney Holbrook may never know what he saw. We like explaining UFO sightings because the vast majority of them are explainable, but every so often, you are faced with one case that possibly falls into the 10% unknowns. At the moment, this is where this case lies. At the moment anyway.

REFLECTIONS ON BRITISH UFOLOGY

by Geoff Bird

Having been one of those who played some small part in the efforts to promote greater understanding and co-operation between ufologists in the north and south, the subject of the present state of British ufology has been for me a constant pre-occupation. To my way of thinking, one of the greatest benefits of the increased spirit of co-operation so engendered has been the positive outcome of efforts to establish a code of practice for investigators. We are all aware of the diversity of viewpoints within ufology, but every right-thinking ufologist is aware that in order to strengthen and advance our researches certain basic standards are necessary. There are those who do great discredit to ufology and these people must as far as possible be eliminated from the ranks in order that both the public and the scientific establishment will be persuaded that genuine ufologists are not cranks but serious researchers.

All groups who are signatories to a code of practice, therefore, have something in common, and that is an excellent foundation for greater unity. Thus far, the existing networks of MAUFOG and NUFON have served a useful purpose, both as political vehicles and means to greater understanding between individuals and individual groups. However, it seems that as in many walks of life a few stalwarts are left to do the bulk of the work while others sit back and 'let it happen'. As far as MAUFOG is concerned, this is very evident. Even the system of progress reports seems to serve little useful purpose.

When the code of practice is well and truly accepted nationally, I feel a new initiative will be necessary and, as I have stated, all signatories to that code, be they nuts & bolts, psychic, psychological or of whatever orientation, will have certain common standards. Surely a national federation of UFO groups comprising all signatories is the next logical step for us to take. Then co-operation on a more local basis would be in order, thus eliminating many of the problems encountered with networks covering large geographical areas.

More can be done - there is an urgent need to adopt certain basic standards for the training of investigators, and as we all know, UFO research has many connotations. The proposed establishment of the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena (ASSAP) is a positive step towards encouraging the co-operation of investigators into all fields. It is to be hoped that ufology will benefit from this.

Whatever happens to MAUFOG, as many groups as possible should meet in Worcester as arranged, and sign the code of practice, without any further waste of time arguing over semantics. After that, it will be up to someone to do some lobbying for as many groups as possible to attend the 1982 BUFORA Conference (Edinburgh) so that the future path of British ufology may hopefully be plotted out. BUFORA will have a crucial role to play in this, so their house at least will have to be in order by the great day. UFOIN also have a vital role, and their relationship with BUFORA (if there is to be one) will also have to be made clear.

Times and circumstances change, and people must change with them. Dogmatism, intransigence and personality clashes are the enemy of progress and lead to a state of near entropy which benefits no-one. In this short article I have merely put forward a few personal ideas. I am not writing on behalf of any group with which I am associated, but as an individual. Perhaps now is the time for more ufologists to do the same. If we have to wield the knife, let us wield it to clear away the diseased tissue, so that healthy tissue may grow. If I can again play some small part in achieving this aim I will be only too happy, and I hope in the not-too-distant future to be able to write articles on ufology, not on the politics of ufology. Let us get our fingers out.



TERRY'S SKYWATCH PAGE

A LOOK AT THE SKYWATCH SCENE

I never thought that I would ever come face to face with an alien, or to be more exact, a bunch of them. Yet, since 1973 I have stood on that hill, in all sorts of weather, come rain, come snow and blasted fog! One night I had to go back from there, and the only way I could get back was to get behind an army lorry and let him lead me back. It was so thick! Anyway, I've stood there, staring at the sky for the past eight years or so, always hoping, but not really expecting, to see something really unusual! So you can imagine my surprise, fear, but also excitement when I thought that that day had finally arrived.

There was me, Stuart Payne, and Pete Roberts, all from Melksham, and also a chap who had just arrived from Swindon on a motorbike. We were stood at the white gates when we caught sight of a brilliant white flash of light in a ploughed field, north of the white gates. As we stood amazed at this sight, yet another flash appeared at the opposite of the field. We all wondered what the flamin' hell it could have been, and in which direction to run: either back down the hill or after the lights. After a brief period, we all decided to go and investigate.

Clambering over the gate, shaking in our boots', we scrambled across the field towards the second light, and as we got near to the point where we thought the light had appeared, a third light appeared at the white gates, where we had just come from. This only quickly flashed on and off, like a flash-gun that went off, placed on the ground. This is the only description I can give it. For the next half hour, every time we reached a light, it disappeared and reappeared elsewhere, usually where we had just come from. I decided to scan the horizon with my binoculars, and to my delight I seen four figures about three foot tall, milling about at the top of the field. At this time, I was still shaking in my boots, however, we decided to make our way towards the figures. By now, I thought this was really it! And I was preparing myself to meet someone or something from a place unknown. After a few minutes we reached our destination only to find four no-good, spidery-looking, blasted kids, about sixteen or seventeen years old.

The tables ha dnw turned: and they were the ones shaking in their boots. I was savage, livid! I threatened to ram their teeth down the backs of their throats, and asked them what the flaming hell they were playing at. They said 'skywatching' in a very nervous voice. We decided to let it stand and make our way back down to the gates, feeling convinced they would never pull a hoax again. In the meantime, no more aliens have sighted at Cradle Hill since.

As I said at the beginning, I have suffered some of the worst weather the sky could ever throw down on me. One evening, when it was bucketing down, I had arranged to meet Ian on the hill. I seen his brother's motorbike approaching in the distance, a large headlight coming up the track. But for some unknown reason, they seemed to take some time to arrive. However, after a while, they appeared around the corner and dismounted from their bike, looking a couple of people who had just been mud-wrestling. I laughed my blasted socks off! They had fallen off, straight into a pool of mud at least six inches deep, and for the next ten minutes they spent their spent their time rolling in the long grass trying to clean themselves up ready for the journey home. Still, things can only get better.

