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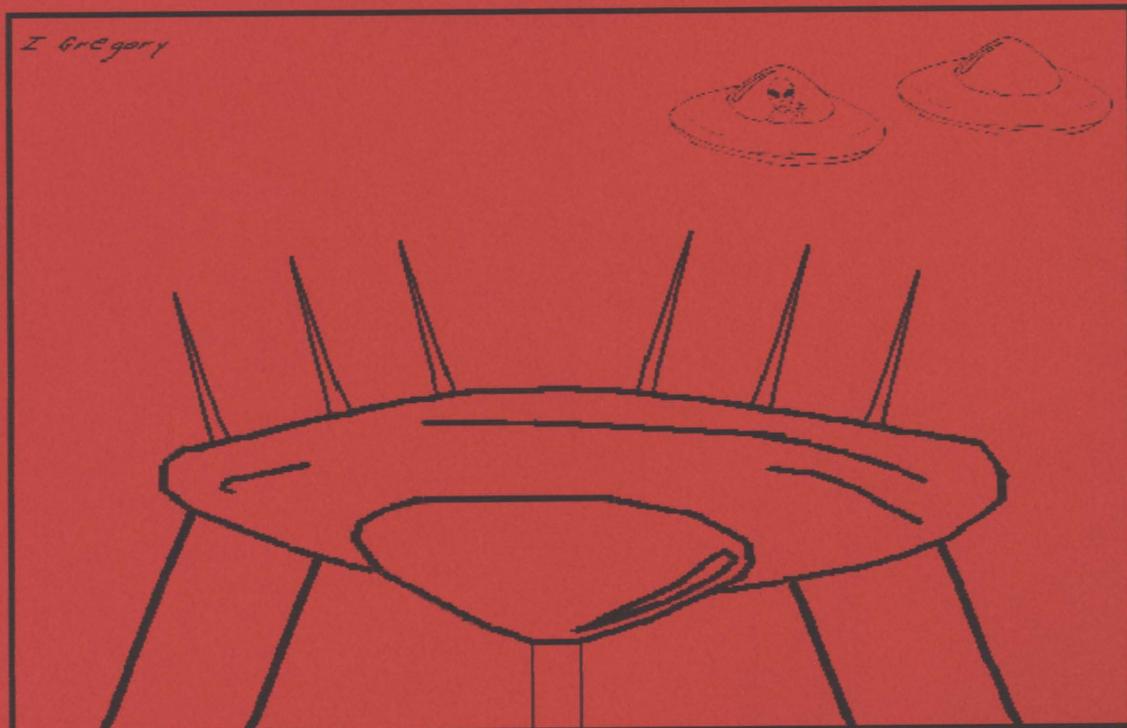
YORKSHIRE UFO SOCIETY

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## PROJECT RED BOOK

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(Vol 3 #7- January 2000)



As soon as this millennium thing is over, we can have our ship back!

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SHEFFIELD SAUCERS PT 6

BRUCE MACCABEE Vs the SCEPTICS

And much more...

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### Subscriptions:

£12:00 - 12 issues ( 1 year)  
£7:00 - 6 issues ( 6 months )  
sample issue - £1:50

Project Red Book is published each month by the Yorkshire UFO Society.

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To re-print articles in this magazine please enquire at the above address- that means me, Dave. I'm sure to say "yes", but it is nice to ask first, y'know?

The articles and views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor, YUFOS members,

*"I call it 'Mr.Pointy'"*

## AN INTERVIEW WITH BILL CHALKER

Born in Grafton, New South Wales (NSW), Australia, Bill Chalker is his country's premier ufologist. He was educated at the University of New England, and graduated with an Honours Science Degree (B.Sc.Hons.) with majors in Chemistry and Mathematics. Since 1975 he has worked in the food industry as an industrial chemist, laboratory manager and quality manager. He is the author of "The Oz Files - the Australian UFO Story" published in 1996, and is a contributing editor of the acclaimed International UFO Reporter (IUR), the journal of the Centre for UFO Studies Bill also coordinates the NSW UFO INVESTIGATION CENTRE (UFOIC). He was the Australian representative for the Aerial Phenomena Research Organisation (APRO) from 1978 to 1986, and NSW state representative for the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) from 1976 to 1993. His articles on UFOs have appeared in IUR, Flying Saucer Review, The Australasian Ufologist and he contributed "Physical traces" to BUFORA's "UFOs: 1947 - 1987 - the 40-year search for an explanation."

**Dave Baker:** The "Modern Era" of UFO reports is often cited as starting with Kenneth Arnold's Mount Ranier sighting in June 1947. We know however that strangethings have been seen in the skies much earlier than that. How far do Australian UFO reports go back?

**Bill Chalker:** With the advent of white colonisation, documented accounts appeared with some frequency. Most of the early accounts would probably have an explanation if more information was available. A number however seem to defy easy explanation.

In "An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales", Lt.-Col. Collins recorded in 1793: "An extraordinary appearance in the sky was observed by several people between five and six o'clock in the evening of Friday 12th of the month. It was noticed in the north-west, and appeared as if a ray of forked lightning had been stationary in that quarter of the sky for about fifteen minutes, which was the time it was visible. It was not to be discerned, however, after the sun had quitted the horizon."

This observation is difficult to resolve, due to a paucity of information, but may be some sort of refractive or reflective aberration related to the "fun" (sun).

At 9.27 am, November 20th, 1902, "a remarkable phenomenon was witnessed in the heavens by Mr. Griffiths, the assistant astronomer, and others," at the Adelaide observatory in South Australia. "Two officers were taking weather observations, when they noticed a brilliant globular light having a planetary disc. It appeared SSE, at an altitude of about 450. It moved slowly northwards, passing within 15 or 200 of the sun, and was brightly visible till 9.31, 4 minutes in all. Mr. Griffiths, who observed it for a minute, states that it covered about 200 of an arc in that time.

The object appeared like Venus does when it is at its greatest brilliancy soon after sunset. Mr. Griffiths lost sight of the meteoric object at an altitude of 450 above the horizon. Other observers say it travelled at least 900, and was lost sight of, in the great glare of the sky. When it was near to the prime vertical it became elongated and took an elliptical form, the long axis lying south to north". It seems that during November, 1902, eastern Australia hosted an incredible array of "fireball" reports. Much of it may have been related to dust storm "devils" or related natural electrical phenomena.

Perhaps the most interesting period of the historical antipodean UFO legacy was the fascinating "airship" wave that swept Australia and New Zealand during 1909. The wave began during July, 1909, in New Zealand, with numerous sightings of unusual nocturnal lights and "airships" seen both during the day and at night. The sightings initially appeared to be most intense over the southern end of the South Island of New Zealand. In the following weeks the reports appeared to move northwards, and eventually by August, Australia also fell under the grip of "aerialitis."

Like many of the modern UFO waves, there were some striking cases set against a background of misinterpretations, sensationalism and, to a lesser extent, outright fraud. Here is one of the accounts of airship "operators". Two men working on the Syndicate No. 2 dredge on a river in the Waikaka Valley, a few miles north of Gore, in New Zealand, got an excellent view of what was dubbed "the nocturnal mystery of the air." At 5 am, on July 30th, the men saw it descend out of the mist. The object had a light at both ends. Inside two figures could be plainly observed. The dredge winchman, Mr. F. Green, said the object rose and fell like a bird. It appeared to be a narrow boat-shaped aerial craft that circled the dredge several times

quite closely over a period of several minutes. The "airship" made "curious and seemingly impossible manoeuvres", apparently travelling at speed, then suddenly decelerating. Eventually it disappeared into the mist, in the direction of Otakarama, leaving behind a curious yellow glare.

One of the more substantial Australian reports occurred at about eleven o'clock at night on August 13th, in Glen Innes, when "several responsible residents described an object like a balloon moving in a northerly direction. A night glass was obtained and the object was found to be shaped like an inverted top. The lower portion was lighted, and as the body revolved a light like a small flashlight kept turning on the land beneath. The upper portion was in darkness and the object continued drifting in a northerly direction".

There are a number of such historical reports. Two historical events I have looked into are extraordinarily fascinating - 1868 at Parramatta and 1927 at Fernvale.

The Memorandum Book of Fred Wm. Birmingham, the Engineer to the Council of Parramatta. A machine to go through the air. A.D. 1873". The contents purported to be an account by one Frederick William Birmingham, described as both an engineer, surveyor and local council alderman, of his observation, in July, 1868, of a peculiar "machine to go through the air" - a flying "ark". Birmingham describes the machine landing in Parramatta Park and how he was taken aboard it by its operator - a "spirit" - and shown papers that would months later be of significance to him. Strange events followed including a daylight sighting in 1873 of a strange object in the sky, all of which the Birmingham of the text, took to have some meaning in what had become a quest to unravel the mystery behind the flying machine in his strange UFO "vision" of 1868. I was able to confirm the historical legitimacy of the material via a very extensive investigation. So a historical detective odyssey unravelled.

Because of the nature of the account, it may be relevant to our understanding of modern day UFO "contact" and "abduction" accounts. Many aspects of the Birmingham "UFO vision" are common to the rich harvest of "contactee" stories of the 1950s, other "contact" tales and even "abductions." Some of these elements include "the invitation," "levitation," tours of the "machine," "alien tutelage," ESP, precognition or other faculties,

disorientation and bizarre "follow up" experiences.

