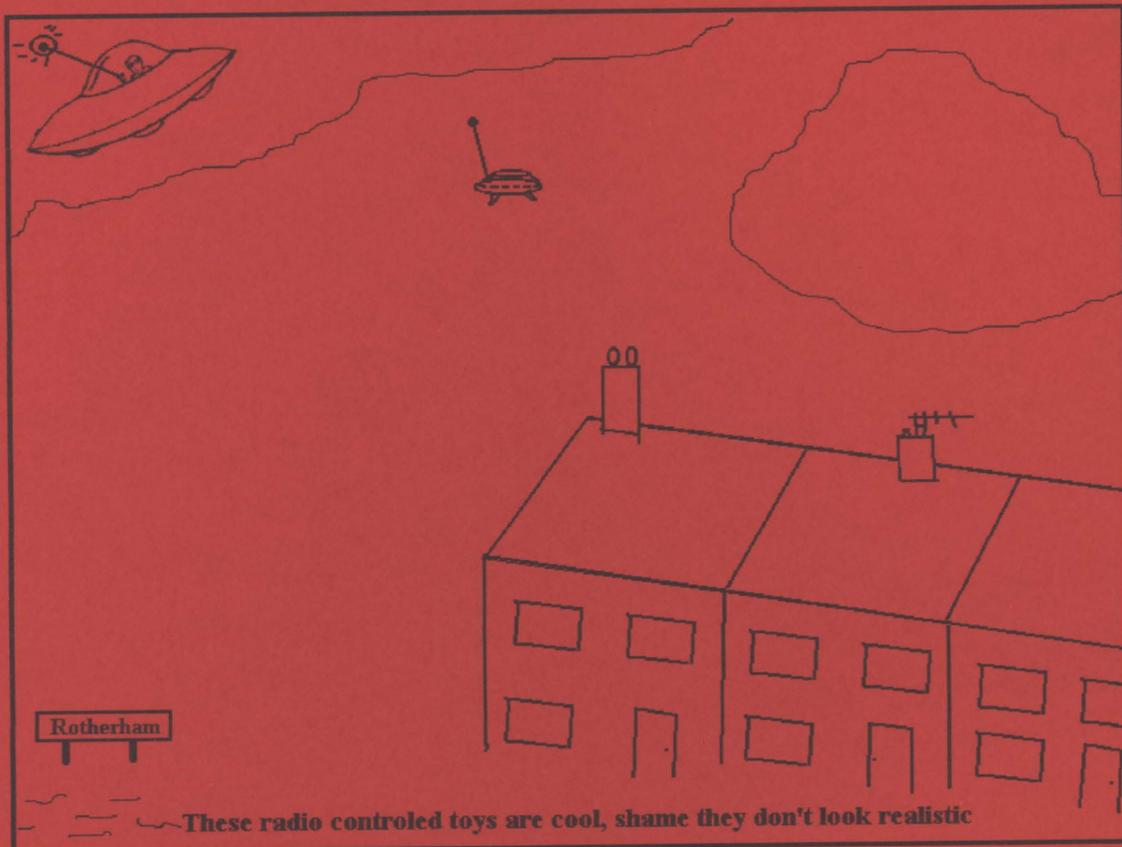


YUFOS

YORKSHIRE UFO SOCIETY

PROJECT RED BOOK

(Vol 4 #4 October 2000)



inside this document

JENNY RANGLES EXCLUSIVE!

THE "MEXBOROUGH" UFO FOOTAGE

SHEFFIELD UFOs

And much more...

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YUFOS



Vol 4 # 4, October 2000)

CONTENTS

1) EDITORIAL

Dave Baker tries to explain the lack of interview this month

2) THE LGE OF UFOS the missing chapter

Jenny Randles exclusive!!!

5) ONE FOR THE BIRDS...

Sarah Crabtree investigates Sheffield UFOs

7) MONSTER MISTAKE

When is a sea monster carcasse not a sea monster carcasse?

8) THE "MEXBOROUGH FOOTAGE"

YUFOS examines exclusive UFO camcorder film

12) FROM AROUND THE WORLD...

Ghostly sightings linked to eye disease
Wine a poor vintage
Summer of Sasquatch
Britain's plan to avoid asteroid armageddon

16) UFOS- THE KEY TURNING POINT (PT2)

Bill Booker on vision, light and sound in UFO cases

18) THE WANDJINA

Bill Chalker on

HAUNTED REALM website
<http://boggards2.friendpages.com>

UFOIN: www.ufoin.org.uk

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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...and remember to give us a reference now, y'hear?

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

"Raise your hands and all your flippers!"

EDITORIAL

This month's issue of Project Red Book was to have featured the usual and very popular "An Interview With...", featuring as this month's guest, Gloria Dixon of BUFORA, UFOIN, Strange Daze magazine and sundry other ufological and paranormal ventures. However, with admirable skill and professionalism, I miscalculated the time left to publication, and arranged my interview with Gloria with only days to spare. Unfortunately for me, but even worse for Gloria, she had been stricken with 'flu and was in no shape to effectively concentrate on my "interesting questions". The last thing you want to be talking about when blowing your nose every thirty seconds is ectoplasm and green alien slime...

So here I was with a blank space in the PRB manuscript with nothing to fill it. A magazine as empty as one of Jeffrey Archer's alibis. What was I to do? Interview myself? Feeling that questions such as "Why are you so great?" and "What's it like to be you?" wouldn't go down well with popular readership, I considered leaving several pages blank and running with the headline "The wit and wisdom of Bernard Manning". However, sanity, good sense and looming subscription renewals won through and I rejected the idea and instead turned to a friend, colleague and real life-saver, Jenny Randles...

With virtually no advance warning and no payment whatsoever, Jenny came through within a couple of hours and saved my bacon....

Jenny has just published a book in the USA that is likely never to appear in the UK except on import. Its part of a series called 'The Little Giant Encyclopaedia'. Over a dozen exist in the series and the publishers asked Jenny to write an LGE of UFOs.

The format is a huge chunky book of pocket book size but 500 pages long. It retails in the USA at \$9.95 (that's about £6) and is published by Sterling.

In the final edit earlier this year it was decided that Jenny had to lose one whole chapter, conceived as a bit of fun (so the most expendable when the publishers needed to lose a few thousand words). It was a sort of UFO book of world records.

It is this 'missing chapter', which Jenny kindly sent me to include in Project Red Book. It's an exclusive, has not appeared anywhere else and isn't in the final 'Little Giant Encyclopaedia of UFOs' that was published in the US this summer.

Being serious for a moment, I am particularly touched by Jenny's generosity, especially in light of a number of cruel and spiteful attacks a number of small-minded individuals have directed towards Jenny on various UFO discussion lists. For example, accusations that Jenny is "in this business for the money", that she keeps information to herself and that she is a 'debunker' are as ridiculous as they are hurtful – and plainly untrue. I don't think that there is anyone who has helped more fledgling ufologists – myself included- on their feet than Jenny has, with nothing in it for herself than to pass on her experience and knowledge. Consider the lecture she gave for YUFOS last year. Here is a person is as willing to stand and talk before 30 people in the spare room of a pub as she is willing to travel to the USA and lecture at the MUFON symposium before hundreds.

We are truly honoured to be able to present this, and we are grateful to Jenny for helping out at such short notice. Thanks immensely Jenny.

Oh, and get well soon Gloria...