NEXT ISSUE: When my house disappeared!

THE STRANGE CASE OF 'MISTER X'

by Klaus Webner

Who knows him not, the famous grandchild of the founder of the Berlitz School of Languages, inventor of the Bermuda Triangle and mystification man of all things which are surmountable with the haze of mystery, and realisable in hard cash: Charles Berlitz. Together with his colleague William L. Moore, he enriched the pseudo documentary literature palette with the 1980 published book; THE ROSWELL INCIDENT. According to the book, an extraterrestrial spaceship crashed in Roswell, New Mexico, U.S.A. in July 1947.

It is surely gripping reading for a lone interest in the subject 'flying saucers'. On the contrary for specialists in this field, the book is nothing more than a mixture of far-fetched speculations, fantasies and false information. The authors 'report' about 'secret' NASA films and photographs which in reality were never kept secret, and available for anyone who is interested in lens flare and other absolutely ordinary phenomena. They represent people as 'UFO Researchers' who were really nothing more than flying saucer believers. They show opinions as facts and ignore everything which is obliging a real explanation. In the chapter DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ALIENS (in my German version BESCHREIBUNG DER FREMDEN), Berlitz and Moore speculate with an FBI photocopy which could, in their minds perhaps, possibly show the photograph of an alien survivor from a crashed flying saucer. In my investigations, however, I have arrived at completely different results!

In the archives of the local newspaper WIESBADENER TAGBLATT I have found an old article with three photographs under the headline:

FLYING SAUCERS OVER WIESBADEN. A GIANT FLYING DISC CRASHED
AT THE BLEIDENSTADTER KOPF. CREW MEMBER IS IN PROTECTIVE
DETENTION. NO CAUSE FOR PANIC.

The text reports of the hunting down of a flying saucer which crashed during the night in the vicinity of Wiesbaden. Even a crew member had allegedly been seized and put into protective custody. The article describes a 'strange creature with only one leg moving about a rotating plate. His arms come to an end in four stubby fingers'. It was written that he had large glaring eyes and his head was an oval shape. The sensational report shows even a photograph of this strange creature in custody of two U.S. policemen. It is the same picture which was published in THE ROSWELL INCIDENT. The so-called Mister X was taken to the Neroberg hotel in Wiesbaden, so the WIESBADENER TAGBLATT article reports. The Americans would not give any comments relating to the incident. 'So that Mister X can get used to our air he will be taking a walk around the grounds of the hotel daily between 14 and 15 hours', says the article. At that time it was also stated that special trips would be arranged on the Neroberg railway and there would be no danger to the population, because special units were out searching the area with apparatus similar to mine-detectors for other crew members. And finally the newspaper article announced:

'Anyone who has made any observations is requested to call the press bureau at the town hall. Further investigations about the mysterious proceedings will be carried out and we ourselves will do everything to keep the public on its toes in the truest sense of the word'.

This fantastic story had been published on Saturday 1st April 1950 in the WIESBADENER TAGBLATT. On April 15 1981, it was possible for me to speak with the writer of the story and even the photographer who had produced the proof photographs.

Now the haze of the 'mystery' fell: the flying saucer crash was only an APRIL FOOL JOKE, created by the WIESBADENER TAGBLATT reporter Wilhelm Sprunkel!

He got the idea after he had read a number of newspaper articles about flying saucers, none of which he took then, or now, as serious. It was just before April 1st, and what better subject is there to produce an April Fool joke than the good old 'flying saucer'. To make the joke as realistic as possible, Wilhelm Sprunkel got in touch with the U.S. liaison officer in the area and requested if it would be possible to 'borrow' two U.S. soldiers. The U.S. liaison officer laughed and said he would have to ask for permission from the commanding officer in Wiesbaden. This man had laughed and said he must ask permission from the U.S. headquarters in Heidelberg. Eventually the joke requests were granted and everyone went about their work.

The photographer, Hans Scheffler, photographed the light fountain glasses from Wiesbaden's cure house pond, cut out prints of them in typical saucer shape and glued these on different photographs. The text says the photographs were released by security agencies but this statement was also pure invention! The following text was set under the photo of the market-place church and Mister X by Wilhelm Sprunkel:

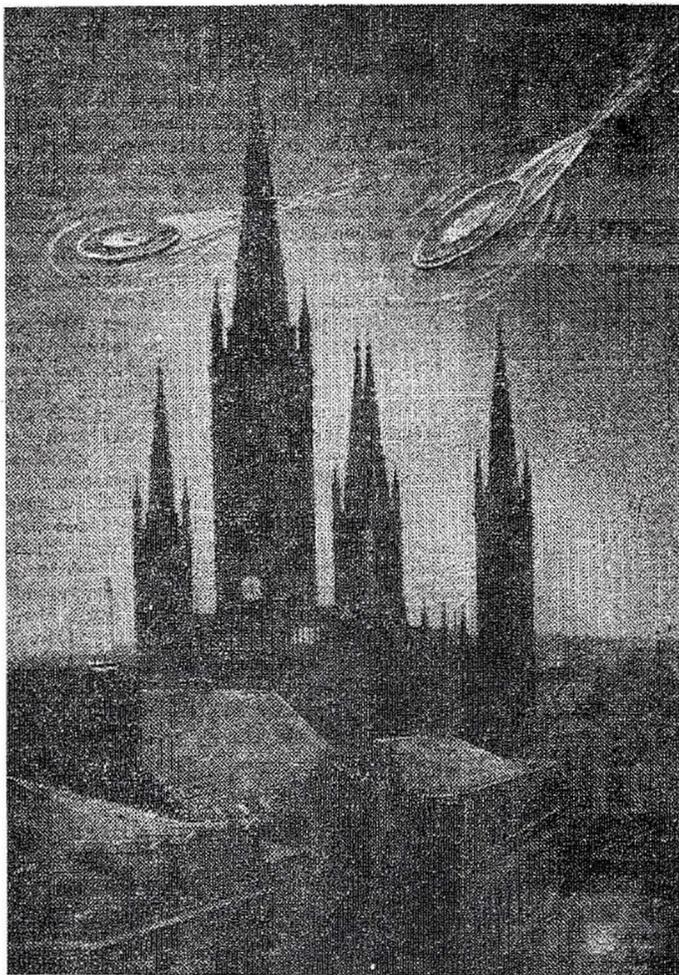
'THE INFRARED KATHODENRAY PROJECTOR CYLINDER TOGETHER WITH PICTURE TAKER AND A SPECIAL FILM REVEALS PROCESSES WHICH MUST BE INVISIBLE TO THE HUMAN EYE. THAT PROVES OUR LEFT PICTURE: TWO 'FLYING SAUCERS' CIRCLED - UNSEEN BY WIESBADEN'S POPULATION - AROUND THE MARKET-PLACE CHURCH. THE NOISES OF THE RUSHING DISCS WERE NOT PERCEPTIBLE BECAUSE ULTRA SONIC WAVES, AS IS WELL KNOWN, CANNOT BE HEARD BY THE HUMAN EAR'.