By all accounts I believe it is fair to say that the Birmingham vision of 1868, and subsequent events, embodied many of the features that appear time and time again in modern contact, contactee and abduction accounts. Perhaps Birmingham's account not only mirrors modern accounts. We encounter tales of invitations by strange entities to go into unusual realms in aspects of shamanism, the stories of "aerial people" of the Middle Ages, fairy lore and the visionary sphere (with the latter consider A.E.'s evocative "visions in the air" of 1893 in his 1918 work "The Candle of Vision"). The specific content may differ, but the basic components of these visions seems to be the same for "Aboriginal men of high degree" (aboriginal shamans), a Parramatta surveyor in 1868 or 20th century UFO abductees.

The bizarre nature of the Birmingham vision (the dream-like quality of the account, floating heads, spirits, flying, instantaneous relocation, poltergeists, voices and not-the-least - visions - all elements of dreams, psychotic episodes, hallucinations or other realities, depending where your preferences lie), does not, in my mind, lessen its relevancy to modern UFO accounts of contacts, contactees, abductions and the like. The impossible and the totally absurd are no longer strange bed fellows in today's UFO accounts. Contactee, contact and abduction experiences may be only human responses to the more objective aspects of the UFO phenomenon. I have little doubt that there are objective phenomena involved in the UFO mystery but, as researchers, we must be very cautious in deciding just where that stepping off point occurs between real objective physical events and the realms of imagination, fantasy and elsewhere.

The other extraordinary historical case was from 1927. It was like an early dress rehearsal for the "mothman/UFO milieu" that hit West Virginia during 1966-67.

Fernvale, a small village in north eastern New South Wales played host to a bizarre procession of usual phenomena during a few short weeks in 1927. I investigated the story between 1985 and 1986, interviewing the main reporting witness, who was a 10 year old boy at the time of the events, and his younger sister, who was also present.

The affair began with the arrival of a dancing aerial light. Over several nights it returned for repeat performances. The property cattle were apparently disturbed by the aerial apparition. One cow went beserk and had to be put down. The light returned on the following night, and once again the cows were very disturbed. On the third night the light apparently did not appear, however the cow herd were terribly disturbed. In the morning 3 cows were found dead, all looking as if they had been "scared to death." Neighbours had similar experiences. A neighbour was terrified by an "apparition", while walking home. The reporting witness was soon to see the nature of this "apparition."

Three pigs kept in a special fattening sty were apparently attacked by a mystery intruder. Two of them were found dead, with puncture marks on their necks and scratches and puncture marks over their bodies. The other pig was missing. There was no evidence of it having broken out, and besides, the railings of the sty were too high for it to get out. An unsuccessful day long search ended with the bizarre discovery of a huge patch of blood with tell tale pigs hair present, just some 150 yards away from the cow yards. The cows were in a frenzy. No further evidence of the missing pig was found.

One night during this period, the boy (the reporting witness) was awoken by strange night noises, unlike any he had heard before. He told his parents but by then the noises had stopped, and it was put down to his imagination. The noises return on the next night, this time much louder. The boy's parents also heard the noise, and were unnerved by it. The windows and doors were closed, however in the morning footprints like those of a "wellington boot tread" were found leading from the front door through to the back. Both doors were open!

The nocturnal light visitations continued for a while but soon the novelty wore off and the family stopped looking out for it. However one night the boy and his older brother returning from a night of cards with neighbours witnessed an extraordinary brightly lit, flying object travel through the valley, light up the whole area, turn slightly following the valley contours, and finally come to rest on a hill. The object glowed for some time on the ground. Eventually there was darkness. The boys investigated in the morning, confirming the presence of a complete circle of scorched grass, about 30 feet in diameter, where the object had been seen to land. The site was

apparent as a brown area amongst the green grass. Indeed the neighbours where the boys had played cards also had seen the light landing. They had come to the site to see what had been there.

The boy also reported seeing a huge bird sitting in a tree, while on his way to school. It seemed impossibly large, but was gone by the time he had fetched his teacher. When he told his parents, they told him that the nocturnal "apparition" that had so terrified one of their neighbours had been a "huge bird" that had "appeared out of the darkness", ambling towards him and flapping its wings. It was also recalled that during the 2 nights of strange night noises there was a strong smell of poultry, and the boy had found, near the house, 2 big feathers, which were unlike those of any bird he had seen. While coming off a nearby mountain the brothers also saw 2 giant birds soaring overhead. They were bigger than any bird they had ever seen, ostensibly at least 3 or 4 times bigger than a wedged tail eagle. The "birds" seemed to be gliding with wings outstretched. The boy recollected, "They were monsters... making sounds like unintelligible conversation." One of the boys' sisters and a parent had also seen "a huge big bird hopping down the hill (near the house) with its wings flapping." On another night, again from the house, they had seen "a dull type of a light - a round thing" travelling leisurely across the sky. Apparently other people in the area also reported sightings of "big birds"!

One other puzzling event was described. One night the family had gone to neighbours. The oldest son had remained behind at the house. "A strange man" dressed in an incongruous "white suit" arrived at the neighbours house. Everyone thought he was with the others. He said nothing and only stayed for a short time. Back at the house, the oldest son was in darkness. He heard a noise in the house, and sang out, "Who is there!" The boy got out of bed in time to see someone in a white suit disappearing into the darkness! The ground between the two neighbours was tricky, even more so on a pitch black night. There were 2 large creeks, that were crossed at certain points by planks, and a big stream, that were navigated by picking ones way steadily over a fallen tree trunk - no easy matter for a stranger at night! The stranger was never seen or heard of again. One wonders if he was wearing wellington type boots and kept an unusually large aviary!

The "visitors" came to the Fernvale area in 1927 drawing the locals inexorably into a flirtation with an antipodean version of the Twilight Zone. The experience became an enduring mystery that puzzled and haunted the reporting witness for some sixty years. The "visitors" had brought to Fernvale a bizarre, and at times, terrifying mystery, that appears to echo an enigma that would begin to hold sway over mankind some two decades later.

You have done some research into links between UFOs and the myths and legends in Aboriginal culture. Tell us a little about these...

The UFO phenomenon has been widely popularised as a purely contemporary manifestation, confined largely to the second half of the 20th century. Research has shown that this might not be the case and that phenomena that may be appearances of the mystery that puzzles us now, have been reported by man throughout recorded history. Such is the case with the oldest continent on earth. The legends and lore of the indigenous aborigines also provides material suggestive of interactions with anomalous aerial phenomena. Of course, in speculation about such data, it should be realised that the accounts are of historical and anthropological nature and therefore care should be taken not to interpolate too much into them.

There are numerous elements of aboriginal lore in which provocative parallels can be seen with modern day UFO experiences. Aboriginal myths incorporate the idea of "sky-beings", with the Wandjina being among the most interesting to consider. The Wandjina have been preserved in a fascinating oral tradition and in a large collection of rock paintings scattered throughout the Kimberley region of northern Australia. The paintings have received all manner of interpretations from stylised representations of a pervasive myth system to naive "ancient astronaut" theories. It is however fascinating to see that the indigenous tribes viewed the Wandjina as "the spirit in the cloud." Indeed, the unique painting style shows a logical sequence from human figures to stylised representations of clouds. This duality of anthropomorphic form and "clouds" is widespread in primitive cultures and finds an interesting parallel in the biblical accounts in "Exodus." While this line of thought is suggestive of superior "sky beings" acting as cultural catalysts for primitive societies, I should point out that making mythological component comparisons,

can make for interesting exercises, full of emotive similarities, but are purely speculative.

The Australian aboriginal shamans - "clever men" or "men of high degree" - described "celestial ascents" to meet with the "sky gods" such as Baiame, Biral, Goin and Bundjil. Many of the accounts of ritualistic initiation bare striking parallels to modern day UFO contactee and abduction lore. The aboriginal shamanic "experience of death and rising again" in the initiation of tribal "men of high degree" finds some fascinating parallels with modern day UFO abduction lore. The "chosen one" (either voluntarily or spontaneously) is set upon by "spirits", ritualistically "killed", and then experiences a wondrous journey (generally an aerial ascent to a strange realm) to meet the "sky god." He is restored to life - a new life as the tribal shaman.

Ritual death and resurrection, abduction by powerful beings, ritual removal or rearrangement of body parts, symbolic disembowelment, implanting of artefacts, aerial ascents and journeys into strange realms, alien tutelage and enlightenment, personal empowerment, and transformation - these and many other phenomena are recurring elements of the extraordinary shamanic tradition. Because of the many similarities between elements of shamanic initiation experiences, modern UFO abduction and contact narratives, and even "near death" accounts, the modern travellers of what may be the same realm could be seen as potential "cosmic shamans" of the UFO abduction and contact or "near death" genres. Because modern society has not recognised the utility of the shamanic experience in interpreting the significance of these contemporary "alien visions", their percipients are seldom able to confront the possible lengthy tradition of their experiences. It should be said, however, many UFO abduction researchers do not accept this interpretation and instead contend we are dealing with bonafide extraterrestrial abductors. Needless to say a sizeable part of the general community completely rejects any arguments for the reality of these experiences. Whatever the eventual explanation, it is impossible to ignore the parallels between traditional shaman initiation experiences and contemporary UFO abduction and contact reports.