DAVE BAKER

THE "LITTLE GIANT ENCYCLOPEAEDIA OF UFOs" – THE LOST CHAPTER

By Jenny Randles

Part Five

UFO World Records

Have you ever wondered where the most UFOs have been seen, or what the largest and smallest crop circle on record might be? Here, in this exclusive UFO World Records section is the answer to all those questions you may have asked, never wanted to ask or simply never thought of! By the next edition of this book who knows how many of them will have been broken as they are all reported as they stand in 1999, to the best of my data gathering ability. Of course if you know differently...

The World's First

The first UFO.

If cave paintings in the Pyrenees are true descriptions of UFOs and aliens, as some believe, then they describe a sighting in northern Spain around 12,000 BC. More certain are reports from the reign of Thutmose III that a 'fiery disc' was seen in the sky above Egypt circa 1500 BC.

The first crop circle.

Was recorded in folk records at Assen, Holland in 1590, where it is described as mysteriously flattened crop. In August 1678 a Hertfordshire field was 'mowed' into circles by what was then termed 'the devil' and a woodcut survives showing a picture of the swirled fields.

The first alien contact.

At St Teath, Cornwall, in 1645 a girl saw strange small beings in her garden and was taken by them to a beautiful alien land. She thought they were fairies.

The first alien abduction.

In Song-Zi Xian, China on 8 May 1880 farmer Ju Tan encountered a glowing UFO, began to float, was paralysed and lost consciousness. He came to with a period of missing time 300 miles away on a mountain top without recall of how he got there.

The first UFO photo.

On 12 August 1883 at Zacatecas, Mexico. A spindly UFO photographed by an astronomer against the sun.

The first alien theory.

The first witness to consider that the UFO and entities he saw were of alien origin was at Lodi, California on 25 November 1896. The hairless, large eyed beings were believed to be martians.

The first government study.

The first known government study into UFOs occurred in October 1912 when Admiralty minister Winston Churchill debated sightings of flying airships in the British parliament and warned that they might be hostile. A secret study resulted in the first cover up.

The first alien baby.

In 1950 at a farm in Anthony, Kansas, a young couple observed a UFO and an entity 'materialised' in their bedroom. They were informed that a girl would be born as a gift to educate mankind. This girl, Donna Butts, arrived and went on to have contacts and abductions of her own.

The first alien to claim conception through a human abductee, used Brazilian farmer Antonio Villas Boas as the father in October 1957.

The first human woman to conceive an alleged hybrid human/alien DNA baby was Cynthia Appleton, from Birmingham, England, told in September 1958 and conceiving in May 1959 as predicted.

The World's Smallest

The smallest crop circle.

Formed in the Mallee wheat belt of Victoria, Australia, in December 1989. They were under two feet in diameter.

The smallest UFO.

In 1978 a witness from London described how when working as a factory night watchman a tiny glowing light about the size of a butterfly entered the building and was pursued by the factory cat as it moved purposefully about the room inspecting the content.

The smallest alien.

At Fencehouses, County Durham two women were placed into a 'time suspension' by a landed UFO and several entities with long blond, near white hair. The beings were only about one foot tall.

The World's Largest...

The largest crop circle.

At Kings Bromley, Staffordshire in June 1989 circle and arc patterns filled an entire field some 300 feet in diameter.

The largest UFO.

In November 1989 a UFO shaped like a triangle and described as 'the size of a football field' (about five times that of a jumbo jet) was reported. It is thought possible this was, in fact, several smaller objects (possibly a mid air refuelling exercise) flying in formation. A possibly much larger object was seen on 17

November 1986 when the crew of a Japanese Airlines Boeing 747 encountered something over Alaska on a trans-polar flight. This was briefly recorded by weather radar and shaped like a walnut was said by the pilot to be 'twice the size of an aircraft carrier' according to the radar image.

The largest alien.

A giant entity almost 12 feet tall was allegedly seen in a park at Voronezh, Russia in October 1989.

The World's Longest

The longest running UFO group.

Is the American Flying Saucer Bureau, founded 1952. Its US parent folded within a few years but its British branch in Bristol remained active in 1999.

The longest running UFO journal.

Is FSR (Flying Saucer Review) - founded 1955, still going strong.

The longest sighting.

On November 2/3 1957 a glowing egg shape made a circular tour of the Levellend, Texas area, moved a little west across the New Mexico border and was seen by dozens of witnesses across a four hour period. Most UFO sightings are far more transient and last at most a few minutes.

The longest abduction.

Snowflake, Arizona, forester Travis Walton disappeared for five days after being struck by a light-beam emitted by a UFO. His colleagues were at first suspected of murder until he returned, describing his trip to a strange room with egg headed aliens. The record is equalled by a Chilean Corporal taking part in a training exercise up a mountain near Putre on 25 April 1977. His men saw him walk into a violet glow to return 15 minutes later with a heavy beard growth and his watch showing that five days had apparently passed by in his time frame.

The longest space ride.

Between 1954 and 1963 South African woman Elizabeth Klarer went on numerous space rides with her friendly visitor. On the last occasion, she claims, he took her on a journey to his home world in the Proxima Centauri system, where she gave birth to their child. The flight there and back took four months.

The World's Most Frequent...

Most frequent IFO.

Aircraft of one type or another trigger over 60% of all misreported UFOs.

Most frequent time of day for a sighting.

Is between 10 pm and 3 am, with the period 2 am to 3 am being the greatest per available number of witnesses.

Most frequent day of the week.

Several studies have shown a 'Wednesday' effect, but it is believed to be a statistical quirk. In fact, most sightings occur, unsurprisingly, at weekends when there is more free time.

Most frequent age to be abducted.

Over 80% of alien contact witnesses are between the ages of 19 and 29. Witnesses above 40 are relatively rare. The real danger ages are 23 - 27.

Most frequent occupation for a witness.

Police officers generate most witnesses, possibly as they are out in the early hours of night. Nurses, musicians and artists are the most commonly abducted people.

The World's Greatest

Greatest number of witnesses to a sighting.

In 1958 a large percentage of the 50,000 crowd at a Sunderland FC soccer match

are thought to have witnessed a UFO passing above Roker Park.

Greatest number of people to film a UFO.

During the Mexico City eclipse in 1991 it is known that thousands observed and at least 20 independently filmed a silver light seen in the now darkened sky.

Greatest number to be abducted.

Several cases exist where five people travelling together were simultaneously abducted (eg a family at Aveley, Essex in October 1974). In the Dandenong Mountains case from Australia on 8 August 1993 six people in three unrelated groups travelling in three separate vehicles are believed to have witnessed the same landed UFO and aliens and experienced an abduction.

Greatest number of crop circles.

Over 500 were recorded in the most active year, 1990. The most visited site is near Alton Barnes, Wiltshire, where circles have appeared most years in a 20 year spell. The most in one field is up to 50 - many small - in a field at Mallee, Australia, 1989.

Greatest UFO wave recorded.

Was on the eastern seaboard of the USA in summer 1952, centring on Washington DC. Over 900 cases were recorded in a three month spell.

Greatest UFO window area.

Several candidates vie for this title of concentrated activity in a narrow area (up to 25 miles by 25 miles). Top contenders are Hessdalen, Norway (up to 500 cases), the Min Min lights of Queensland, Australia (over 1000 documented cases), the Marfa, Texas light (as many as 1500 alleged incidents). But the record to date is held by the Pennine Hills window (moorland between Sheffield/Manchester/Leeds) in the UK where reports date back 400 years and total over 2000.

ONE FOR THE BIRDS...

The following two stories appeared in The Sheffield Star and show how sometimes UFO reports can be followed up, and even solved-(ulp!) – in a short time even by –(bigger ulp!) members of the public! Thanks go to Sarah Crabtree for permission to use her work. (Ed)

POSSIBLE UFO SIGHTING SPARKS APPEAL FOR MORE WITNESSES

DID YOU SEE WHAT I SAW? by Sarah Crabtree

(The Star, Thursday September 21, 2000)

A Sheffield man who saw what could be a UFO hovering above the city has appealed to Star readers who may have seen it to get in touch.