Then the borrowed U.S. soldiers came into action. With a U.S. army jeep they drove to Neroberg and in front of the look-out cupola the 'mysterious encounter with Mister X' took place.

The photographed creature seen in the Berlitz/Moore book and in the WIESBADENER TAGBLATT from 1950 was really the five year old Peter Scheffler, the photographer's son. The only thing that one of the soldiers held was a can. The rest of the effects, like the hose, breathing gear, horror head, griffin hands, one leg and foot-plate was later painted in by Hans Scheffler. The source of the photographs was given as: 3 TRANSLAG/USA PHOTOS. This specification was also invented by Wilhelm Sprunkel - he got the idea from the name of a firm in the Wiesbaden area. The whole saucer crash story in fact was so authentically created that in 1950, a lot of people took it as being the truth. It caused so much excitement that the American weekly newspaper WIESBADEN POST reprinted the story with photographs.

Wilhelm Sprunkel also received a phone call from a woman journalist who wanted to buy the copyright on the Mister X photo. Mr. Sprunkel explained to her that the whole case was a joke but the woman was not willing to believe him and was angry that he did not want to give the sensational photo away. After some twenty minutes he finally managed to convince the woman that the whole story was really only a joke. On Monday April 3rd 1950, the WIESBADENER TAGBLATT had published a denial under the headline: 'TÜCHTIG REINGEFALLEN!' (trans. 'Good Letdown!').

The next question is, how did Charles Berlitz and William Moore come across the joke photograph of Mister X? Someone, possibly one of the two U.S. soldiers had sent the photo section of the newspaper article to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in America in May 1950. There, nobody had taken the story seriously and the newspaper article had gone into the FBI archives where it collected dust until the 'Freedom of Information Act' came into force, releasing FBI and CIA material to the public. Mr. Barry Greenwood, allied with the UFOIN organisation (UFO INFORMATION NETWORK) in Rome, Ohio, acquired a bundle of FBI photocopies and discovered the picture of Mister X. This photocopy of Mister X was so bad in quality that UFOIN's draughtsman Mr. Lawrence Blazey, had made a sketch of the creature. William Moore ordered this material for his book THE ROSWELL INCIDENT and Mister X was born for the second time.



From the WIESBADENER
TAGBLATT of April 1st
1950, this photograph
purportedly shows the
invisible flying
saucers over the Market
Place Church.
Reproduction: Klaus
Webner.

Although the authors knew that the story came from Wiesbaden, Germany, they have never done any investigations. The WIESBADENER TAGBLATT employees told me that neither a Charles Berlitz nor a William L. Moore or anyone else had started any requests before me. But just in this case, the investigation was so easy. In Wiesbaden there are only two newspapers. One of them, the WIESBADENER KURIER, was so kind and had even sent my request to the WIESBADENER TAGBLATT where the April Fool joke from 1950 is well-known. The photographer Hans Scheffler, the reporter Wilhelm Sprunkel and even Mister X himself, Peter Scheffler are still employed there.

Because of my research work on this case, the WIESBADENER TAGBLATT published on Wednesday April 22nd 1981, the article:

'A TAGBLATT APRIL JOKE IN THE FILES OF THE FBI.....
AND NOW AS A TRUE SAUCER REPORT IN A BOOK PUBLICATION.'

Unfortunately the newspaper found it not necessary to mention my name and published the unmasking as their own report.

The last question is: what happened in New Mexico? According to the available material, in Roswell only a balloon with a target crashed in 1947. No serious office has ever mentioned a crashed spaceship or even little men. Such rumours have no concrete foundation either from CIA or FBI files. The latest research work says: 'Crashed flying saucers' and 'crew members on ice' are fantasies and not facts!

From the April 1st 1950
WIESBADENER TAGBLATT.
Mister X being escorted
by the two U.S. soldiers
away from the Neroberg
cupola. It seems that
of all the special
effects in the photo,
only the jerry-can was
real. All the rest was
drawn on by Hans
Scheffler.
Reproduction: Klaus
Webner.