Australian mysteries researcher Rex Gilroy records an intriguing tale allegedly from 1933 that reportedly involved an aboriginal woman in a UFO abduction experience at the isolated

locality of Discovery Well, on the northern edge of the Great Sandy Desert, in Western Australia. The story echoes the tribal legends and traditions of men and women being abducted by "sky gods" or "culture heros" in the dreamtime and the initiation experiences of aboriginal "men of high degree" or shamans. In Rex Gilroy's account, the aboriginal woman claimed her tribe had been frightened off from Discovery Well when a "large shiny egg" suddenly came down out of the sky. In broad daylight the strange object flew low over them. Several beings, described as strange, grey-skinned and man like, came out of the "egg". The woman said she was "stunned" by an object carried by one of the beings. Her story indicates she was carried aboard. Inside the "egg" the interior was glowing. She was strapped to a shining table and apparently "experimented with". The woman told stockmen of her experience, but perhaps not surprisingly they laughed at her.

This 1933 tale also anticipates the spate of UFO abduction tales that would virtually dominate the UFO landscape by the 1990s. It was not until 1957 that the sexual abduction experience of Antonio Villas Boas from Brazil occurred. The famous Betty and Barney Hill abduction story in the United States did not take place until 1961. Neither story was well known until the mid 1960s.

Some of this information argues for a literal extraterrestrial interpretation of such stories, but one should be careful not to uproot such tales from the cultural setting they emerged from and to stamp them with western cultural imperatives, such as our fascination with extraterrestrials and their possible relevance to UFO experiences. This caution is particularly relevant to the tribal legends and oral traditions. Even though similarities occur between say UFO abduction stories and the shamanic experiences of aboriginal men of high degree, literal interpretations may be incorrect. Instead of extraterrestrials we may be dealing with something else. The perspectives offered by indigenous cultures such as Australian aborigines may support other interesting possibilities. Such experiences may be about the effect that subtle forces have on humans. Fascinating work is being done on the effects of the natural landscape, "places of power" (or locations of unusual natural energies), hallucinogens, our modern electromagnetic environment, and so-called "earth lights". These are areas rich in possibilities for the extraordinary worlds of UFO and alien abduction experiences. The

popular acceptance of a literal extraterrestrial explanation may be premature or incorrect.

Bill, you have been involved in many of the most celebrated UFO cases in Australia and New Zealand. One of ufology's classic CE3 cases is that of Father Gill, and the so-called 'Boianai Visitations' of 1959...do you think that the case is as strong as ever?

Yes, I do. The Boianai "visitants" still stand as remarkable evidence for an impressive aerial anomaly and are regarded as some of the best entity reports on record.

You had the opportunity to interview Father Gill personally. What did you make of him as a witness?

I was privileged to have had two extended opportunities to interview Reverend Gill and discuss the events at Boianai. I have also corresponded and communicated with him and addressed further recent attempts to "explain" the events. I was impressed with his quiet and certain manner in relating the events.

What does Gill think he and the others saw? Did his experience change him?

He is open minded on what he may have seen and is still waiting for someone to explain what he saw. He still remains puzzled by what he saw and was pleased that an authority like Dr. Hynek had independently interviewed him and some of the other witnesses and travelled to the site.

Many sceptics point out that it was rather strange that the men should go and have an evening meal during the event...

Remember the different cultural perspectives and that the departure for dinner had occurred on the second night of spectacular but frustrating activity. They didn't land, despite Bill Gill's efforts to encourage them to do so.

The RAAF who investigated the case offered the explanation that the UFOs were planets and stars. Do you agree?

No, I do not. Some of the lesser "objects" might be explainable in this manner but it cannot validly explain the main object and the "animate beings". A close analysis of the reports argues powerfully that the RAAF "explanation" of "either known planets seen

through fast moving cloud, or natural phenomena" was unsatisfactory. Donald Menzel, and other sceptical investigators into the case, make a number of inaccuracies, such as Gill's myopia...

Over the years there have been a number of attempts to explain the Boianai sightings, including astronomical misidentifications, hoax, cargo cult effects, and that Rev. Gill had myopia and astigmatism (Rev. Gill was wearing correctly proscribed glasses). None of these explained have satisfactorily address the evidence. Astronomer and former US Air Force consultant, Dr. Allen Hynek, and his Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS), went to great lengths to investigate and research the affair. Dr. Hynek and Allen Hendry, the then chief CUFOS investigator, concluded the "lesser UFOs' are attributable to bright stars and planets, but *not* the primary object." Its size and absence of movement over three hours ruled out an astronomical explanation. My own discussions with Rev. Gill led me to the same conclusion. Most recently there was an attempt at explaining the whole affair away as Rev. Gill and the other witnesses being confused by a false horizon, and that all they had been watching was a brightly lit squid-boat and crew too busy to do more than just wave at the people on shore. This idea is not tenable when one realises that Rev. Gill was certain that the object he saw was at a 30° elevation in the sky. Only a massive tidal wave might have elevated the horizon ocean line to have a boat high enough to fit that viewing perspective. I suspect Rev. Gill and the Papuans may have noticed that! A mirage is also not tenable given the circumstances of the event.

While he accepts that the sightings remain unexplained, Rev. Gill questioned my characterisation of some attempts to explain them as "silly". He felt that these "explanations" were serious attempts to bring understanding to the events. I think that attitude encapsulate the integrity of Rev. Gill and the reality of the affair.

A classic CE 2 (physical trace case) is the Tully saucer 'Nest' of 1966. Tell us a little about it.

The Tully "saucer nest" has a very special place in UFO lore. The famous Tully "UFO nest" affair of 1966 is one of the best known accounts of an apparent UFO landing report. It is the focus of a very important nexus in the pivotal question of UFO reality.

1966 was a major year for UFO activity in Australia. The classic UFO landing at Horseshoe Lagoon near Tully, far north Queensland, and witnessed by 28 year old banana farmer George Pedley, entered the term UFO "nest" into popular UFO parlance. The locality was the centre of an extended UFO milieu that continued for many years, particularly in 1969, 1972 and 1975. The area was also the site of controversial experiments in UFO detection through remote sensing and filming.

The Tully incident has been mentioned extensively in the UFO literature over the years, and yet surprisingly many inaccuracies and misconceptions have developed. These problems became more critical when the famous incident once again became the focus of attention, this time due to the English "crop circle" controversy. The prominent schools of thought on the crop circle formations adopted the 1966 Tully incident as a classic example of their perceived explanations for the circle complexes. Their claims about the relevance of the Tully incident as the progenitor or a classic example of the currently perceived crop circle phenomenon were flawed and generally unfounded. Doug and Dave, the notorious "circle" hoaxers, also cited the Tully incident as the inspiration of their crop circle creation escapades. Instead of being an example of a wind vortex effect, "spaceship" landing site, the result of occult paranormal forces, "plasma vortex" evidence or hoaxed "saucer nest", the Pedley "nest" is a remarkable example of a UFO physical trace case. The choice of "UFO" is deliberate in that an unidentified phenomenon was apparently involved. A definitive explanation currently alludes us.

Again, a great many misconceptions have developed about the case...It was more than just flattened grass, wasn't it?

It certainly was a lot more than that. At about 9 am, on January 19th, 1966, George Pedley was driving a tractor heading south along a narrow track on Albert Pennisi's cane farm. The weather that morning was calm, with the sun shining at approximately 30 to 40 degrees east. When he was approximately 25 yards from Horseshoe Lagoon, Pedley heard, above the noise of the tractor, a loud hissing sound, "like air escaping from a tyre."

"The tractor tyres seemed O.K. to me, so I drove on," Pedley said. "Suddenly, an object rose out of the swamp. When I glanced at it, it was already 30 feet above the ground, and at

about tree-top level. It was a large, grey, saucer-shaped object, convex on the top and bottom and measured some 25 feet across and 9 feet high. While I watched, it rose another 30 feet, spinning very fast, then it made a shallow dive and took off with tremendous speed. Climbing at an angle of 45 degrees it disappeared within seconds in a south-westerly direction ...". He added, "I saw no portholes or antennas, and there was no sign of life either in or about the ship."

When Pedley drove around the bend of the track to the lagoon, there, at the spot beneath where the object had risen, was a huge, round cleared area in the swamp grass. The water in this circular area was slowly rotating and appeared to be completely clear of reeds. With this evidence of what he had observed, Pedley concluded, "I have really seen something!" He had passed the same spot some three hours earlier, as close as 12 feet, and had not seen anything unusual.

Within a few minutes he returned to his tractor which he found he had to restart. He had noted just immediately prior to hearing the hissing sound a sound like a misfire in the tractor motor. He was sure it had not stopped. As with most farmers it was not his habit to switch off the tractor motor until finished with it.

Later in the day, apparently about noon, George returned along the track and stopped for another inspection. The cleared area of the lagoon surface was no longer visible. What was clearly evident was a floating mass of reeds, approximately 30 feet in diameter, had apparently come to the surface of the lagoon during the time Pedley was absent. The floating mass of reeds and grass was noticeably distributed in a radial pattern, in a clear clockwise manner. Pedley was certain the reeds were quite green in this mass, as they were in all the surrounding reeds in the lagoon. Unable to keep this experience to himself, George Pedley had by about mid afternoon told a friend, and also Albert Pennisi, the property owner. He led them both to the spot where the extraordinary evidence lay. Both were astounded. Neither had ever seen anything like this before, despite being experienced bushmen. Pennisi "knew" his lagoon and a circular effect like this was totally unprecedented in his experience. Pennisi and Pedley waded out to the floating mass and found that it was possible to swim from either side under the mass. The water was clear of any obstructions and the lagoon

floor beneath it was smooth and clear of any roots.