Alan Biggs and his 13 year old son Ashley saw up to 25 brilliant white globules of light, which circled the evening sky before disappearing into the distance.

Alan, a freelance sports reporter was so intrigued that he telephoned Woodseats police and, bizarrely, spoke to an officer who took a similar call last year.

Pc Geoff Martin confirmed Alan's sighting was consistent with that of a man on his way to work a year ago.

Alan, of Old Hay Close, Dore, was looking out of his upstairs window on Monday evening when his attention was drawn to a string of bright lights.

"I was looking out over Holmesfield and Millthorpe, just over the border into Derbyshire", said Alan, 45.

"The lights were in the middle-distance, maybe 2,000 feet up, very bright, almost white, and in a line of about three or four which moved around

"At first I thought maybe it was several aeroplanes, but the night was still light enough that I would have been able to see the shape of an aircraft."

As Alan watched, more lights appeared, until there was a total of between 20 and 25.

"They came from almost nowhere," he said. "Then, after about seven minutes, they disappeared."

Sheffield and Manchester airports said the lights were nothing to do with them. Alan added, "My son came upstairs and saw them too. It's just a pity I didn't have a full house at the time."

UFO ALERT - DID ALIENS FLY OVER SOUTH YORKSHIRE, OR WERE THEY PIGEONS REFLECTED IN THE SUN?

(The Star, Saturday September 30, 2000)

When Alan Biggs saw a constellation of dazzling bright lights circling the sky close to his Sheffield home last week, he immediately contacted the Star.

Intrigued by the sight, which even the police and air traffic controllers could not explain, he appealed to other readers to get in touch if they had see it too – and dozens had.

Could extra-terrestrial life be hovering in the skies above Sheffield? Or might the explanation be nothing more sinister than...a flock of humble pigeons?

Star reporter Sarah Crabtree took up her telescope and set off to investigate...

A string of brilliant white lights hovering in the skies over Sheffield? A supernatural spectacle which disappeared almost as quickly as it appeared?

Could alien life forms be visiting South Yorkshire?

The Star reported the possible UFO sighting last week, after reader Alan Biggs witnessed up to 25 white globules of light circling the sky close to his home in Old Hay Close, Dore.

MONSTER MISTAKE

By Dave Baker

MYSTERY ANIMAL WASHED UP ON BEACH

(Yahoo! Australia & NZ News Top Stories Tuesday 12 September)

Conservation officers in the north-west of Western Australia are baffled with the discovery of a strange mammal.

The four-and-half metre creature is thought to be a species of whale, but has been described as having a dolphin-like appearance with big tusks.

It was washed up on a beach at Point Maud near Coral Bay, south of Exmouth last week. Marine conservation officer at Exmouth, Caroline Williams, says the mammal's head will be studied by museum authorities in Perth.

"It's the most weird looking whale I've ever seen - picture a very large nose dolphin, so it's got the long snout, but then rather than having rows of sharp teeth it's got just two teeth in the lower jaw, one on either side and they're actually on the outside of the body," she said. "So I guess they're really sort of more tusks, like you'd have elephant tusks."

I was all ready to run the story in this month's issue of PRB as an item in the *From Around The World* column. It was only by chance however, that I caught a follow-up story on a newsgroup that blew the myth and the mystery out of the water...pun intended.

RARE WHALE FOUND ON BEACH

PERTH

Wednesday 13 September 2000

Found: a rare dense-beaked whale.

A bizarre mammal that washed ashore on a Western Australian beach has been identified by marine experts as the rare dense-beaked whale.

The four-metre mammal, which has a dolphin beak and a pair of small tusk-like teeth jutting out of its bottom jaw, was found stranded alive in shallow water by a German tourist on Friday

at Point Maud, north of Carnarvon. It died soon after. Only three or four have been recorded in Australia.

"The best word to describe it is ugly," said Carolyn Williams, an officer with the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

The department's principal zoologist, Nick Gales, said: "They are not very sociable animals and because they live a long way offshore, off the edge of the continental shelf and beyond, we hardly ever see them and don't know much about them."

It is not known if the dense beak is used to help them dive or whether males use it for fighting or show.

The whale produces the most dense bone of any vertebrate, its beak about three times denser than human bone.

This affair is interesting in that here we have a perfect crypto-zoological mystery that is reported and then solved only a day later.

We also had "experts"- on whose shoulders the authenticity of such a case stands, "baffled".

Well, so much for the 'experts'...

It is of course in this manner that myths are made. So many stories that appear in the news, the media, on Internet discussion boards and even in magazines devoted to unusual phenomena, are rarely followed up- and that can include PRB. (*Fortean Times* is one exception, which runs a regular 'catch-up' column.)

This may be because there *is* no follow up; the investigation grinds to a halt and the file remains 'open', either through reporter apathy or because no more information becomes available, every line of investigation having been genuinely exhausted.

But it also can be that an explanation has been found and the mystery solved...*but is not as good a story!*

THE 'MEXBOROUGH' FOOTAGE

Report by Dave Baker

After an appearance by myself in the *Sheffield Star*¹ on Friday ...September promoting the Yorkshire UFO Society, I received a call from a young man who claimed that he had camcorder footage of UFOs which he had taken a year ago.

As it turned out the witness, Michael N, lives within walking distance of YUFOS Towers and the following day myself and fellow YUFOS member Jonathan Slater went out to interview Michael and view the footage.

BACKGROUND

The video was taken on Saturday, 13th March 1999, at around 4:00 - 4:30pm. Michael is sure of this time because his wife was watching the horse-racing on TV at the time; "And winning...as she usually does!"

The weather was bright, warm and dry with very little wind, the sky heavy with clouds.

At the time, Michael and his wife Denise were living in a second floor flat on Park Road in Mexborough. The area is mostly residential, with a number of fielded areas around. It is in fact one of these fielded areas which the 'UFOs' appear to fly over - a potentially important point.

Michael says in his report, "I was standing on the back balcony (of our flat) and to my left I saw a black object moving in a straight line and moving slowly."

The object appeared elliptical: "I would say it was at least 3-4 feet long and moving 20-30 mph in a straight line, from the South or South-west, to the North or North-east, towards Malton and Doncaster." Michael said.

When he first saw the object it appeared to be about ¼ mile away and seemed to be the size of a pea at arm's length.

After watching this object for a few moments, he ran into the house and grabbed his camcorder, and proceeded to film the object.

Throughout the video, the object moves further away until Michael thought it was about a mile distant. ("about the size of a match-head") Then another object, apparently identical to the first, appeared "out of thin air" and "for a few moments moved up towards the first object. This first object then moved away to the left, and the 'new' object moved away to the right."

The objects then faded into the distance and Michael stopped filming.

AFTERWARDS

Michael claims that he is "a complete disbeliever in UFOs", but he did admit later that he does like to watch programmes about the subject, such as the US series *SIGHTINGS* on Yorkshire Cable TV. He is a keen astronomer however, and rejects outlandish theories such as the ETH. He is also somewhat of an ornithologist, and on a holiday a few days later he videoed a flock of birds which he thought were of a similar distance away as the UFOs to compare them. I have seen this footage and there are marked differences, but this could be due to a mistake in the comparative distances, or the size of the birds themselves. More about this later.

Thoroughly perplexed by the experience, and keen to find out if anyone else had seen the objects, Michael contacted the *South Yorkshire Times* about the sighting.