Available Photo and Tape Material on the Case

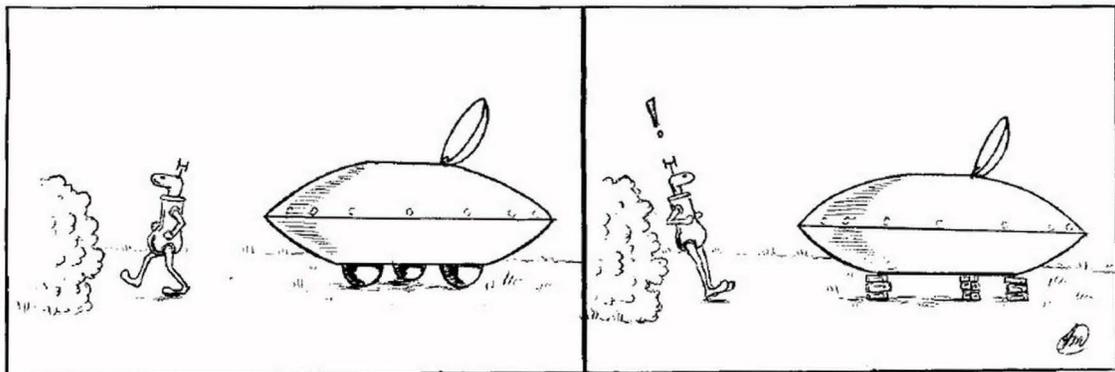
- 1) Article from April 1st 1950/ denial from April 3rd 1950/ Mister X/ Market-place church/'crash area' with newspaper text/ Mister X plus market-place church with newspaper text. Each 12 cm x 17 cm b/w photograph: 6 German Marks.

- 2) Wilhelm Sprunkel with his article/ at his desk/ standing/ Market-place church/ Neroberg Hotel/ Neroberg cupola where Mister X photo was made/ Wide angle photo of that location. Each 17 cm x 23 cm colour photograph: 10 German Marks.
- 3) Tape cassette with the whole newspaper text of 1950 and an interview with Wilhelm Sprunkel and Hans Scheffler: 12 German Marks.

The material is only available from: Klaus Webner, Zugspitzstrasse 56, 6200 Wiesbaden, West Germany.

Copyright Klaus Webner, Germany July 1981.

Editor's note: It may be of interest to note that since the publication of his investigation in the German CENEP REPORT magazine, Klaus Webner has come under some criticism, in particular from the faction he calls 'typical flying saucer believers'. It appears that in any country there are a collection of people who like to exist in a dream world where we are being watched over by kindly space brothers, and every unusual light seen in the night sky is in fact a scout ship returning to its orbiting mother-ship. And these people get rather upset when one of their dreams becomes shattered by some level-headed investigation such as in the Mister X case. Klaus Webner was called a 'Court-fool of ufology' by one angry man in a letter to him. In a letter from Klaus to myself he expressed his worry about the 'saucer sectarians' representing a problem in West Germany, and these points are echoed in Werner Walter's letter in this issue's SIGNALS column. It is not only Britain that has problems in this field then, and I imagine that every country will have its own band of romantic ufologists preaching their own particular beliefs, and it is a good sign that this problem has now been recognised. In the ufological field that is now in its early stage of development, the Berlitzes, von Danikens and Pagets will find their days numbered and a more reasoned approach will become evident. The problem has been recognised in West Germany and the enemy is known and CENEP are doing their best to overcome it. And if Geoff Bird's article, REFLECTIONS ON BRITISH UFOLOGY, can be digested and acted upon then perhaps the future might be a little more rosy.



ADVERTISEMENTS:

FLYING SAUCERS, meetings, photos, skywatches, news, badges, cassettes, mags, etc. SAE details! British UFO Society, Tempo House, 15-27 Falcon Road, Battersea, London. SW10.

A 1-DAY UFO SEMINAR is to be staged by the British UFO Society on Sunday 1st November, at Trevelyan Hall, St. Anne's Lane, Great Peter Street, London SW1. It will have speakers (yet to be announced), an exhibition and UFO stalls. For details, send SAE to British UFO Society, Tempo House, 15-27 Falcon Road, Battersea, London. SW10.

SIGNALS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ian,

Having read your editorial in 'The PROBE Report' Vol 2 No 1, I thought I'd write to give you SCUFORI's viewpoint on the question of magazines. In your editorial you ask yourself whether or not 'The PROBE Report' is necessary and, having decided that it is, you subtly hint that if you can produce a magazine then all other UFO groups should be able to. This is a fair comment, but have you considered the possible long term consequences of every group in Britain attempting to produce a magazine such as yours (which, I might add, is probably the best magazine produced by a local UFO group in Britain at the moment).

Assuming for a moment that every local UFO group started producing a good quality magazine (that is being more than optimistic) a number of things might begin to happen.

- 1) The effort of producing a magazine up to the standard of others on the market would certainly detract from most groups' investigation and research capabilities (and we all know how bad they are nationwide as it is).
- 2) As a consequence of this, the reports etc. printed in magazines would be less and less detailed and more and more inaccurate than they are at present, thus bringing ufology into greater disrepute.
- 3) Groups and individuals may become far less willing to submit articles and reports for inclusion in rival magazines (an intense rivalry would exist), because they would be too busy writing for their own magazines.
- 4) Even so, there would still be a great deal of duplication of material, making the magazines similar in general content and thus boring to read.
- 5) For those groups or individuals who for one reason or another, were physically unable to produce a magazine for exchange with other groups, the thought of having to subscribe to every other magazine so as not to miss anything would be daunting to say the least.
- 6) Faced with the prospect of a glut of UFO magazines on the market, groups, individuals, and even the general public would be forced to become very selective, resulting in average subscriptions for any one magazine being considerably reduced.
- 7) This in turn would result in many magazines collapsing through lack of interest (and possibly one or two groups collapsing along with their magazines), and the increased effort needed by those left to keep going might lead to more rivalry, creating a vicious circle.