Pedley and Pennisi were most struck by a particular feature of the surface of the floating reed bed - what seemed to be a clear "print" or impression of the UFO. The outer perimeter of the floating mass was thrust down markedly as if indented by a massive inverted saucer shape, with a circular centre about 6 to 8 feet in diameter. Pennisi rushed to his house and returned with a camera taking a series of photos. By then the upper surfaces of the reeds on top of the "nest" had turned brown. The underside of the reeds remained green. This browning had occurred by late afternoon, some 8 hours after the sighting by Pedley.

One of the most prolific sources of UFO stories from the Tully area was local witness Claire Noble. She reported on extensive activity that preceded the famous Pedley sighting of January, 1966. According to Mrs. Noble there had been aboriginal stories spanning many years from Tully Gorge, Murray River and mountain areas around Tully. Apparently aboriginal folklore suggested similar occurrences from earlier times although I have not come across explicit evidence of this. One of the earlier reports came from near Euramo, the closest village to Horseshoe Lagoon. In September, 1959, a Max Menzel was driving a tractor when he spotted "a brilliant, large, conical craft, approximately 30 feet long", which seemed to be hovering over the top of sugar cane, just 100 feet away. A nearby house was illuminated in a vivid red and orange light. There was a proliferation of sightings through 1965, including an apparent night time landings on the slopes of Mount Mackay on November 29th. Activity surged for months in the wake of Pedley's experience. The Tully district seemed to be haunted by UFOs. "Nest" activity reoccurred during early 1968 culminating in a strange affair involving a remote "UFO detector" and linked camera at Horseshoe Lagoon being triggered and running off footage. The undeveloped footage was posted off to Kodak. The package was returned with a note from Kodak saying the container contained no film on arrival in Melbourne, despite the original postage being indicative of a film being present. Investigators even used a local member of parliament to try to get to the bottom of the missing film mystery, but all to no avail. "Nest" activity also occurred at Horseshoe Lagoon during subsequent years including 1969, 1972, 1975, 1981 and 1987. By 1990

Albert Pennisi was indicating there had been 22 nests at his lagoon since 1966. However none were as compelling with regard to an explicit UFO connection as George Pedley's find in 1966. While hoaxing and misinterpretation was suggested in some of the latter finds, such allegations were not applicable to the original nest.

I have spoken to George Pedley on a number of occasions. Initially I found him to be reluctant to resurrect his experience. However he was interested to assist in a serious attempt to clarify what happened. For example, I spoke with George Pedley on June 3rd, 1981:

*B.C.:* From what I have read you saw what you called a spaceship? You'd didn't really describe it in much detail.

*G.P.:* Oh, I would never have said I saw a spaceship!

*B.C.:* That's what the papers were quoting you as saying.

*G.P.:* Well, that's wrong for a start. I saw an object... something going up and that's it. Just what it was, I don't know.

*B.C.:* What did you really see?

*G.P.:* Well ah, I just saw this thing in the sky and it took off! It was about 25 feet when I saw it. 25 to 30 feet in the air, when I saw it.

*B.C.:* It was in the air when you saw it?

*G.P.:* Oh yes, I didn't see it in the lagoon as they say. That's wrong. The marks were in the lagoon... and it just took off from there (in the air) It went up another 25 feet and it just flew straight out.

*B.C.:* So you saw it rise up from a position of about 20 feet when you first saw it.

*G.P.:* That's right.

*B.C.:* And the position where you first saw it, was that in the same spot where the nest were found?

*G.P.:* You mean the object?

*B.C.:* Yes, where you saw the object rise up, you say you saw it originally from 20 feet in the air, roughly about 20 feet in the air...

*G.P.:* Yeah...

*B.C.:* Where the nests were subsequently found was that directly beneath that position or...

*G.P.:* That's correct.

*B.C.:* What sort of size would you have put on it?

*G.P.:* Size? Oh, the size was pretty right, I'd say 29-30 feet, something like that.

*B.C.:* Did you get the impression of an object or was it sort of a solid looking thing or gaseous...

*G.P.:* Well I thought it was a solid thing, at the time. I didn't see any portholes, or anything like that, antennas or anything like that, they

could have been there, I'm not saying they weren't there.

*B.C.:* What sort of shape would you have put on it?

*G.P.:* Something similar to like 2 saucers, you know, face to face...

*B.C.:* What sort of colour?

*G.P.:* It seemed a silvery grey, a blue grey, like that.

*G.P.:* (with regard to the media assertions that he saw the object rise up out of the lagoon) I think there was a little bit of misunderstanding there. I would say it was their fault. Anyway, I'd never say that.

*B.C.:* So how long in sight was it for?

*G.P.:* We worked it out to say 30 seconds.

*(Part two of this extensive interview with Bill will be in the next issue...including crop circles, Fred Valentich and Kaikoura...)*

## EDITORIAL

As usual with a new year, let alone a new millenium (doh!) I would like to take a moment to thank all those who have made both PRB and the monthly meetings possible through 1999. So no frills or fancy dangly bits, just on with it:

*Jenny Randles*, for advice, kind words, great reviews, successful July lecture and PRB interview...*Andy Roberts* for the same, and for almost introducing me to the Old Bailey...*Jerome Clark*, *John Schuessler* and *Bill Chalker* for spanning interviews...*Dr. Dave Clarke* for all his help and for a successful series of articles I'm sure he could have actually been paid for elsewhere...*Tim Matthews* for his excellent lecture in August...*Jon Slater* and *Ian Gregory* for printing and putting together the magazine this year...*Mark Martin*, *Andy Ashmore*, *Iain McCafferty* *Helen Gracen* and *Adam Bradley* for original PRB articles...*Jon Slater & Eileen Fletcher* for their Forum contributions...*Richard Moss* for the hard work he puts in on our web-site...*Bill* for his kind and generous donation to start off our UFO library... all the members of the Yorkshire UFO Society for continuing support, my wife *Jacqui* for putting up with all the curses and profanity as I manly struggle to produce a 20-page UFO monthly, (you ungrateful bastards!), and my main man *Matthew*, 2 years old in February and a big fan of "Aynas" (*Aliens*) for dragging me away from my computer to play with him and his toy WWF wrestlers. Hey, it's a break! And anyone else I forgot to mention. Happy New Year !!!

## WATCHING THE DETECTIVE Me, Tony Dodd and ufology by Andy Roberts

### Alien Investigator: The Case Files of Britains leading UFO Investigator

by Tony Dodd

Headline 1999

ISBN 0747274723

p/b 246 pp

photographs

£9.99

So, Tony Dodd's written a book about UFOs. This is a review of that book and I'm recommending you buy and read it. But before all that.....

Tony Dodd eh? Dodd 200 as we frequently refer to him in our Masonic Luciferian meetings. Tony Dodd, ahhh, what memories that name conjures up. Dodd first entered my consciousness in the early 1980s when he was a big wig with YUFOS<sup>1</sup> and their magazine QUEST. Those were the days when UFO magazine was but a twinkle in the Birdsalls third eye and Philip Mantle wasn't yet a household name. I fondly remember infiltrating two Quest/YUFOS meetings at Centenary House in Leeds and listening to Tony Dodd doing his magicians trick, producing rumour after unverified rumour out of his metaphorical hat. At these meetings and at the YUFOS conferences Tony was obviously the main man, a serving police officer who, as we all know, are the most credible of witnesses. A man who'd seen, up close and personal, over 200 hundred UFOs. What's more he'd photographed some of them and his photo of two lights on Carleton Moor and of a gaseous something at Addingham had me swooning. At that time I was a sceptical ufologist, very much so, but I had a fascination for earthlights and was more than prepared to believe that D-200 had captured some of these elusive critters on film, even though his tales of regular night time encounters with Adamski saucers sat uneasily and contrarily with his photographic evidence.

The contradictory nature of what Dodd claimed to have seen and what he'd *actually* photographed bugged me.

And of course, Dodd had been at the centre of one of the 1980s biggest and most contentious UFO events- the Cracoe Fell photographic case. Strangely - or perhaps not - this case is left out of Alien Investigator but its something we should all bear in mind when thinking about the claims Dodd makes.

It's March 1981 and two serving police officers see a dazzling object hovering above a field some two miles away. They watch it for an hour, take pictures and communicate with Dodd on the phone. Suddenly these photographs are big news the centre piece of every YUFOS lecture. Dodd even appeared on GMTV with them. The words structured craft of unknown origin are bandied about and Dodd will not entertain any suggestions as to the real nature of the craft. The police officers can't be mistaken, they saw what they saw, it was an object with bright lights. Bright lights my arse! It was a rock reflection. Dodd was told this at the time by a farmer in Cracoe village and ignored it. It could and can still be seen every day to some degree or another. Yet Dodd stuck to the UFO story. Even when I reproduced the phenomenon on film in 1986 it took several years before Dodd would finally relinquish his belief in the UFO interpretation of the Cracoe Fell photo.

Yet after that event, in the late 1980s, whilst helping Paul Devereux with earthlights research, I found myself taking tea with Tony at his house in Threshfield. I thought this was pretty generous, we'd dished him right left and centre, trashed one of his keynote cases, yet tea and cake was still very much on the agenda. The Devereuxs, Dave Clarke and myself arrived soaked and steaming from the moors and Tony and his wife made us feel very welcome and he was only too pleased to answer our questions (we left out the tricky ones, tea and cake on a cold day have that effect!) and graciously allowed Paul to use his photos in his book.