Michael told me that an article appeared in the newspaper around a week later, in which he asked to remain anonymous mainly due to his association with a local astronomy society. However, the *South Yorkshire Times* did receive a number of calls from readers who had seen something similar. One man, who the paper put into contact with Michael, claimed to have seen something very similar the same day in Conisborough. Michael made a copy of his video for this man, who said he was "a plane spotter for the RAF". Unfortunately though,

¹ Complete with picture of me holding my binoculars- Original photo-journalist idea #127/B

this 'expert' could not identify either the UFO he had witnessed himself, or the objects in Michael's video footage. Over a year later, Michael does not still have the man's telephone number.

Michael did show his footage to friends and family, and was rewarded with a wide variety of possible explanations, ranging from balloons and aeroplanes to plastic bags and birds. None of these explanations seemed to fit the camcorder footage perfectly.

And there the matter ended, as far as Michael was concerned. He was not aware of any local UFO groups who he felt he could entrust with the footage, and so the matter was forgotten until the article appeared in the *Sheffield Star* by which time Michael and Denise had moved to Sheffield.

THE VIDEO FOOTAGE

Michael was – quite rightly – none too keen to loan me the original video tape, but he did agree to make me a VHS copy, which he brought to me a couple of days later. Michael has also agreed that should further investigation be necessary, he would be willing to loan the original camcorder tape to YUFOS for full scientific analysis.

Once I had my own VHS copy of the footage I was able to examine it at length and at my leisure.

I watched the footage numerous times in various modes: slow-motion, freeze-frame and frame-by-frame – as well as in standard format.

The video lasts just over 7 minutes.

To begin with, the footage shows what appears to be a black, seemingly elliptical object, very visible against the clouds and the blue sky, moving slowly and I would say purposefully, in a straight line.

It is impossible to judge size or speed from this kind of viewing, though at one point Michael does zoom out to show the 'whole' area, before zooming in on the object again. From this it is possible to see that in the final minutes of the footage the objects are very far away, so would have to be fairly large.

While filming the first object, Michael comments that his only explanation is that the object is a black plastic bag blowing on the wind.

However, watching the footage it is clear that the object's shape remains too static, and it's trajectory too straight and direct for something light and flaccid caught on the wind. There is no sign of fluttering, tumbling or looping or any sign that this is an inanimate object being blown around.

The object simply moves away into the distance. A number of times small flocks of birds fly very close to the camcorder, and at one point a single bird passes the viewfinder further away. Although this bird does *slightly* resemble the object as it appeared when closest to the camera, it is *obviously* a bird, as the movement of it's wings are clearly visible.

About four minutes into the footage, another object apparently identical to the first appears below and to the right of the first object. On first glance it does seem to appear "out of thin air" as Michael claimed, but on using frame by frame analysis, it appears more likely that this second object comes into view through cloud, or merely the haze of bad visibility.

This second object then rises up to a level with the original. Michael states on the video that "There's two objects...and they're stationary", but I think it more likely that the objects are still moving, but *away* from the camera.

After a few more seconds the objects fly or drift apart, and Michael has to pan the camcorder around to find each one. At this point the objects begin to fade in and out a little, until Michael loses them altogether.

THE CAMCORDER

The equipment used was a Canon UC 6000 8mm analogue Camcorder, with 16x optical zoom, and a maximum shutter speed of 1/1000 of a second.

Michael used manual focus during the video, and finished at full zoom.

One thing which struck me about the camcorder footage even as I viewed it at Michael's home was the lack of any titles, date or time. This suggested to me that the footage could have been taken at any time, and not necessarily when Michael claimed.

I was also wondering at just how co-incidental it was that his camcorder was so close at hand. In my experience, anyone who is as orderly as Michael appeared to be usually keeps an expensive and fragile piece of equipment like a camcorder safely packed away.

However, before I could question these points, Michael explained it quite matter-of-factly of his own volition.

The previous day, he and Denise had been to York. As part of a meticulous filing system, Michael always uses the date/time/titles function on the camcorder. Earlier that day he had erased the titles "YORK" and the date and time in preparation for another day trip they were planning to make the next day. Consequently, the camcorder was at hand, and the video footage is free of any titles. T

The complete camcorder tape is available, and the day-trip footage is on either side of the UFO footage as Michael explains.

THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE TIMES

One of the first things I did was to telephone the newspaper to confirm that the story had appeared when Michael told me that it had. This would also help to confirm the date of the event and the footage, considering that no titles, date or time were on the footage.

Michael was completely forthcoming in this, and although he could not find the clipping from the newspaper (he and Denise had still not unpacked everything from their recent move to Sheffield), he was able to give me the name of the journalist who he had spoken to.

I called the South Yorkshire Times and eventually was able to speak to Anne Story. The journalist had since retired, but helped out a couple of days a week to work on the occasional article.

Anne remembered the case, and had seen the footage herself that she thought was "very strange". She confirmed everything Michael had told me, and also put me in contact with another journalist who had worked on the case.

Kevin Rogers had been working on an article about the infamous 'Steven Pratt photograph' when Michael's video came to light.

This was around the time that the photo had been declared "genuine" again by the Pratts, who has some years previously admitted the photo was hoaxed by painting saucer shapes on a sheet of glass. Apparently, they had only told everyone the photo was hoaxed because they were getting too much ridicule and hassle from neighbours and the press. Steven Pratt's brother Kevin was proclaiming himself something of a ufologist, and had given a premonition that a major UFO event, such as an actual alien landing, was going to take place in Conisborough later that year.²

Working on this colourful local story, Kevin was intrigued by Michael's story, although he did not see the footage himself. He did cover a small number of UFO reports, which came to light as a result of the Pratt story, and again was able to co-overrate the details Michael had given me.

Unfortunately, it appears that not a great deal of investigation was undertaken to identify the UFOs in Michael's footage by contacting airports, RAF bases, meteorological offices etc.

INITIAL IDEAS.

YUFOS members Richard Moss and Jonathan Slater viewed the footage with me a day or so later.

It is easier to say what the object is not, rather than what it is. It is nothing astronomical or meteorological, as could easily be the case with footage taken at night, and I doubt very much if the UFOs are aeroplanes or helicopters, kites, balloons, hang-gliders or various sundry objects caught on the wind.

It is obvious that the UFOs are not dirt or dust on the camcorder lens. Michael can see the UFOs with his naked eye, and pans the camera to follow them. So we know that the UFOs - whatever they turn out to be- are *actual* objects actually *there*.

Watching again on various formats, we noticed that the initial object's shape *does* appear to momentarily change. What *could* be a wing is visible in a couple of frames, but this could also be distortion of the freeze-frame facility, such as colour-wash, or a ghosting effect.

² *Nothing happened. Surprisingly.*

We considered that if it *was* a wing which is visible in the frames, why wouldn't this movement be seen all of the time? We then realised that should the object be a bird of prey such as a falcon or a hawk, it would only need to occasionally flick it's wings to stay aloft, actually gliding on the thermals and air currents. Although as previously stated it is difficult to effectively judge distance and size, I do think it is safe to say that the objects are fairly large, consistent with Michael's original estimation.

This line of thinking was supported by UFOIN's Andy Roberts following my posting of a brief overview of the case on the UFOIN discussion list.

At this point Andy had not seen the footage so could only go by my description, but he did say: "If it's a big bird then a heron would be the most likely culprit. They are everywhere these days and can glide for *ages* without so much as a wing twitch. They also resemble pterodactyls to the peasant in the street, as the 'pterodactyl' flap over Bradford about fifteen years ago proved."