These observations, of course, are based on a perfect model, where all UFO groups are of roughly the same abilities and attributes etc., and in reality the consequences may be very different. However, I hope you can see the point I am trying to make. There are disadvantages as well as advantages to producing a magazine and we (SCUFORI) prefer not to do so. Our main function is to investigate reports and, not being as fortunate as PROBE in having any spare personnel able to concentrate adequately on the production of a magazine, we are happy to have any material we do produce printed in magazines such as yours. There is a need for some groups to publish a magazine, but we feel a few selected groups printing good quality magazines and having others submit information, articles and reports to be included in those journals is far better than having everybody going it alone and doing the same thing, but producing poorer magazines.

Best wishes, Marty Moffatt, SCUFORI, Swindon.

(I quite agree with your comments, and your point 1) echoed remarks I made in the last issue's editorial. I certainly never at any time envisaged a country knee-deep in UFO magazines and I really never intended the editorial to read that way. I was stressing the need for UFO magazines and we both agree on that, but it is essential that prepared reports are published either through a group's own magazine or another journal. I am afraid there are some groups who do neither and this information can be lost. SCUFORI's policy is excellent, as you freely provide reports (of a standard second to none in this area of the country) for publication, and PROBE are more than happy to receive them. As for your comments on different standards within groups..... that's another story altogether. Ed.)

Dear Ian,

One notes with a quiet and understanding chuckle that Arthur Shuttlewood, so long isolated from the realities of UFO research in his Warminster ivory tower, again descends to name-calling in his criticisms of those ufologists who dare to express even the mildest doubts as to the nature of his own individualistic interpretation of the UFO phenomenon.

To clear up a few points first: the 'funny so-called UFO magazine on Merseyside' is presumably a subtly satirical reference to the Merseyside UFO Bulletin, which flourished under the inspired editorship of John Harnsey, from 1968 to 1975. I am happy to report that it did not close due to a policy of 'petty backbiting', but thrived with a policy of level-headed and rational examination of ufological claims. When, in 1974 - 5 the editor and associate editor moved for professional reasons, to the Greater London area, it must be apparent even to Mr. Shuttlewood, that the title 'Merseyside' UFO Bulletin was no longer appropriate, so the name was changed, first to 'Metempirical UFO Bulletin', then to 'MAGONIA', under which title it appears still, with a continually growing, world-wide circle of readers and contributors. Its thirteen years of publication mean that it has lasted considerably longer than any of the cultist publications connected with the Warminster UFO community!

I note that Mr. Shuttlewood describes me as 'vitriolic'. I had to refer back to my original letter to you to see just what had been flowing from my acid-loaded type-writer-ribbon. I discovered a sentence about Master James the Baker's Son which was so loaded with 'if's', 'But's', 'possibly's' and perhaps's' that it could have been a declaration of policy from the Social Democratic Party! No vitriol here, Arthur! On the other hand, Mr. Shuttlewood's letters are regularly larded with such epithets as 'vicious character assassins', 'know-all's', etc. Previous letters from the Warminster Wordsmith have seldom been noted for their temperate language.

I am at a loss to understand how a person can be 'accused' of hypnogogic hallucination. This is a perfectly normal thing, and one can no more be accused of it as be 'accused' of dreaming or having hayfever. I am sure David Rees and the 'sly hoaxer' unfrocked on Cop Heap (how I would have loved to have been there with a camera - flash, of course) can take care of themselves. It is true that, as Mr. Shuttlewood says, none of us are able to tell him who and what UFO intelligence comprises, as we are merely studying and trying to comprehend the mysterious business that we call ufology, and have not been vouchsafed the answer to the ultimate question of Life, The Universe and Everything, as apparently has Mr. Shuttlewood.

I am sorry, Mr. Editor, if this letter is getting long and boring, but there is one more thing I would like to say, and no doubt it will be interpreted as a 'vicious personal attack'. There are many different shades of opinion in ufology, and rightly so. And it should be possible for proponents of one point of view to criticise the concepts and theories, investigations and reports, of those who propound a different viewpoint. However, there are many people, and unfortunately Arthur Shuttlewood is typical of these, who interpret any criticism, or even questioning, of their no doubt sincerely held point of view, as being an attack on them. And because of this, inevitably, they do open themselves up to such attack. They have only themselves to blame for this personalisation of UFO controversy. Surely we should be able to have genuine debate, controversy, and examination of claims without having silly epithets thrown around.

Most British ufologists now regard Warminster as peripheral to the real research that is being done, and see Mr. Shuttlewood as a rather embarrassing figure, whose excentric views are a hindrance to wider public acceptance of the seriousness of their work. Of course, most British ufologists are too polite to say so, but not the vitriolic Mr. Rimmer! Yours faithfully, John Rimmer, Editor, MAGONIA (funny so-called UFO magazine).

Dear Ian,

We have here in Germany the same problems you spoke of in your editorial. The editors of most magazines in the UFO scene will publish items that are fine for the enthusiasts of flying saucers and believers of the strange world beyond reality, but you can only find a scientific solution to the UFO problem in this world - not on a

fictional level. The problem is very clear: most UFO-fans will read things and incidents of a futuristic kind. You send a free issue like the last non-fiction magazine from yourself and the interest is suddenly zero! Why? You publish a magazine more like a real scientific journal, and with science you do not bring very good evidence for flying saucers. That is the problem for a journal and that is the great problem for the foundation of a good working investigation group. For me, it is the hard-working little group that is better than a great group with more than 1000 members, when this great group produces mere fiction. The time will come in the near future when groups like PROBE and CENAP can take a new renaissance in ufology. 'Ufology' hasn't much a future; we must find a better term and we from CENAP network think that 'UFO-Investigation' is the real term. The work of the UFO-field can only find a good start at the roots, not in the fiction books like Adamski-enthusiasts write. 'Ufology' is a negative term for the general public; that is very clear when you yourself do public relation work. Ufology is, for the people of the streets, no more than belief in the Loch Ness monster, life after death, spiritualism and many other things on a mystic-belief base, and no scientists will think differently about ufology when they read the literature of today.