But his stories, often in the pages of QUEST, just got weirder and weirder. Then in the mid 90s the Birdsalls kicked off into space and became UFO Magazine. All pretence at being

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<sup>1</sup> (Not us...-Ed)

an investigative group was left behind as they boarded the train to profitsville. At that time Tony was coming out of the police force and rumour was rife that hed used some of his getting out money to help fund Graham and Marks foray into publishing.

And still the stories got weirder. Cattle mutilations appeared on the scene and there were dark hints from Tony that he was having his phone tapped, mail tampered with and that maybe, just maybe, he was under surveillance from, gulp,.....them.

Then something happened. Perhaps Tony's stories got just *too* weird, because he abruptly left UFO magazine. Word was that the fruits of his labours in the UFO mines were being carefully sifted and the glittering jewels would soon be revealed in that book hed always promised to write.

But first there was his involvement with writer Jean Ritchie and the so called Jason Andrews abduction case, which disgusted myself and many other ufologists. As far as I could see by being complicit in the research and, by default the eventual publication of this child's abduction stories, Tony was far more responsible for violation of his life than any so called alien intervention. Childrens lives can be ruined in so many abusive ways, and when the terrors and uncertainties of childhood are teased out by adults and amplified into book form for little but profit and fame you can be certain that another little fairy has died. This case is reprised in Tony's book - ...it soon became apparent that Ann Andrews and he son Kason are both abductees (p.94), it should make you very concerned indeed if you are at all concerned about the welfare of children.

The last time I saw Tony was in 1997 at one of Tim Matthews Southport conferences. He looked tired but was still banging on about aliens, conspiracies, cover ups and how even little voles were being mutilated by, well, that bit wasn't quite clear but my guess is it was by a covered up conspiracy of alien vole violators. It obviously made perfect sense to many in the audience because you could have heard a rodent gasp it's last breath, and in the breaks he was surrounded by starry-eyed believers fearful for their pets and livestock.

Then came the book. If you want to know what's going on at the paranoid, American influenced end of the UFO spectrum in these isles you have to read it. In fact Id go so far

as to say that its required reading to follow what is happening to UK ufology as we go from 99 to 00.

The introduction is a killer. A bizarre account of how one of Dodd's informants with a vitally important video to deliver to him, was chased through London streets as two thugs attempted to stop him. He knew that if he drove out of London they would catch him on the motorway. His car only stood a chance against theirs in the crowded London streets, and only then because he was on home ground.

Cor blimey! So the guy gives them the slip and posts it. Phew! At least the TRUTH would be delivered safely by the Royal Mail. Did Tony get it? Did he buggery - it was obviously intercepted. The video allegedly showed aliens on a warship, on an underground base, UFOs on a USAF base and aliens shopping in Sainsburys. I made one of those up - but which one? This sets the tone for the book - anonymous informants, narrowly missed chances, the truth just out of Tony's grasp.

Then we get some old tosh about Tony's early life and how he struggled to become a hard bitten police officer, eventually ending up in the Yorkshire Dales. I'm surprised it hasn't been made into a TV series! Its thrilling stuff and Dodd's nocturnal missions around deserted moorlands were an X Filers dream. Sighting after close range sighting, always with someone else, often other serving police officers. Wow! We might say, surely police officers don't/can't lie, can't be wrong/are credible witnesses. This stuff is dynamite, it's just got to be true. I'm sure that's the angle his publishers hoped would work with the book buying public. And well it might. But they'd be wrong, as its utter nonsense as a perusal of UFO police cases and criminal trials involving police will readily show you. Just as an aside October 1967 is littered with cases where police officers the length and breadth of England chased Venus across the countryside night after night. And Tony himself has been proved wrong with cases such as the aforementioned Cracoe Fell case. But I'm not for a minute suggesting Dodd is lying about any of these incidents - he's a police officer and they Don't lie y'know. But I am doubting the descriptions and quality of what he saw. Let's cut the crap - police officers are flesh and blood creations like you and me. They are as prone to misperception and even darker humans traits

as the rest of us. So Tony was in the police. So what?

How can I be so cruel.....Easy. Lets boil it right down to what really matters. Dodd was a highly experienced PC in those days. He claims to have regularly seen many UFOs, often of the clearly defined domed Adamski style disc type. Dodd had also taken photographs of balls of light, which he published. Yet despite him knowing he could go out almost at will and see these most fantastic craft he never managed to photograph any. Like Robert Plant and Rolf Harris, it makes me wonder.....

In chapter six Tony moves his attention to the animal mutilations which have, like all things in American ufology, come to our shores. Guided by Tony's wisdom on the matter it soon becomes clear that none of Gods creatures are safe from the alien menace. Lets face it we need animal mutilations like we need a hole in the head, but Tony's got em. You name a creature and Tony has reports of them being found with holes in the strangest of places. It may be risible, but it tugs at our heartstrings. The idea that aliens could be violating ickle creatures is worse, far worse than anything Watership Down could ever throw at us. But according to Tony its happening in a woodland dell somewhere near you now.

Indeed so many mutes have been uncovered by Dodd (and we must therefore assume that he has only touched the tip of the iceberg) that no vole, badger or fox is safe of an evening. Perhaps we could accept this if these cases were isolated and verified. But when you do the numbers, multiply out the sheer number of aliens and UFOs it would take to sustain this level of human abducting and animal mutilation, well it all looks rather silly doesn't it?

Animal mutilation is a tricky and emotive subject at the best of times because yes, there is evidence that animals are mutilated, but as with the horse slashings there is also evidence that human beings are always responsible. The psycho-sexual drives, desires and fantasies of our own species are a damn sight more perverse than any of Tony's alien fantasies. There is also the problem of interpretation - mutilations can often be predator damage; clean neat cuts the result of insect activity, and the fact that rectums, vaginas, eyes etc. are frequently cored out is

only evidence that predators like the tasty, soft, easily accessible bits.

Tony's on a roll now and he ups the stakes again and again. Animal mutes are followed by his desperate and disturbing attempts at linking human deaths with UFOs and their occupants. But all he can muster in evidence are a few obscure cases from abroad. Sure, humans are found dead in mysterious circumstances every day, mutilated even, but Tony is again oblivious to the same problems which affect animal mutilations and can just as easily be applied to humans.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of Tony's fascination with dead animals and people are the photographs. Deer and fox with holes in their heads (yeah? and? so?) are depicted rather pointlessly, but the photograph of an allegedly mutilated human is, literally, obscene. How does Dodd know the man died in the way he suggests? Are the man's family aware that a photograph of their dead and mutilated relative has been spread round the world in the name of profit and titillation? I doubt it very much. Would you like to see your son or father displayed in this way?

And isn't it just a tad convenient that the most bizarre evidence comes from locations where no rational investigators can easily reach?. South America has long been the origin of the most crazy of UFO stories and if even half of the tales are to be believed the continent is a holiday destination for gnomes, dwarves, elves, monsters, greys and so on.

A case in point here, somewhat closer to home is the Zygmunt Adamski case from Todmorden, which just won't go away despite there being *no evidence whatsoever* to connect Adamski with UFOs other than because he shared his name with George Adamski the famous UFO hoaxter! An unusual death, a name shared with a ufologist and bingo! That's the banal level at which this book operates. But then it's probably the banal level at which most of its readers operate at too.

Elsewhere Dodd unbelievably resurrects the Thomas Mantell case. I thought no-one now believed that Mantell died chasing a UFO but no, Tony has got an anonymous informant who tells him different. Yet another anonymous informant has told Tony that the Captain William Schaffner has more to it than meets the eye. And yes, the loss of a Lightning jet flown by a well qualified pilot is an unusual

story. And there are alleged anomalies about the state of the jet when it was recovered. But the factual evidence available, including that from a member of the ground crew doesn't suggest a UFO element in the story. The anonymous source does and so Tony carefully conflates the disparate strands until a far bigger mystery is created.

When considering the official version of the vents which lead to the pilots demise Dodd sanctimoniously writes we cannot prove that these versions of events are not correct. So why would you want to Tony? Why would you want to link a human beings death to a story given to you by a source you choose to keep anonymous? Why indeed are all the best cases in the book based more or less entirely on anonymous sources? And if you can't prove something why suggest it in the first place?

Then, at last, we come to Tony's version of the Berwyn Mountains UFO Crash. It would be funny, if it wasn't so sad, to see what a hash Dodd has made of relating this case. I know a considerable amount of detail about the case having spent two years investigating it, and there are certain irrefutable facts.

Tony's investigation apparently consisted of a little light reading and some conversations with Margaret Fry. Whilst the majority of my review of Tony's book is based on opinion, with the Berwyn case I can safely say I know what I am talking about and Tony is just plain old fashioned wrong about everything but the date! Firstly the nurse was not asked to go to the scene of the crash - she volunteered. A shading of meaning but a very important one. The former indicates that the police really thought something had crashed whilst the latter indicates the nurse, living so near, thought she could be of possible service if something had crashed. Nor did the nurse see little flecks of white light (p206). As per her interview with the British Geological Survey (BGS) in 1974 and my interview in 1998 it is clear the nurse saw *vehicles* and *torchlights* - she described them as such in 1974, when the case at that time was merely an investigation into an earth tremor and the fantasies of ufologists were yet to come. Neither did the nurse meet a military vehicle and was ordered off the mountain. She stated to me that she saw not a living soul on the mountain. Obviously they have made her change her story!