Jenny Randles, on the UFOIN list had this to say:

"Hard to comment without seeing the footage - although presumably a slow moving dark object should be checked against an airship in the distance.

"With so many Sky Sports games - most of which use airships now - its always a possibility. I've seen them from trains up to 20 miles away before realising they are heading for Wembley. At that range they look a bit like your video sounds."

WHAT NEXT?

YUFOS intend to continue its investigation of the case, although the prime focus will be the analysis of the video footage itself. Ian Gregory is attempting to produce 'blow-up' images from the video in order to better see the UFO, whatever it is.

Andy Roberts and Dr. Dave Clarke have agreed to take a look at the footage and offer their opinion of it's worth. If they agree with YUFOS that the Mexborough video warrants further investigation, we hope to bring expert

Bill Rose into the picture to help with in-depth computer analysis.

Bill has helped UFOIN out in the past with his excellent skills, and will hopefully bring the case into sharper focus – pun intended.

PRB will keep you updated....

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF
**PROJECT RED
BOOK**

“AN INTERVIEW WITH...”

GLORIA DIXON

(*BUFORA, UFOIN and
“Strange Daze” magazine*)

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 14th November 2000

7:00pm – 10:00 pm

THE THREE CRANES

Queen Street,

Sheffield City Centre

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

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

GHOSTLY SIGHTINGS LINKED TO EYE DISEASE

(John von Radowitz, Science Correspondent, PA News)

Ghosts, night terrors and near-death experiences could be caused by a peculiar form of "blind-vision" often suffered by people who lose their sight, an expert claimed today.

Dr Dominic Ffytche said individuals who go blind through eye disease, or have their eyes removed, often report a bewildering and frightening array of hallucinations.

They include abstract patterns and shapes, but also disembodied faces and costumed figures.

In 60% of cases, patients reported seeing "grotesque" distorted faces with prominent eyes and teeth, said Dr Ffytche.

Forty per cent saw figures in costumes, including people in Edwardian clothes and Napoleonic uniforms, as well as knights in armour.

"They often wear hats and helmets," said Dr Ffytche, from the Institute of Psychiatry in London.

Brain scans carried out while the patients were hallucinating showed activity in specialised regions of the visual cortex.

Speaking at the British Association Festival of Science at Imperial College, London, Dr Ffytche suggested that sightings of ghosts and other supernatural experiences could have the same biological cause.

The "old hag" experience that occurred when a person was half asleep and half awake was one example.

"You think a monster with a distorted face is in front of you," said Dr Ffytche. "I'm sure ghosts, fairies and witches all relate in some respect to these disembodied hallucinations.

"Near-death experiences may also be related to activity in these specialised brain areas."

Idyllic landscapes and vortices, often associated with near-death experiences, were sometimes "seen" by blind people.

Dr Ffytche pointed out that it was not always necessary to go blind to have these hallucinations.

Strokes could trigger them off, as could having the eyes covered by patches for a sufficient length of time. The visions could also be summoned artificially, by electrical stimulation of the correct brain regions.

"I could do it to you," Dr Ffytche told an audience of journalists.

The hallucinations were thought to be "release phenomena," said Dr Ffytche. He added: "When there's no information coming in, and the brain is idle, you get cells firing away to produce these images."

People who were blind from birth did not suffer the visions. There was a particular cut-off point when the vision of sighted people deteriorated to a point where they started to hallucinate.

The hallucinations could be very frequent. The patients undergoing the brain scan were only examined for five minutes at a time, yet hallucinated enough to make the study possible.

'WINE' PROVES A POOR VINTAGE

Archaeologists considered arranging a tasting session after finding what they thought was a 300-year-old bottle of wine - only to discover it contained a rancid mixture of urine and pubic hairs.

The bottle, found in the foundations of a 17th century Surrey house, contained almost half a pint of urine, pubic hairs, an eyelash and a handful of bent pins. They now believe it was used as a folk charm to ward off a witch's curse.

The bottle was discovered by archaeologist David Williams, who jumped to the conclusion that it was Jacobean wine.

"I managed to get a local vineyard interested and they arranged to open the bottle, test the contents and possibly organise a tasting," he said.

"When the cork was pulled there was a rather alarming hiss of escaping gas. They could find no trace of alcohol - or indeed anything organic. I then poured the contents through a strainer and out fell all these pins and other bits and pieces."

Witch bottles were made by people who believed their illness or misfortune, the death of family members or livestock, meant they had been cursed.

The bottles were intended to turn the curse back on the witch as long as the bottle remained sealed.

Alan Massey, a retired organic chemist from Loughborough University who carried out the analysis, said: "In this case the curse was intended to make the unfortunate object of it feel as if they were weeing with a bladder full of bent pins."

The occupants of the demolished house, near Reigate Castle, have not been traced and the owner of the witch bottle remains a mystery.

"SUMMER OF SASQUATCH" REVIVES LEGEND

(Sally Suddock, September 15)

It's becoming known as the "summer of Sasquatch," with *UFO Digest* reporting Thursday that more than 19 sightings of the ape-human-like animal have been reported from overseas to the West Coast and Eastern Seaboard in the U.S.

UFO Digest's Clyde Lewis, in a lengthy discussion of the legendary beast (www.ufodigest.com), said, "it is time to demand that Bigfoot need not be associated with Elvis sightings and weird theories that sound like rejected plots from the "Six million dollar man."

Too often, he says, science perceives Bigfoot (or Yeti, or Sasquatch, or Yowie, or other names) reports as "tall tales concocted by drunk hunters who mistake large bears for a more strange albeit odorous being that may or may not belong on this planet."

Arguing that the body of evidence may be present to verify that Sasquatch is,

indeed, real, Lewis says it's not unusual for animals believed to be nothing more than myths in ancient lore actually turn up to be categorized by scientists.

"The difficulty in capturing an undeniable picture, video, or even hair or scat samples of the Bigfoot has caused a number of people to dismiss outright the possibility of such a creature existing. However eyewitness testimony continues to pour in and recently the sightings of such a creature have increased," said Lewis, adding that even President Teddy Roosevelt said he'd seen one.

The most "notorious" evidence of Bigfoot's presence is the film shot in 1967 by Roger Patterson and Robert Gimlin; a grainy image of Bigfoot climbing over a log in the forest is ubiquitous in Bigfoot research. Those who scoff at the notion that an 8-foot, odiferous glowing-eyed animal could roam the Earth and not be captured have debunked the Patterson/Gimlin evidence as a hoax, but the film survives as documentation nonetheless.

"In the year 2000 it seems that Bigfoot has once again decided to come out of hiding and many people are catching a glimpse at the fabled creature. What this means is uncertain; however, the testimony as of late is remarkable and deserves mention," Lewis notes.

The first sighting of the New Millennium was in Wisconsin, reported by a man who saw a Bigfoot-like creature standing on the side of the road early in the morning. Then, in succession, came sightings in Oregon, Washington, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Australia, among those that have surfaced in the press. And China's government issued restrictions earlier this year on hunters of the Yeti, seeking to protect the creature if it's ever found.

Theories abound as to the beast's origin—is it an advanced form of shy ape; an early form of the species that evolved into humanity; or even, perhaps, a visitor from another world in the universe?

One of Amazon.com's best sellers is a book by Jack Lapsertis that makes a case that Sasquatch is actually an alien species seeded on Earth to guide the human race. *The Psychic Sasquatch* is the result of 40 years of research Lapsertis has undertaken on the creature.

In one case, he recounts the story of a woman reading on the porch of her cottage in Wisconsin in 1977, when an "invisible force" sent the book out of her hands. At the edge of the forest stood the Sasquatch, which over time continued to have telepathic discussions with her.