Now is the time for a real investigation of the UFO phenomenon worldwide, an investigation back again to the roots, back again to the backgrounds of the sagas and stories. Why tell us stories about abductions, landings and CE11's? What is the psychological background? Do we today have a change in our psycho-social living that we need stories like these for our survival in this techno-world? These things are what have a great future in the field of UFO investigation but also a detailed and critical investigation case by case by people that have a serious mind towards this matter.

It is beautiful to find reports like CASE CLOSED and SWINDON CIGAR in your magazine. You can search for such investigations-reports in other journals and find this in only a few cases; most magazines publish only the 'truth', which is no more reality than a fictional story! Sincerely,

Werner Walter, CENAP, Mannheim, West Germany.

BOOKS

UFO STUDY by Jenny Randles. Robert Hale Ltd. 271 pages. £7.95.

UFO STUDY is intended to be a kind of step-by-step instruction manual for investigation and research into the UFO phenomenon. The basic procedures cannot be faulted but no matter how objective the intentions are, the author's own beliefs filter through into the latter half of the book and confuse the research section with a slant towards the psychic influence. This reflects Miss Randles' current position in the spectrum of theories and could possibly be harmful if it persuades 'newcomers' to study only in those particular fields. It is interesting to think how UFO STUDY would have been written when the author was writing as on page 176 where she spoke of anti-gravity propulsion, semi-silent power units and exhausts. These 1975 extracts obviously stemmed from earlier beliefs and were extremely subjective, and UFO STUDY suffers slightly from this. Miss Randles is convinced that CE3 and especially CE4 cases have psychic connotations and provides a statistical wealth to substantiate her points, which is fair enough, but another person could possibly produce another set of statistics to show quite the opposite. The data from which these figures are acquired is sometimes dubious in nature purely because it is based on witness testimony and difficult to accept as hard fact. If anyone is entering ufology for the first time UFO STUDY will start them on the right course for investigating UFO sightings, but the research section may confound them. Initially we are dealing with what appears to be a physical phenomenon by means of site investigations, aircraft movements and weather reports but by the end of UFO STUDY the physical reality of UFOs seems to have vanished into a dream world. On page 211 we read, 'It has been found that almost all witnesses to the CE4 (and many to the CE3) claim reasonably extensive histories of psychic or paranormal phenomena. These include, most often, ghost sightings, precognitive dreams, and 'out-of-body experiences'

..... The theory is that only 'Psygenics' experience a CE4 (except perhaps under exceptional circumstances). If we are to accept that 'almost all' is good enough evidence to support these theories, then the 90% explainable UFOs (IFOs) ought to be sufficient to dismiss the very existence of UFOs in general. Just what the 'exceptional circumstances' are, we are not told. The danger here is the possibility of a reader-now-turned-ufologist digging at a witness to find out any psychic history and linking the UFO event to a one-off experience of *deja-vu*! Miss Randles does, however, safeguard herself in one paragraph on page 227 where she states, 'I am still hesitant to reject totally any physical reality for such cases and proclaim a wholly psychological explanation', and goes on to warn of the 'two-camp' situation (physical v psychological), which is unfortunately forever widening. UFO STUDY, despite its constant references to UFOs: A BRITISH VIEWPOINT and heavy reliance on the works of Vallee, stands on its own as an essential book for any ufologist. There is a hard-headedness in its acceptance of face-value accounts, which is refreshing in light of the more romantic headline hunting, dramatic literature that publishers usually opt for. It is encouraging to see serious works like UFO STUDY reaching print which will hopefully show the general public as well as the scientific authorities that there are a few people who do take ufology seriously.

ALIEN QUEST by George H. Leonard. Sphere Books Ltd. UFO/Fiction. Paperback £1.50. It is not surprising that after his ridiculous 'Someone Else Is On Our Moon', George Leonard has turned to novel writing, and it is with interesting results. The plot of ALIEN QUEST involves a member of the Montgomery County Flying Saucer Society (which boasts one of the wierdest collection of sinister characters anyone could wish for) sponsoring a non-believing astronomer to the tune of £1 Million in a hunt for a piece of a flying saucer. ALIEN QUEST has its silly moments and Leonard's daft 'Moon Machines' make their inevitable appearance to add to these. Reference is also made to the 'Scoutmaster' incident as a leading case, yet this whole episode was exposed as a hoax back in 1952 with the scoutmaster, (J.D. Des Vergers) planning the whole thing as a publicity stunt. All the old names and cases get name-dropped: Hynek, Ruppelt, Jessup, Vallee, the Mantell case and the Hills' abduction, to show that Leonard knows something about the subject presumably. The two main characters trace down areas where certain UFOs make regular appearances and are lucky on both occasions. It is difficult to accept that UFOs could come and burn up cars and suck up water through a hose as regular as clockwork, and not have crowds out there watching them; but that seems to be the case here. It has all the ingredients for a 'meaty' novel, eg, sex, murder, four-letter words, and a sadistic rapist, which all combines to make, on the whole, an extremely entertaining story. The UFOs appear to be extraterrestrial in origin, but no answer is really given, and if you want to know whether or not the £1 Million was won, read ALIEN QUEST.

THE UFO ENCYCLOPEDIA by Margaret Sachs. Corgi Books. Large Paperback. 408 pages. £4.95. The problem with producing an encyclopedia is that the minute it hits the market, it is out of date. THE UFO ENCYCLOPEDIA must have taken a long time to compile, and during that time, groups and organisations featured have vanished. It also suffers the egotistical tendencies of some of the people who filled in the circulars some years ago, and information here is distorted beyond imagine. An example of this is the feature on UFO INFO EXCHANGE LIBRARY; besides it folding 18 months ago, the facts and figures quoted were mere ambitions of the contributor. These errors, of course, are not the fault of the author/compiler, as she could not vet every item that was returned - she unfortunately had to rely on the honesty of others. One mistake noted that is her fault is the transformation of Travis Walton into Travis Walter (p 360), and there may well be others. On the other hand, the cases and personnel included in THE UFO ENCYCLOPEDIA are useful for reference purposes, and Margaret Sachs has done well in completing such an arduous, boring task.