Dodd then says local ufologist Margaret Fry

started an immediate investigation - what utter and complete rubbish. Margaret didn't even live in the area until many years after the event, and her investigation (based on my interviews with Margaret) consist of unrecorded interviews, scraps of notes, rumour, anecdote and belief. In fact several witness I interviewed in the area had harsh words to say about how she led them on. You may find this a bit hard on a fellow UFO investigator but that's how it is. If people are going to make ludicrous statements about alien craft then the time when they could get away with shoddy investigation is long gone. So there we are. Tony has told us much, yet he's told us so little and in the end we are no nearer to knowing anything about the matters he attempts to discuss in his book. What are we to make of it? Well, as I said at the start, buy the book and read it yourself. These themes and cases won't go away just because I or anyone else disagrees with them, so the correct thing to do is arm yourself with the relevant information and know your enemy!

With this book Tony Dodd reminds me of no one more strongly than Donald Keyhoe, the 1950s US populariser of cover-ups, and the man most responsible for the paranoid mind set of thousands of ufologists and members of the public. I was even tempted to title this review *Through The Keyhoe*.

But then we all know who lives in a belief system like this.

Tony Dodd does.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

*As always, YUFOS likes to accept all points of view, and we invite anyone who has read Tony's book and disagrees with Andy to put pen to paper and tell him where he's got it wrong. Then Andy will probably reply to you where YOU are wrong, and I'm sure that much hilarity can only be round the corner...*

*Ufology. It's good, innit?*

*Oh, and the YUFOS to which Andy refers is not the Yorkshire UFO Society (YUFOS), but the Yorkshire UFO Society (YUFOS).<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>2</sup> *We nicked the name after the Birdsall Brothers dumped it and became all International and Questioning it too, until Dave Clarke told us... But it IS a good name though. YUFOS... Yoo-Foes, geddit?*

## PROSAIC EXPLANATIONS: THE FAILURE OF UFO SKEPTICISM

by Bruce Maccabee

(brumac@compuserve.com)

c B. Maccabee, 1999

*"In over 30 years of UFO investigation I have not studied a single sighting for which I could not find a prosaic explanation."*

-Paraphrase of a statement

by Philip J. Klass

Could some UFOs actually be manifestations of Other Intelligences (OIs) or Non-Human Intelligences (NHIs) such as extraterrestrials (ETs), visiting the earth and interacting with human beings? Or are all reports of such sightings simply mistakes, hoaxes, or dreams of the hopeful believers? It all comes down to explanation. If there were no sightings which are richly detailed, credible, and yet unexplainable, the UFO subject would be based totally on theoretical expectations, as is the so-called Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI). SETI is based on the theory that we could detect electromagnetic radiation, such as radio waves or light, that is radiated toward us, intentionally or unintentionally, by extraterrestrial civilisations.

If all sightings had reasonable explanations, then theoretical speculations about ET intelligences visiting the earth might be interesting but of little practical consequence. Ufology, if there were such a thing in the absence of unexplainable sightings, would consist of studying witnesses who, evidently, failed to identify explainable (identifiable) phenomena or who simply made up "tall stories" about ET visitation. "Ufological science," if it existed under these circumstances, would consist of psychology, psychiatry and perhaps sociology.

There are skeptics who believe that this is exactly what ufology should consist of.

Noted UFO skeptic Philip J. Klass has provided perhaps the most straightforward statement of the skeptic's position on UFO sightings in his book *UFOs: the Public Deceived* (Prometheus Books, Buffalo, NY, 1983, pg. 297), wherein he writes that the "Occam's Razor" alternative to unexplained UFO sightings, is this:

*"...roughly 98% of sightings are simply misidentifications of prosaic, if sometimes*

*unfamiliar, objects by honest persons..(and) ... the balance, roughly 2%, are self-delusions or hoaxes by persons who like to spin tall tales and become instant celebrities."*

In other words, UFO reports are the results of misidentifications, delusions, and hoaxes, period! There is not one case for which there is no "prosaic explanation." As evidence of this Mr. Klass has offered prosaic explanations for a number of famous sightings. Of course, Mr. Klass has not attempted to explain each of the hundreds of thousands of sighting reports which have been made over the last half century. However, he has proposed explanations for a representative sample of reports which are classified as "good" by most ufologists and, on this basis, he has generalised his statement to apply to the bulk of the UFO sighting reports.

Mr. Klass' statement is that he has provided "prosaic" explanations for all the reports he has studied. A reader of Mr. Klass' analysis would likely assume that each prosaic explanation is, in fact, the actual explanation for a particular sighting. At least, that is what the typically logical, but uneducated (in the deep lore of ufology) and trusting reader would infer from Klass' statement. It is also what the generally skeptical scientific community and the news media would infer from Klass' statement. Unfortunately, his statement is wrong.

Klass would have the reader believe that he has correctly explained all the sightings he has investigated. If he were correct then his argument about misidentifications, hoaxes, and delusions making up 100% of UFO sightings would be unassailable, at least for the sightings which he has investigated. (One can always imagine that some sighting(s) not investigated by Klass is (are) unexplainable, but that's not the point of this discussion.) However, in some cases he has offered prosaic explanations

which are demonstrably wrong. In other cases he has proposed explanations which may not be provably wrong but which are, at the very least, unconvincing. (Note that in the absence of confirmatory information, it may not be possible to decide whether an explanation is correct, but it is possible to decide whether or not an explanation is convincing.) Hence Klass' claim is literally correct: he has offered prosaic explanations for the sightings he has investigated. But the logical inference that these are the correct explanations is wrong: there are sightings which he has investigated but has not explained. From the scientific point of view, it is not sufficient to propose explanations that are incorrect.

To say that at least some of Klass' prosaic explanations, even explanations for well publicised sightings, are wrong is a strong statement. However, an even stronger statement can be made: Klass' analysis has demonstrated that at least some of the cases he has investigated have no prosaic explanations. Why is this? Because Klass, having analysed these cases carefully, has proposed the only potential explanations that remain after all other explanations have been rejected. That is, there are no other potential prosaic explanations that make any sense. Hence, when his proposed explanations are proven wrong there are no remaining candidate explanations and the sighting becomes that of a TRue UFO (TRUFO), which might be evidence of OI/NHI/ET.

## The Case of the Damaged Police Car

The first example of a case for which Klass' proposed prosaic explanation is wrong, or, at best, unconvincing, is the rather traumatic experience of police officer Val Johnson of Warren, Minnesota. (See the above reference, page 223). Shortly after 1:30 a.m., August 27, 1980, as he was cruising the countryside in his police car in an area of low population, he noticed a bright light that he could see through the trees of a small wooded area. Thinking it might be a landed airplane carrying illegal drugs from Canada, he accelerated along a road toward the area of the light. Suddenly this light moved rapidly toward his car. He heard a noise of breaking glass and lost consciousness. When he regained consciousness, he was leaning forward with his head against the top of the steering wheel. There was a red mark on his forehead which suggests that he might have bumped his head on the wheel hard enough to render him

unconscious (he said he was not wearing his seatbelt at the time). After regaining consciousness he called the police station. It was 2:19 a.m.. He had been unconscious for about 40 minutes. He reported that something had "attacked" his car.

When another officer arrived on the scene a few minutes after Johnson's report, he found Johnson's car nearly 90 degrees to the road (blocking the road) and skid marks nearly 100 ft long. Johnson was found in a distraught condition, in a state of shock. He said he recalled seeing the bright light rushing toward his police car and he recalled hearing breaking glass. The next thing he recalled was realising he was sitting with his head on the steering wheel. He did not recall skidding to a stop. He complained about pain in his eyes and was taken to a doctor who could find no eye damage. He did not complain of a headache.

Of particular importance is damage to the police car. One of the two glass headlight covers on the driver's side had been broken; there was a large crack in the windshield on the driver's side; a plastic cover on the light bar on top of the car had a hole in it; there was a dent in the top of the hood, and two of the three spring-mounted antennas were bent 60 or more degrees, with the bend occurring over a short distance (i.e., sharp bends). Examination of the antenna surfaces using a microscope showed that the insect matter ("bug tar") that coated the antennas was "stretched" at the bend, but there was no other disturbance of the insect matter. Evidently the antennas had not been scraped or rubbed when they were bent. Also, the electric clock in the car and Johnson's mechanical wristwatch both read fourteen minutes slow, although Johnson was certain he had set both before he had begun his nightly patrol.

The damage to the car was physical evidence that something strange had taken place. Careful studies of the damage were made by the police department and by scientists working with the Centre for UFO Studies. They could find no evidence or reason to believe that Johnson had damaged his own car. They could find no prosaic explanation for the sighting. Klass also investigated the sighting. He spoke to several people who knew Johnson and asked about his interest in UFOs. According to his friends he seemed no more interested in UFOs than in numerous other subjects. They could provide no reason to believe he would intentionally damage his car to create a UFO incident. He might "hide your

coffee cup," one gentleman told Klass, but "as far as we know, he's never told any untruths." Klass concluded his discussion of the Officer Johnson UFO sighting by offering two alternatives. He wrote:

*"The hard physical evidence leaves only two possible explanations for this case. One is that Johnson's car was attacked by malicious UFO-nauts, who reached out and hit one headlight with a hammerlike device, then hit the hood and windshield, then very gently bent the two radio antennas, being careful not to break them, then reached inside the patrol car to set back the hands of the watch on Johnson's arm and the clock on the car's dashboard.*

*"These UFO-nauts would then have taken off Johnsons' glasses, aimed an intense ultraviolet light into his eyes, and replaced his glasses, while being careful not to shine ultraviolet on his face.*

*"Or the incident is a hoax. There are simply no other possible explanations."*

Klass' amusing version of the "UFO/ET hypothesis" should not detract from the importance of his statement that, "There are simply no other possible explanations." In other words, if it was not a hoax then there is no prosaic explanation for this sighting. Perhaps Klass realised that the hoax hypothesis was unconvincing at best and intentionally tried to make the UFO alternative seem silly. (One envisions "little green men" or "grey entities" molesting the police car and officer Johnson, perhaps laughing gleefully as they hammered his car!)