For those who have described the creature as glowing-eyed, fierce and frightening, *Psychic Sasquatch* paints a radically different, benign portrait of it.

He relates the Bigfoot to extraterrestrials and says they cannot be found because they can exist in a different dimension. He describes them as "gentle creatures" that consider themselves to be the first people to populate Earth--brought here millions of years ago by ETs (said to be the Star People).

"The Sasquatch say that they are transported to new regions of wilderness whenever hostile humans or developers enter the creature's immediate domain. The Sasquatch insist that ET intervention occurred with all races of humans and higher hominoid types. The Sasquatch also said that 7 races of Bigfoot have been seeded on Earth, with one race less than five feet tall and another up to 15 feet tall," says Lapsertitis.

Lapsertitis believes that Sasquatch in current times is bringing a message of Earth danger, and of a great Armageddon soon to occur.

ET or not, hoaxes or not, Lewis says "the bottom line is that most serious researchers know what Bigfoot is. He is a mountain ape first. Later they have to determine where they have come from, how many there are and whether or not they have a link to man."

"The reality of Bigfoot may be as mundane as a monkey that has yet to be classified by science. However seeing one in the forests of the United States can be an experience not easily forgotten," Lewis says.

BRITAIN PLANS £25M SHIELD TO PREVENT ASTEROID COLLISIONS

(Jonathan Leake, *Science Editor*, September 17 2000)

A Government team is to propose spending up to £25m on a plan that would safeguard Britain and the world from devastation by a giant asteroid or comet.

The Spaceguard initiative, expected to be announced tomorrow by Lord Sainsbury of Turville, the science minister, could see Britain using a chain of telescopes to detect and monitor "near-Earth objects".

A report, from a commission appointed by Sainsbury, says that Earth faces a tiny but definite risk of being struck one day by an asteroid - a large lump of stone or metals travelling at tens of miles a second. This kind of impact is believed to have wiped out the dinosaurs 65m years ago.

A monitoring station possibly based at Armagh in Northern Ireland and linked to telescopes around the world, would be the first stage in a programme that would also investigate ways of knocking any approaching asteroid off a collision course with Earth.

One option could be to fire a nuclear missile that would explode close to the incoming rock and deflect it.

At least two big impacts were recorded during the last century alone.

The first, at Tunguska in Siberia in 1908, devastated an area the size of greater London. The other, in Brazil in 1947, left several huge craters. Both fell in unpopulated areas and nobody was killed.

Last week astronomers announced that a huge asteroid would cross Earth's orbit today at a range of 2.6m miles. In astronomical terms this is a tiny distance - and others will come much closer.

In 2027, a rock measuring half a mile in diameter, travelling at 50 miles per second and known as 1999 AN10, will hurtle past Earth at a distance of just 200,000 miles. It will pass close by several more times - with nobody yet able to predict whether it will hit the planet.

The British commission includes Professor Harry Atkinson, who has worked for the European Space Agency and other international bodies, and Sir Crispin Tickell, the former British ambassador to the United Nations. It was set up in January.

The threat is already taken seriously by America and Japan, which have established their own Spaceguard projects. NASA has said it plans by 2006 to track all asteroids with diameters greater than 1km that will cross the path of Earth.

An asteroid that size would wipe out most life and there would have been many such events early in Earth's 4.6 billion-year history. Now, however, the risk is much lower because most potential collisions have already happened. The last big asteroid, about six miles in diameter, was the one that wiped out the dinosaurs.

The commission's report says Britain's role could be to find smaller objects, between 50 yards and about half a mile in diameter, of which there are many thousands.

Up to six telescopes would have to be built - some designed to detect near-Earth objects, others to track them continually and a third group to analyse the light they reflect in order to find out what they are made of.

The aim of Spaceguard would be to ensure that Earth had sufficient advance warning - hopefully decades - to investigate and then take preventive action.

A Whitehall source said: "We accept there is a risk and want Britain to take a leading role in dealing with it."

Sainsbury wants other European countries to help finance the network, which would be computerised and would enable astronomers to build up a huge database from which they could predict which objects presented a threat.

Mark Bailey, director of the Armagh Observatory, a world-renowned centre for the study of asteroids and comets, where the project would probably be based, believes the world is now so heavily populated that even a small impact could kill millions. "Asteroid and comet impacts have changed human history in the past and it could happen again," he said.

The biggest risk to Earth is from comets that appear at random from the Oort Cloud - a huge sphere of icy rubble that surrounds the solar system. They move very fast and could reach Earth within months of being spotted.

Dr Bill Napier, an astronomer who specialises in comets and asteroids, believes the only solution is to set up a fleet of rockets carrying nuclear bombs that could be detonated half a mile from any threatening object.

"You would only have to nudge them a few metres to send them safely past Earth to avoid Armageddon," he said.

MORE RATS THAN PEOPLE

(Suzanna Chambers)

BRITAIN could soon be overrun with rats as mild weather and an ever-ready supply of scraps causes the rodent population to explode.

Experts warned last night that the number of rats roaming both in urban and rural areas of Britain could reach an all-time high if this winter is mild.

The problem is considered so serious that a special forum has been set up to address pest infestation. The advisory group, made up of local authority officers and rodent experts, met for the first time last week to try to come up with a cohesive pest control policy.

Insiders say a lack of Government guidelines has made it difficult to tackle pest control issues in the past and they hope the forum will provide a standard practice needed to deal with the problem.

The UK rat population now stands at well over 70million - meaning there are more rats than people living in Britain, according to Rentokil Pest Control.

In Edinburgh a pack of super-rats as big as cats has pushed the capital's rodent population to about eight million in the past six months.

Rentokil Pest Control spokesman Jeffrey Roberts said: "Rats have continued to breed throughout the mild winters we have been experiencing and if we get another mild one this year we will have major problems."

Rentokil has experienced an increase in call-outs of up to 20 per cent on last year across the country. In some areas complaints have nearly doubled, Mr Roberts said. According to rat expert Dr Steven Havers, an increase in fast-food outlets, free-range livestock enterprises and an apathetic attitude to rats' existence are also to blame.

Dr Havers, a rodent consultant for the British Pest Control Association, said that every group of pigs wandering freely in a field will be sharing their food with a colony of rats.

"If you were to walk round a grain store you would be horrified, bearing in mind that rats and mice carry diseases such as leptospirosis or Weil's disease," he said. "People might think that this situation paints a pretty bleak picture but that's what it is." Weil's disease attacks the

nervous system, and up to 20 people suffer from it every year. Dogs can die from the disease if they drink stagnant water.

A spokesman for the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, the umbrella organisation which represents environmental health officers, confirmed that a mild winter could lead to a rise in rats.

(Express Newspapers, 2000)

WEST VIRGINIA "ANGEL HAIR" FALLS NEAR ROMNEY

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY -- A housewife in near rural Romney reported that the mysterious gossamer substance known as "angel's hair" fell in profusion on her family farm during the evening of Tuesday, September 19, 2000. The witness Rusty reports that, "Last night at about 7:00 PM, I heard a loud 'droning' sound, like a large airplane." I went out to look to see if I could spot it, but I could not. The droning lasted about an hour."

"This morning, when I got up, my yard was full of this 'spider web stuff.' Don't know exactly how to describe this other than they looked like spider webs, but at the same time they were not your usual 'circular' webs?"

"I immediately got the camera out and took a dozen photos. I had my husband go the seven miles to town to buy some rubber gloves so we could get some samples. There were other spots of angel hair along the way, but nothing as heavy as was in my yard.