INTO THIN AIR by Paul Begg. Sphere Books Ltd. General/Non Fiction. Paperback. £1.25. What a disappointment: not the book itself, but the way in which it blows up all the old stories, for example, 'finding' the lost Battalion at Gallipoli and reducing the Mary Celeste tale drastically by clipping off all the fiction. Paul Begg has carried

out an immense programme of investigation by re-examining the original press reports and letters from which the 'vanishing' tales originally found fame, and this thorough re-assessment has taken away the 'mystery' camouflage from many of the old stories, and in several cases dismissed them as pure fabrication. The origins of many classic stories, such as the famous David Lang disappearance, have been difficult to trace and seem to stem from unverified articles. It is difficult also, to understand Begg's intentions in INTO THIN AIR. In the majority of cases, he dismisses the evidence, or point blankedly refuses to accept the tale, (as in the 'Seabird' case on page 55), yet seems astounded at other incidents. This switch does confuse the reader, as does the ending. There is no conclusion, summary or anything.... maybe that vanished too.

SFI-1 SPOT NEW BOOKS REVIEWED BY PHIL HODGES.

THREEWORLD by Harry Harrison. Granada Publishing Ltd. Science Fiction. Paperback £1.25. The setting is a planet called Halvmörk where the winter and summer were each four years long. The extreme heat and cold at either poles of the planet make life unbearable and the only habitable place to live is the twilight zone. Unfortunately, every four years the zone itself shifts 27,000 kilometers and the entire population must travel to the new area to survive. The twilight zone is ideal for crop rearing and the planet was in fact originally settled by Earth to provide food for its millions of inhabitants. Every four years, ships from Earth arrive at Halvmörk to collect food and supply the colony with the seeds, machinery etc it needs to set up its new base. This time, however, the ships have arrived and the colonists are faced with travelling to the other zone without spare parts for their vehicles and the supplies for their survival. An undemanding but enjoyable story chronicles the journey across the planet.

THE EMBEDDING by Ian Watson. Granada Publishing Ltd. Science Fiction. Paperback £1.25. A somewhat involved story which switches between a children's hospital carrying out a bizarre language and environmental experiment on its patients; a doomed Brazilian Tribe; and a large Earth-bound spacecraft. All three themes are cleverly brought together in this well-written book.

THE OAK AND THE RAM by Michael Moorcock. Granada. Science Fantasy. Paperback 95p. This is the fifth book in the Corum series and is typical of Moorcock's writing; a story involving magic and enchantment. If you enjoy tales of sword and sorcery, then this is the book for you.

MOORCOCK'S BOOK OF MARTYRS by Michael Moorcock. Granada. Science Fantasy. P-back £1.25. A collection of short stories with Martyrdom as its theme. The Greater Conqueror, ('Great' in the Contents list) puts an unusual slant on the rise of Alexander The Great, but Behold the Man is a rather distasteful tale of a time traveller who poses as, and becomes, Jesus Christ.

ENEMIES OF THE SYSTEM by Brian Aldiss. Granada. Science Fiction. Paperback £1.25. A million years in the future Man has eliminated war, disease and emotion. The planet Lysenka 11, however, is populated by primitive descendants of the original space-ship colonists. The planet is used to provide holidays for parties of tourists. One such party becomes stranded on the planet and a number of them are captured by the primitives. Their ensuing ordeal shows that they were not as civilised as they thought.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION by Peter Nicholls. Granada Science Fiction. Large paperback. 672 pages. £4.95. A unique book for in-depth SF enthusiasts, as most of the book comprises of short but informative reviews and criticisms by famous SF authors and publishers on SF authors and publishers' books and magazines. It is not recommended for the average keen SF reader, and maybe the only benefits can be obtained by authors themselves. The layout is hard to follow and a knowledge of what one is looking for is required.

**CASE
CLOSED**

WE APPEAL TO ANY GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL TO SUBMIT CASES WHICH HAVE BEEN GIVEN RATIONAL EXPLANATIONS FOR PUBLICATION IN THIS FEATURE. SOLVED CASES ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF UFO STUDY AND SHOULD BE GIVEN ADEQUATE COVERAGE. THIS ISSUE'S OFFERING FIRST APPEARED IN UFO INSIGHT Vol 1, No 6, THE JOURNAL OF FUFOR.

An Interesting Light In The Sky

by Mark A. Tyrrell.

Mark is Secretary to Federation UFO Research
and Editor of UFO INSIGHT.

Although 'light in the sky' (LITS) reports do not have the attention fostered on them as, say, 'Close Encounter' type cases, the writer feels they do, in some instances, possess some aspects which are as interesting. Indeed, they may be the visual characteristics of a phenomenon totally divorced from the 'Close Encounter' cases, but it is not the intention of this article to discuss the origins of the LITS. Rather, it is to show, with the aid of one such case investigated by the writer, that they can give as much an insight to the psychological processes of a witness as can a 'Close Encounter' case, especially the feelings and reactions that took place in the observer when an incident occurs. It is also felt that these can be ascertained, by the properly qualified people, irrespective of the true nature of the stimulus that was visually perceived.

The case now under review occurred on Wednesday 23rd August 1978 at 21.30 hours BST. The sole witness, a David Klapowski, was 12 years old at the time and attended a local comprehensive school. He seemed to be quite intelligent, honest and genuinely puzzled by what he had seen.

The Incident and Follow-up Investigation.