The police department did not accuse Officer Johnson of damaging the police car. Yet, Klass' book, published about 3 years after the incident, clearly implies that this event had to be a hoax since it was clearly not a misidentification or a delusion (recall that, according to Klass, roughly 98% are misidentifications and the remainder are hoaxes or delusions).

Several years after the publication of the book I challenged Klass to send a letter to the police chief of Warren, Minnesota, along with a copy of his book chapter so that the police chief would realise that he should charge Johnson with damaging the car. So far as I know, Klass never did send such a letter and officer Johnson has never been charged with damaging the police car.

## UFO In The Snake River Canyon

Klass is not the first to offer prosaic explanations. Dr. J. Allen Hynek, who, in his later years, became a strong proponent of UFO investigation (founder of the Centre for UFO Studies in 1973), began his "UFO career" in 1948 as a strong skeptic/debunker. His explanations of a number of UFO sightings helped to set the tone of governmental UFO investigation in the early years. One of his most unconvincing explanations was that offered for the sighting by Mr. A. C. Urie and his two sons on August 13, 1947. They lived in the Snake River Canyon at Twin Falls, Idaho.

According to the FBI investigative report of this case, at about 1:00 p.m. Mr. Urie "sent his boys to the (Salmon) river to get some rope from his boat. When he thought they were overdue he went outside to his tool shed to look for them. He noticed them about 300 feet away looking in the sky and he glanced up to see what he called the flying disc."

This strange object was flying at high speed along the canyon which is about 400 feet deep and 1,200 feet across at that point. It was about seventy-five feet above the floor of the canyon (and so more than 300 feet below the edge of the canyon) and moving up and down as it flew. It seemed to be following the contours of the hilly ground beneath it. Urie, who said he was at about the same level as the UFO, so that he had a side view, estimated it was about twenty feet long, ten feet wide and ten feet high, with what appeared to be exhaust ports on the sides. It was almost hat shaped with a flat bottom and a dome on top. Its pale blue colour made Urie think that it would be very difficult to see against the sky, although he had no trouble seeing it silhouetted against the opposite wall of the canyon. On each side there was a tubular shaped fiery glow, like some sort of exhaust. He said that when it went over trees they didn't sway back and forth, but rather the treetops twisted around, which suggests that the air under the object was being swirled into a vortex. He and his sons had an excellent view of the object for a few seconds before it disappeared over the trees about a mile away. He thought it was going 1,000 miles an hour.

Hynek offered the following "prosaic explanation," which became part of the official Air Force record on the sighting (see the files of Project Blue Book): an atmospheric eddy.

Why this explanation? The object appeared pale bluish in colour, like the sky, and the trees were moving around as if a swirling wind went over them. Hynek explained the blue colour as a "reflection" of the blue sky in the hypothetical atmospheric eddy. He offered no explanation of how this eddy could appear to have the strange "hat" shape, be travelling at about 1,000 miles per hour, how there could be a fiery glow at one location on the side of the "eddy" or why the eddy would appear as a solid rather than transparent object.

With a little thought he could have realised that no atmospheric eddy could reflect or bend

light (as in a mirage) coming down from the sky enough to redirect it toward the witnesses. An eddy is a density inhomogeneity in the atmosphere which, in principle, might bend light by a very small fraction of a degree. However, for Hynek's explanation to work, the light would have to be bent five degrees or more, far beyond anything the atmosphere could do. Hynek's explanation is another failed prosaic explanation. Even Hynek realised this and repudiated his explanation years later (see *The Hynek UFO Report*, Dell Pub. Co, NY, 1977).

(Next issue....Kenneth Arnold explained?)

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## A CENTURY OF SHEFFIELD SAUCERS

### Part 6 – The 80s

By Dr. David Clarke

Twenty years ago a Sheffield teenager lugged an oversized tape-recorder from a bus stop at Ranmoor and tapped on the front door of a large detached house on a hill. The man who answered the door was a tall and distinguished chartered surveyor called William Clark-Graham, the year was 1980 and this was the first UFO assignment for a wide-eyed schoolboy called David Clarke. Back then I believed six impossible things before breakfast, a meal usually made up of sci fi films such as *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and the latest paperback UFO pot-boilers.

It wasn't an impressive case to start a career chasing flying saucers. Mr Clark-Graham, his wife and four children had contacted RAF Finningley and local newspapers after watching a mysterious moving light which appeared in the sky over the western horizon in the direction of the Peak District hills. The lights first appeared in the early hours of a January morning and Mr Clark-Graham, who was an amateur astronomer, was convinced they could not be aircraft.

"We were passing binoculars to each other when someone saw a second light," he said. "Then we watched both of them flying parallel for about 20 minutes before they disappeared below the tree line." After tape-recording their story, it was my task as a fledgling BUFORA

investigator to look for possible explanations, which at that time involved checks with the local astronomy society and Bawtry Met Office. In this case all the indications were that the family had seen a satellite or high altitude balloon in the clear January sky or a "moon halo" caused by the reflection of light on ice crystals in the upper atmosphere.

This might seem an extremely dull case but it was the very first that I investigated, and it is fairly typical of the kind of 'bread and butter' sightings which reach groups such as YUFOS on a daily basis. In this case it marked the opening of the 1980s, a decade which saw one of the biggest UFO flaps ever recorded in Sheffield and South Yorkshire during the winter of 1987-88. By the late 80s the subject would become swamped with claims about

alien autopsies and implants, abductions and interbreeding, underground bases, all neatly packaged and delivered to thousands of believers via the World Wide Web. But those who lap up such stories today would do well to learn some of the vital lessons about human perception and deception which begin to crystallise as one interviews witnesses in the real world.

It remains a sobering fact that in excess of 90 per cent of reports of Lights in the Sky such as the case from Ranmoor can be accounted for

by reference to a host of down-to-earth explanations, ranging from bright stars and planets to bolide meteors, satellites and even the moon. One of the first cases I looked into actually involved a spectacular misidentification of the moon. Two night nurses on duty on a ward high up in the Doncaster Royal Infirmary building reported seeing a bright white light hovering on the horizon as they went about their duties early one morning in March 1981. As they watched the light it resolved into a classic "dome-shaped" flying saucer which slowly materialised out of the early morning mist, and at one stage they said they could clearly see portholes or windows along the side of the UFO.

I quizzed both witnesses, got them to draw the object they had seen and visited Doncaster town centre to work out the precise direction in which the UFO had "materialised" and later "dematerialised", as they put it. Suspicions were immediately aroused by the length of time this UFO had remained in view, which in this case was something in the order of three hours.

As Jenny Randles has noted somewhere, cases involving this length of time invariably have simple, natural explanations. In this case, as you have probably guessed, it was clear from the direction of sight and from the recorded moon rise and setting times for that particular morning that the nurses had indeed seen, and radically misidentified, the moon. But, I was forced to ask myself, why did the moon appear to these two observers in the form of a flying saucer? How could the moon appear to have windows and portholes? And what's more, how could two apparently sober and reliable observers be fooled by such an everyday phenomenon?

It was then that some of the schoolboy enthusiasm began to meet harsh reality, a stage at which many others flounder in the murky waters of belief and evidence. Many others have dropped out of the subject at this point and gone on to search elsewhere when the solid evidence they expect will confirm their beliefs melts through their fingers. For while some of a more paranoid mindset might like to kid themselves that ET may have paid a visit Doncaster that chilly morning and chose to hover in precisely the same place as the moon just to give two nurses a thrill, the sane and sensible solution for this case was to me unescapable.

This kind of case was a sobering jolt for someone who once firmly believed that most "UFOs" could not possibly be anything other than alien visitors. As was the realisation that so many people were capable of turning conventional aircraft into giant triangular-shaped UFOs hovering a few hundred feet above the ground. The facts are, for example, that Sheffield lies below a number of busy air corridors and today more than 2,000 aircraft pass over the city every 24 hour period, including both small civilian planes and commercial airliners at higher altitudes, providing plenty of opportunity for triggering sightings of lights in the sky.

With all that said and done, there remain a number of cases in my files which have defied obvious explanation and continue to puzzle and perplex me to this day. There was, for example, the strange sight witnessed by a courting couple parked on Myers Lane at Stannington, who claimed they had been chased by a dome-shaped object containing a tall humanoid figure with "fizzy hair and furry boots" (no, it wasn't Robert Plant). The fear this couple displayed five years after the event was clear to behold, as was their inability to understand how this UFO could vanish into inky blackness as they turned out of the road into a area lit by streetlights. It was tales such as this, with their obvious parallels with psychic experiences and the appearances of ghosts and apparitions, which got me thinking there was a lot more to the mystery of flying saucers than the simplistic idea that we were dealing with visitors from another solar system.