"The first sample he tried to get with the gloves soon turned into a goo-like substance as soon as he touched it. He put the samples on a piece of paper towel and put the gloves in with it in a plastic bag."

"We were able to photograph the angel hair."

(As of publication, numerous possible explanations had been given on UFO sites and discussion groups on the internet, but the "angel-hair" had not positively been identified. Ed)

FIRST-OF-A KIND BIGFOOT DISCOVERY HAS SKEPTICS TAKING NOTICE

(Eric Wilkinson, October 2, 2000)

MASON COUNTY – One of the Northwest's biggest mysteries, the Sasquatch, also known as Bigfoot, is no longer a legend – it's alive, according to researchers who have discovered what they say is its imprint.

Deep in the northwest mountains, a team of 14 researchers tracked the elusive primate-type beast for a week deep in the mountains of the Gifford Pinchot national forest.

The imprint appears to be a hair-covered body lying down on its side, reaching over to get some fruit, the researchers said. Thermal imaging confirmed that the body print was only hours old.

From the imprint, they created a 250 lb. plaster cast of what they say is the lower half of the Sasquatch.

"We actually almost missed it," said researcher Derek Randels. "It dawned on us all at the same time, and it was overwhelming.

"These heel impressions weren't made by a person getting in the mud wallow and squirming around," said Dr. Jeff Meldrum of Idaho State University.

The trackers gathered hair samples that will be analyzed by DNA testing. They also made voice recordings of what they think is the Sasquatch wailing, also being sent off for analysis.

The creature is believed to be 7 to 8 feet tall, weighing 800 to 1,000 lbs. The researchers believe there are hundreds just like it throughout forests in the Northwest.

There are a lot of sightings, they added, but estimate that more than 90 percent of sightings go unreported for fear of ridicule.

"This cast is very hard to argue with," said Randels. "We have had a lot of very intelligent people looking at it in the last two days and I think it's just going to be a heck of a shot in the arm for the credibility of the creature's existence."

UFOs- THE KEY TURNING POINT (PART 4)

BY W.H. BOOKER (YUFOS)

There is another form of electrical energy-static electricity. This is when we can get certain objects 'charged' with *positive* or *negative* electrons. If these objects have equal amounts of + (positive) and - (negative) electrons they are said to be in a state of equilibrium, or balance. Strangely enough it is very easy to change this state of balance.

The first easy example is to take a nylon comb and try to get the comb to attract small pieces of paper. If the comb is in a state of balance- as above- nothing will be attracted to it. Now comb your hair and see it attract the pieces of paper.

This can be repeated using a piece of glass rod and rubbing it with a piece of silk.

Have you ever noticed the 'cracks' and 'crackles' when taking off a nylon shirt? These are sparks of electrical charges escaping from the nylon material. In fact if you do this in the dark you can even see the small flashes of light and sparks.

The other familiar flashes we see are when it starts lightning during a storm. These lightning flashes are created by positive and negative charges building up in the clouds. Some of these charges build up to 100MV (million volts) at 20,000 amps. These charges always take the shortest path to Earth, or to other clouds with opposite charges.

The second example is to turn the kitchen tap on with just a gentle stream of water descending, then with a charged comb - hold it close to the stream of water and watch the water move towards the comb. You can't do that with the strongest magnet!

The third example involves driving a car in dry weather, which causes friction with the air passing over the bodywork. This creates a charge in the body of the car, building up over a long journey. This is due to the body being insulated from earth by rubber tyres. Years ago I was feeling a little tired after a lengthy journey, but the shock I received from the car door handle soon woke me up! Nowadays we have the earthing strips to eliminate this, thank goodness.

Through experiments, physicists have found that many objects containing a charge, be it positive or negative, only appear on the surface. For more complex reasons, the more curved the surface the greater the density there. Thus a sphere will have a constant charge density. Any charge in a cube will appear only on the edges and if there is a point, nearly all the charge will be at its tip. From anything with a point on it there will be a leakage, or point discharge.

This is the one of the reasons scientists and physicists pay little attention to static electricity or electrical charges as a form of energy, because it leaks away. Just like water, it evaporates into the atmosphere.

If we just stop for a moment and think what is happening to all of this energy. The 100 million volts of electrical charges, plus the hydrogen, the oxygen, evaporated from the seas, rivers, lakes and ponds? The hydrogen and oxygen gasses rise up to cooler regions, to form clouds, which again hold the electrical charges to give us lightning and rain to form our rivers. But all of this electricity is contained in an envelope close to the surface of our own sphere, the Earth. The gasses and charges do not disappear out into space - why- because it is held close to the surface by the Earth's magnetic field.

We should be asking ourselves where does all this energy, the charges, the static electricity, come from? Earlier I explained many objects are in a neutral state, like the comb or glass rod, until charged by friction, like the car travelling on a long journey, the charge building up on the bodywork until discharged by a 'short' to Earth.

During the chapter on speed we discussed the tremendous speeds the Earth travels through space- over 548,000 mph. Out there in space is not a complete vacuum, there are millions of tons of particles and gasses floating about, much of it from our own Sun. Therefore I believe that our atmosphere is highly charged by friction travelling through space at high speed. Not only does the Earth become charged, but also all of the other satellites,

moons and planets. We know the Moon of ours has only a very weak gravitational field, $1/6^{\text{th}}$ that of Earth. But it must contain a large static electrical charge if it causes our tides on Earth.

It is my belief that not only the Moon, but all of the local planets such as Mars, Jupiter, Saturn (more-so the large planets), have a considerable effect on each other and the Earth.

All the planets in our Solar System revolve around the Sun, but each one travelling at a different speed. Every so many years a group of planets come together in a line – one behind the other.

In 1999 this happened to two or three, almost in-line. I mentioned earlier that it was my belief that the planets have considerable effect on each other. Looking back at the beginning of last year, we had more earthquakes, plus volcanic eruptions all around the world than we care to think about. On more than one occasion, this happened when our Sun was also closely aligned with these other planets. It is my opinion that our little planet Earth was having a so-called tug-o-war with our celestial neighbours. Thus the most fragile areas of the Earth's crust just gave way!

Not enough serious study of static electricity has been done in the past, even the physics text-books have shied away from any detailed analysis of this high energy. This static electricity is simply an electrical charge that isn't moving, has a high voltage, but little current. These voltages could be measured in various ways. But no-one seemed to discuss why such huge voltages could be built up in an innocent little comb, or even in the clouds.

There are several machines that can produce this static electricity, the main one being the Van Der Graaf generator. Even a small machine of this type can produce up to $1/2$ a million volts, the larger models up to 10 million volts. If we came into close contact with some of the very small machines, they may not be harmful but many of us know that they can give us a very strong tingling sensation, plus make your hair stand up on end.

Coming back to Earth's gravity, it is understood that there is a slight difference of attraction at the Poles as opposed to the

Equator. This is most likely due to the speed we are travelling at the equator, being above 1000 mph and at the Poles almost nil. With the speed at the Equator being high, the centrifugal force is greater than where we are at Great Britain, much further North. But even at the Equator this force is not strong enough to overcome gravity.

We have all seen photos and film shots of the Earth from space. Over the curved surface there appears very little to be seen in our atmosphere. If we were to stop and think about this, it is only natural because the air we breathe gets very thin above about 4 miles high. Thus looking at our curved surface from out in space, this four miles is virtually invisible, especially looking at Great Britain when it appears about the size of a postage stamp!

Yet within the thickness of our atmosphere we get all of our weather patterns; the typhoons, tornadoes, whirlwinds, electrical storms, wind, rain, hail, snow- it is estimated that the Earth has a phenomenal 8,000,000 lightning flashes every day. Think of that total voltage- eight million, billion volts! All 'wasted' as lightning.