The following rundown of the incident is taken from the witness's own verbal account:-

"I left the swimming pool - Nantwich swimming pool - at about 9.10 (pm)... I had a new pair of lights on my bike and I was riding along Crewe Road (Nantwich) and decided to turn off down Eastern Road (Willaston) to test my lights. As I was riding along Eastern Road (in an easterly direction towards Wistaston - David's home village), I was looking around at the outlines of the trees and things and then.... I looked up and saw a light in the sky which was sort of a sharp bit in the middle and hazed around the outside.... then I passed a tree and then I saw it again just over some trees in the distance; and that was the last time I saw it and then I went straight on home."

An on-site investigation took place, the location of the incident being Longitude 2°-28.3' West; Latitude: 53°-)3.8' North, but was deficient in as much as only one Azimuth for the light was recorded, whereas three elevations were taken. It was felt that any difference between each Azimuth, if the others were recorded, would have been negligible because the witness's position only changed between 9/10 yards during the incident and the light was probably some distance away. Anyhow, the elevations, which are in keeping with David's original, written testimony which states that the object was 'falling slowly', were measured, in sequence, as being 13°, 10° and 2°. The Azimuth for the middle elevation was 170° magnetic but the light remained in this southerly direction throughout. A reconstruction of the incident indicated that its time duration was probably no more than 10 seconds. David described the colour of the object as creamy and, although quite bright, it did not cast any glow onto the surrounding area.

**CASE
CLOSED**

The sighting location is bordered on its northerly side by railway lines and on all other sides by trees, hedges and fields. It has quite a rural aspect although being just outside the large suburban villages of Willaston and Wistaston. Enquiries to the Manchester Weather Centre and the Meteorological Office at Bracknell both ruled out the possibility of what was seen being a weather balloon. Bracknell actually forwarded the investigator's enquiry to the Ministry of Defence, who sent the usual 'defence implications' reply. It was not felt that an aircraft was the cause of the sighting and no enquiry was despatched to Manchester Airport. It must be pointed out though that, in this particular area, aircraft can fly below a certain height without having to contact Manchester and other queries to that quarter have proved fruitless before and since the incident under review. At 21.30 hours on the 23rd August, the moon was 15° below the horizon at 100° Azimuth, another explanation ruled out.

A tour of the area by car did not reveal anything untoward but this inspection was by no means comprehensive as the area covered was quite large and it could not be ascertained accurately as to where the light may have been over. There were no other sighting reports for the area at this time.

A Scared Witness

Although it was deemed that there was 'no evaluation possible' for the case, it was said at the time that if a similar experience cropped up in the future, it would be interesting to use it for comparison. Apart from this, there are factors of the incident which the writer would like to discuss, that seem to indicate that David's report may have been influenced by recent events in his life, just prior to his sighting. It is the purpose of this article to speculate that because of these 'influences', David's subconscious did one of two things that night in Eastern Road. It either caused him to imagine the whole thing or enlarge greatly on something he had seen which might not have been as vivid as his report makes out. That the sighting had greatly affected David was confirmed by an interview with his parents. They stated that although he was not a lad to be easily scared by anything, upon arriving home after the incident, he was both excited and very scared. Upon his arrival, both his father and brother went straight out to the sighting area, but he would not go back with them because of his fear. In fact, he was so scared that his mother stayed in the house with him! Both parents confirm that David's story has not changed upon subsequent retelling, although he is sometimes known to enlarge on a story. It was felt that perhaps his young age would account for this.

The CE111 film - an influence?

In a taped interview, David stated that he had seen the film 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind' only a few days before the sighting. Although he maintained that the two experiences were entirely different, it was felt that it was possible that the film acted as a trigger for the sighting, or alternatively had a subliminal influence on the way David actually perceived a visual stimuli. Thus affecting the way he reported it to his family, friends and the writer who investigated the case at the time. Two extracts are taken from the aforementioned interview which seem to indicate that the film did have an effect on David and that that effect was deeper than he was aware of.

'The film itself frightened me and seeing the UFO, it frightened me even more about UFOs and things like that.....'

'Seeing the film I sort of knew it was a film, but it gave me a clearer understanding of UFOs and when I saw the UFO I believed completely....'

**CASE
CLOSED**

Could these statements mean that David's experience, whatever its causation, confirmed to himself what was being put forward by Spielberg in the film? At that moment in time, what was real to David's subconscious, the film or the 'real' experience? Take the sighting area for instance, could this have had a marked effect on a lively pubescent imagination? It was just outside a village, dark and unusually quiet for the time of night. The scenario has certain similarities to those presented in the 'Close Encounters' film. Perhaps coupled with a latent fear, this could have enriched David's perception of something which might have gone unnoticed had he not seen the film.

Fatigue may have had a part to play in enhancing his susceptibility to suggestions made unknowingly by his subconscious. Remember that David had been swimming at a local pool, the time was getting late and he had to cycle home a distance of 3 or 4 miles. Upon perceiving a light in the sky, which may have been of astronomical origin - although a check on this proved negative, his subconscious may have started to colour his perception with latent memories of 'Close Encounters', which the writer believes had a profound effect on David irrespective of his sighting report. It is a well known fact that witnesses to a car accident unconsciously fabricate evidence to supplement their memory. Tests have proved that if a witness was asked if there was broken glass at a scene of an automobile accident, the subject would recall some even if none was present! We are all open to suggestion in our day-to-day existence. Radio, television, films, books and newspapers all act on the subconscious in the form of suggestion. Added to this, David's brother had an interest in UFOs before his sighting and this may have had an effect on him although the writer feels this to be minimal because of the circumstances detailed above. Whether David's experience was real, in the physical sense of the word or otherwise, it presents certain aspects that have, to some extent, been studied by qualified people - particularly in the U.S. (Sprinkle, Haines). What is made absolutely clear is that by no means should a 'LITS' case be ignored simply because it is just that.

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