Even more mysterious than the Stannington case was the "missing time" story I was told by man from Swinton, near Rotherham, who would never allow his name to be used. Richard, as I will call him, wanted to tell me about an event in the early 1980s which had become deeply etched in his mind, and which has always struck me as having similarities with the initial experience recalled by PC Alan Godfrey in West Yorkshire, which occurred in November, 1980. In this case Richard was walking to his parent's home in Greasborough one autumn night with his brother after visiting a sick relative. They had reached Carr House Hill when they had stopped in their tracks after seeing an object which they described as being the size of a double-decker bus hovering in the air beside an electricity pylon beside the road.

"We could see the outline and a row of green lights or windows along the dullish outline,"

Richard told me. "It never moved or made any noise as we watched it for several minutes, which convinced us it was not an aeroplane. We both got a really eerie feeling or impression that the thing was watching us at the same time we were watching it – it was uncanny."

After a short while the UFO simply vanished, and the next memory Richard said he had was arriving at his parent's home nearby. His brother would never discuss what they had seen, he told me, but Richard said: "I often have a feeling that there was more to it, something that I have forgotten. But the more I try to remember the more puzzling it becomes. I has stayed on my mind ever since."

Richard came forward with his story in 1993, following publicity for the film *Fire in the Sky*, neighbour saw on a spring evening hovering above a row of shops at Gleadless Town End.

"It was about dusk and I was walking along the road and met a neighbour called Ken and we stopped to talk," she told me. "We looked into the sky and saw a white light over a shop. It was just like the sort of craft you expect to see – a saucer with a dome on top and a red light underneath which became dimmer. I could see machinery inside and two people, pale but human in shape and wearing ice blue uniforms. They had straight hair parted in the middle, but quite thick and clipped above the shoulders. The nearest I could think to describe it was to liken it to Cleopatra's hair. One man- oh, I say he was a man, I don't know why – had his hands on what looked like the controls and just stood there looking down. The other was at the back with his hands behind his back."

Jean drew me a sketch of the UFO marked "Space Machine", which I still have. It shows a classic flying saucer with central cabin and control panels which look for all the world like something from *Blake's Seven* or *Dr Who*. That's not to say I did not believe Jean, who told her story in a honest, straightforward way which made it difficult to dismiss it, even though I was never able to trace the neighbour.

"I saw it for a couple of seconds and afterwards Ken said he saw the same thing but was frightened of what people would think," she explained. "I only saw him a couple of times after that but he never told his workmates. I met him years later and said, 'Do you remember...?' and he definitely did but was still nervous about it." Probing deeper, it soon

a semi-fictionalised re-working of the well-known Travis Walton "abduction." Sensibly, he rejected overtures from UFOlogists who wanted to offer hypnotic regression as a method of unlocking his suspected period of missing time, but a large question mark continues to hang over what it was these two men saw in Rotherham that autumn night.

The most memorable sighting involving a "close encounter" I remember from this period actually happened in the spring of 1979 but was not reported until the mid-80s. When my case report appeared in the pages of *Northern UFO News* it was billed as the case of "aliens over the chip shop." The witness, Jean Ford, was then in her 50s and like Richard was desperate to know more about what she and a

became evident that Jean's UFO encounter was just one of many weird encounters she had experienced throughout her life. She also described sightings of an apparition of a dead relative, precognition and poltergeist-type phenomena in her home, the same kind of stories which turn up in the accounts of many other 'close encounter' percipients.

Although frightened by her experience, Jean was not nervous about discussing it in public and in 1993 she was interviewed by Ian Soutar in the *Sheffield Telegraph* in a feature accompanying a review of *Fire in the Sky*. She said she was a little fed up of people asking her if the aliens she saw had popped down to pick up a bottle of milk from the Co-op, but added:

"I do get upset when people don't believe it, but at other times I think, oh well, if that is what they want to think. I think a lot of people laugh this sort of thing off because they are a bit frightened themselves."

(Part 7 of this series will summarise the UFO flap which gripped South Yorkshire over the winter of 1987-88.)

## FROM AROUND THE WORLD... AND BEYOND!!

*UFOs, conspiracies, paranormal and fortune events compiled by Dave Baker*

### TEST SITE GAINS CONTAMINATED LAND

(A story in the Las Vegas Review Journal says that Area 51 is being relinquished by the Department of Energy.)

(Keith Rogers)

---- Begin excerpt ----

The Department of Energy made it official Wednesday: the Nevada Test Site has grown by nearly 200 square miles thanks to some surface contamination from a 1968 nuclear test and President Clinton's signature on a law this year.

The new law, according to an Energy Department statement, also serves to "correct several land use and jurisdiction misalignments throughout the complex."

That means the Air Force takes control over DOE's rectangle around Groom Lake, along the northeastern corner of the test site, which had been controlled by the Air Force under a secret agreement.

The location, also known as Area 51 - the site of at least one classified airstrip - has been shown on government maps as a 38,400-acre rectangle primarily in Lincoln County that belonged to the Department of Energy but was controlled by the Air Force and had not been shown by DOE as part of the Nevada Test Site.

The "misalignments," according to the Energy Department's statement, "had become outdated and inefficient because of evolving mission needs among the Department of Energy and Department of Defense."

### CHINESE BIGFOOT TRACKED AT NATURE PRESERVE

On Sunday, December 5, 1999, the China Daily reported that a scientific team in the Shennongjia mountains of Hubeir Province, China had found physical evidence of a large

hairy hominid, which they called "a wild man."

Standing eight feet tall with long red hair and a taste for corn on the cob, (China's) Big Foot is back and apparently running around a nature preserve in central China.

Chinese scientists are on the trail of the legendary beast after a hunter reported seeing a creature in Hubeir province in Shenongjia Nature Reserve two months ago, the China Daily said.

The scientists found 16-inch footprints, brown hair and chewed corncobs and concluded they were not left by a bear.

### MUTILATIONS MATCH THOSE ELSEWHERE, INVESTIGATORS DISCOVER

*(Amarillo Daily News - Online Edition)*

HEREFORD - Law-enforcement officers in the Hereford area found they had something in common with officers in the Taos, N.M., area on Dec. 9, 1978.

On that date, Hereford officers found out that a metallic material on the hides of mutilated cows was nearly identical to the material found on mutilated cows in New Mexico.

According to Globe-News files, the unexplained mutilations occurred during the previous summer. Between 15 and 20 of the mutilations happened near Hereford. Another 12 cattle were killed inexplicably in northern New Mexico.

In both places, the mutilations were discovered after local people reported seeing UFOs.

To make the incident even more strange, ranchers in both places reported that the udders, rectums, tongues, ears, testicles and sometimes tails were cut off the animals with sharp and precise instruments. Entire reproductive tracts were missing from some of the animals. But other cattle were left intact.

Officers in both places reported that there were no tracks or traces of human activity around or leading to where the cattle were found dead.

The substance found at both places looked like slivers of gray paint and contained high amounts of potassium and magnesium. The material was not fully identified at the time, but was believed to be some type of Teflon.

## UFO LASER BLINDS MOTORIST NEAR GUYRA

On Monday, December 6, 1999, at 2:30 a.m., Brian Renwith, 74, was driving his 1998 Subaru station wagon on the New England Highway in northern New South Wales, Australia when he saw a peculiar array of lights on the roadway ahead.

Renwith was driving between Armidale and Glen Innes, heading north towards Queensland, when he spotted the mysterious lights. Armidale is about 32 kilometers (20 miles) south of Guyra, the site of the recent 'UFO crash.'

"When I saw all the frizell of lights ahead of me, I thought, what the hell was it?" Renwith reported. "It looked like an island in the middle of the road. It was just a maze of reflectors ahead and so I had to slow down. They were on both sides of the highway and down the middle of both lanes. They looked like they were every ten feet as far as you could see."

"As I approached it, I was struck with the red light," he added. "It just lit everything up, and everything went red."

Renwith described entering the blaze of lights and then feeling that the object was rising and moving behind him.

The UFO "seemed high and it seemed to blind me," he added, "It was a laser-type beam the thickness of a broom handle. It hit the side mirror and flashed back in my face. I could feel the heat from this thing."

Instantly blinded, Renwith slowed the Subaru and pulled over to the side of the road. He sat there for over an hour, his eyes blind and streaming tears.

After a long while, his vision cleared enough for him to drive away.

Afterwards, when he heard about the Guyra UFO crash on TV, he contacted the Australian UFO Research Network and was interviewed by ufologist Diane Harrison.

Renwith still suffers from severe eye irritation as a result of the incident.

*(Many thanks to Diane Harrison of AUFORN for this report.)*

## GUYRA UFO MYSTERY SOLVED

*(Blair Cummins)*

AAP – The mystery of the unidentified flying object that crashed into a northern New South Wales dam has been solved with police today confirming a small meteorite was responsible.

Police divers recovered sediment and fragments from the Guyra dam and geologists believed the sediment came from a small meteorite the size of a golf ball.

The meteorite penetrated the mud at the bottom of the dam and now was embedded about four metres into soft granite and was unable to be removed, police said.

Emergency services have left the area.

A council worker raised the alarm on Wednesday, when he discovered a 15m area of flattened reeds in the Guyra Reservoir at about 9am.

Several locals reported seeing an object falling out of the sky sometime between Monday and Wednesday morning.

Local authorities quickly cut-off the town's water supply after the discovery, concerned the object may have contaminated the water supply.

But experts yesterday said the water had not been contaminated and reinstated the town's water supply.