At this stage I would like you to use your imagination. You are in a space capsule, coming back to Earth from a trip around the Moon. You have been travelling in space for days, through solar storms, solar winds, through clouds of microscopic dust particles, gasses, meteorites and satellites. After all this time in space you are just getting used to weightlessness, then you look through a window – and there it is, in all its majesty, in a black velvet sea, surrounded by millions of colourful stars...our very own celestial globe, giving off a beautiful silvery-blue light, suspended as if by invisible hands. It appears to be motionless, yet gliding silently and relentlessly through space.

We are going down now through the radiation belts, then going first into orbit before entering the Earth's atmosphere at the correct angle to avoid burning up! As soon as we are past this barrier, gravity starts taking a big toll. We need to slow down quickly by using a parachute to lower us gently into the sea or onto land.

(Continued next issue...)

THE WANDJINA

By Bill Chalker

(Copyright: 1976, 2000)

Anyone watching the Olympics will have no doubt seen the flag unfurled by the aboriginal tribes, which many people versed in UFO lore thought greatly resembled the image of the archetypical 'Grey'. This was discussed on the UFO-Updates Internet list, and Australian researcher Bill Chalker posted this article as explanation... (Ed)

In March, 1837, George Grey led an expedition into the interior of the Kimberleys in north west Australia, originally to see if the inland sea existed. Although no such inland sea was found, Grey widely explored a part of the Kimberley. It was during this exploration that Grey discovered 2 sites with rock paintings of the type we now refer to as Wandjina paintings.

Grey relates the discoveries in his journals, and his drawings appear in Volume 1 of his *Expeditions of Discovery* (1841). Subsequent expeditions into the area by Brookman (1901), Love (1930), Elkin (1930, 1948), members of the Frobenius expedition (1938), Coates (1952) and Crawford (1962, 1963 and 1964) confirm most of Grey's material.

Indeed Wandjina type paintings are dispersed over a wide area of the Kimberley and are generally assumed to illustrate the principal characters of an extraordinarily complicated myth system. Interpretations of what these figures represent, vary quite markedly from mere nature symbolism, to evidence for intrusion by other races, to indications of visitations by anomalous anthropomorphic phenomena that is aliens and the like.

Although subsequent expeditions have indicated some inaccuracies in Grey's drawings most compare reasonably well with established and documented sites. But one of Grey's drawings is somewhat unique. He located a painting of the figure of a man 10 feet 6 inches in length, clothed from the chin downwards in a red garment, which reached to the wrists and ankles.

In Grey's own words:

The face and head of the figure were enveloped in a succession of circular bandages or rollers, or what appeared to be painted

to represent such. These were coloured red, yellow and white, and the eyes were the only features represented on the face. Upon the highest bandage or roller, a series of lines were painted in red, but although so regularly done as to indicate that they were intended to depict written characters, or some ornament for the head. The painting was more injured by the damp and atmosphere, and had the appearance of being much more defaced and ancient than any of the others, which we had seen. This figure brings to mind the description of the prophet Ezekiel.

It was this particular painting that sparked considerable controversy. It was bandied about as evidence for early incursions by foreign peoples and the series of lines & painted in red, which may have depicted written characters, were given all manner of interpretations. Indeed it was suggested by some, that these characters represented a decipherable script. Thomas Worsnop indicated they read, I am a great personage, they being made by traders from the Red Sea area. Professor Campbell suggested the script was archaic Japanese, and offered the translation: the number of the hopeless ones is 62, from which he concluded that a Japanese vessel floundered on the coast leaving survivors. Probably no less exotic a connection is the suggestion by Professor Homet that similar markings were found curved onto stones in certain parts of South America. The suggestion is that perhaps a superior people in these areas were the source or stimuli for the marks.

The only problem with all these speculations, is that the painting, upon which they were based, has not been found yet, or rather its existence, in the form Grey described and drew, has not been confirmed. I. M. Crawford, of the Western Australian Museum, suggested he found the painting upon which Grey based the strange sketch. Crawford's figure however

is 2 feet shorter than the Grey dimensions, and appears to have a top feather projecting out of the top bandage or roller. This dissimilarity and other factors suggest that Grey's second cave, the locality of the Ezekiel figure has not actually been found.

Generally the Wandjina figures that have been found are connected with the sky by most indigenous tribes. Indeed, the aborigines view the Wandjina as the spirit in the cloud, understanding them as being both human in form and cloud like. The elaborate head-dress is usually interpreted as the lightning, which the Wandjina controlled. Perhaps more succinctly, the Wandjina are thought of as beings in the clouds. They originally came out of the clouds, and now, as the aborigines see it, they return in that form. In a similar vein, certain tribesmen say the Wandjina have returned to the sky, and can now be seen at night as lights moving high above the earth.

It appears that the cloud connection is the more dominant belief. It is perhaps interesting to note that the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, featuring in Exodus, exhibit the same religious myth. The superior being (or beings) is in the cloud. The Bible takes the connection even further by indicating that this superior being (God it seems) is humanoid in appearance, speaking to Moses on a person-to-person basis. The cloud is also capable of landing. The cloud and being are distinctly separate.

Whether this same myth mechanism is operating as a stimuli for the Wandjina legends is entirely speculative, but I.M. Crawford indicates that the paintings of the Wandjina range from human figures to stylised representation of clouds:

The sequence from human to cloud form evolves through the following stages: Wandjina paintings usually show man like figures complete with body, but in some cases the body is omitted and only the head and shoulders retained, and in the next stage the shoulders are omitted leaving us just the halo surrounding the face. This is finally simplified until the halo becomes a mass of concentric lines, with only the eyes peering through & the eye of the storm.

W. Arndt, a senior research officer with the CSIRO, suggested that the reverse may have been the stimuli for the Wandjina figures. That is, that the paintings evolved from paintings of clouds.

Of further interest is the association between the Wandjina belief and the Rainbow-Serpent myth. The Rainbow Serpent is called Galaru in the northern Kimberly and Ungud elsewhere. According to legend, Galaru lives in a sacred pool near the Wandjina cave, and is responsible for the spirits of babies which it brings to the waterholes. These spirits are incarnated, by the retouching of the Wandjina. The latter finds an analogy of sorts with the fairy faith myths of child-napping. The children, often as not returned, or they appear as changelings. This belief in changelings was not restricted to Europe. It can be found in regions as remote as Australia, China and the American Pacific coast. F.W. Halliday speculated about a dragon and the disc myth. With the Wandjina associated with the cloud, the serpent and cloud mythic connection resonates with Halliday's thesis.

In conclusion, the Wandjina myth exhibits a number of mythological components common to those more directly ascribed in other documented beliefs. The analogies with the biblical, fairy and dragon myths have been noted, merely to demonstrate the generality of myths of the superior being acting as a cultural catalyst for primitive societies. The speculations outlined are purely exploratory and should not be regarded as evidence for supporting the idea that extraterrestrial beings were the stimuli for the Wandjina myths. Indeed the arguments are more suggestive of anomalous anthropomorphic incursions of some type, which appear to have some similarities with other documented sky myths. Just finding out who these beings were, finds an interesting analogy in the contemporary UFO myths. As such they are of particular interest to researchers.

The Art of the Wandjina by I.M. Crawford (Western Australian Museum), 1968;

The journals of George Grey, "*Expeditions of Discovery*"

The Australian Aboriginal by A.P. Elkin (1954)

Australian Religions by M. Eliade (1973)

The Past is human by P. White (1974)

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