

READERS' LETTERS

Dear David,

At the moment I am very busy preparing a circular newsheet about "Unidentified Encounters" (a new magazine) which will be available early next year (Jan-Feb 1980). I have decided to include the final conclusions (if any) of Project UFO Flight Path in the first issue".

All the Best, Dean Preston, UFOJA, St.Clement, Jersey.....

Dear Dave,

One thing of major importance will be happening here after the National Conference (October 13/14/15th), we will be forming the Australian Centre for UFO Studies, and I will be a foundation member and an active supporter of it. We will be operating like the GEPAN Group in France by concentrating mainly on Hard Data cases and we will be making Australia an independantly operating country researching the UFO Phenomenon; more on this after the Conference.

Regards, David Reneke, UFO Research (NSW) Sydney, Australia.....

Dear David,

Mark Moravec deserved congratulation for the excellent paper on "The Ethics of UFO Investigation" (See SKYWATCH 33). This is a difficult problem which many people are tackling in isolation, without any agreed guidelines. There is a need for an agreed code of practice. It is to be hoped that the paper by Moravec will act as the catalyst to initiated discussion leading to such a code. Perhaps your readers would add their ideas to assist this to develop. Personally I would argue with Moravec on one point. The proposed order of priorities puts the investigator before the gain of information. Each investigator must judge this individually. But if Roentgen and Marie Curie had followed this code, we would not have had diagnostic or therapeutic radiology as early as we did. I think each investigator must assess the risks taken vis-a-vis knowledge gained on a personal basis.

Sincerely, Peter A Hill, Branch Secretary, BUFORA, Edinburgh, Chairman; International Working Party on Standards in UFO Research.....

Dear David.

Thank you for your note of the 18th and newsletter. I continue to be amazed at the amount of useful and interesting topical news you pack into this. Following up your editorial mention, you may be interested to learn that the first UFO Class at Morley College was disrupted by a camera crew from BBC2 Television News, and a 2 1/2 minute piece was shown at the end of the 10.40 News on 2, the same evening. I have learnt that the classes are now fully subscribed. The ethics of UFO investigations was an interesting discussion paper.

Sincerely, Lionel Beer, Chairman - BUFORA, London.....

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter and latest issue of SKYWATCH received today. I found some items interesting in the issue, particularly some of the foreign reports. I was also intrigued by your mention (on the last page) of the Australian film of 1911, "Haunted Billabong", which dealt with sheep mutilations and space visitors. Could you tell me a bit more about this? Where did you read about it? I'm sure Tom Adams would like to know about it, for possible mention in his publication STIGMATA, which deals with animal mutilations.

Regarding the Randles and Delair article on the "Name Game", I have always been intrigued by the number of people associated with UFOlogy in one fashion or another whose names begin with "M" and end in "EL" or "ELL". For instance: Menzel, Mantell, Michel, Mansell, Mel Noel, Michael, etc. Perhaps its just a coincidence, but its curious!

Yours truly, Lucius Farish, Arkansas, USA.....

Dear David,

Many thanks for your issue No.33 received today. It is very comprehensive and must have involved plenty of time and labour on the part of dedicated staff under your leadership. I note your reproduction of the Malaysian Bit. Please put in my full name and address for your readers to write to me, as I have a free 16 page professionally printed publication to be posted to anyone who would be interested in requesting a copy (airmail 13p but surface mail free). Correspondence on religious and spiritual matters welcome.

A Merry Christmas and a most rewarding New Year, Peace be with you,

Dr.C.H.Yeang, 24 Cantonment Road, Penang, Malaysia.

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of the 7th June and the enclosed fact sheet which proved very interesting.

Thank you also for suggesting ways in which I could help you compile the Phantom Aircraft etc., and MIB report. So far I have found two instances, one in "Our Haunted Planet" by John Keel who devotes almost all of chapter 9 to the subject of the MIB, and also in "Gods of Aquarius" by Brad Steiger where you will find on pages 60/63 approx. and page 80 something about the MIB.

You asked me to relate something of my experiences. I am to an extent reluctant to do so as they entail to something which I do not understand, but since you ask will tell you of some of them.

As I believe I said, I have seen UFOs, the first of these I believe when aged 8 (1954) and pointed out to my father as a "shooting star". This was a white light "falling" on the diagonal and disappearing behind rooftops in front of uf, there was no engine noise and it was a clear night.

There is a gap of approx. 13 years before I saw another, there was a silvery pulsating light which appeared to go right over the roof of the house we are now living in, heading NW. Being in an upstairs room at the time made distance, height etc. very deceptive; I believe this sighting would have been very different had I been outside at the time.

One evening, about 8.30 p.m. I was watching TV when I began to grow restless. This restlessness grew until 9 p.m. when I felt as if I had to go out into the garden, convinced there was a UFO coming. I watched the sky for about 25 minutes and was just at the point of turning back indoors when something caught my attention from the corner of my eye.

I saw a triangular shaped streak of movement - this is all that it can be described as - then heard a "Whoosh" sound, something like rushing air and then saw two orange lights (fairly large), one slightly more opaque than the other and either side by side or one slightly above the other come to an apparent halt/hover. They appeared to come from the SE and travel towards the NE. The impression I got while watching these lights was that these were saucers skimming over or through water and puzzled over this ever since. I told my husband of this sighting but was met with disbelief as his policy still is that he doesn't believe in these things until he sees one.

A possible sighting of a UFO came one evening just as I reached the front gate of the house.. I heard a sizzling noise coming from behind and above me. Naturally I turned round to see what it was and I saw a dark object with flame-coloured sparks coming from behind it. This could alternatively have been a meteor. If it was the latter then this is the first time I have ever seen one so close in. I favour this as an explanation of the sighting though I have read of similar ones which fit this as something like the description of a UFO.

On another occasion I watched what I believe to be a UFO for well over half an hour. It was a white light which at first couldn't be seen as it looked just like a star. I wouldn't have known it was there until it moved. However, it did numerous movements across the sky and some pinpoint turns, which as far as I know, no aircraft can do. All the time I was watching I was listening for an engine noise; there wasn't any, and while still watching there was another light which crossed the sky near the object I was watching, perhaps there had been two of them on this occasion. It faded out after a short distance, too slow for a meteor and too fast for a plane. However, I finally left the light to carry on its antics over towards the Hainault area.

Finally on UFOs, I saw a bright large red light just as I walked to the bedroom window one evening. This mildly surprised me, possibly as I had more or less "walked" into it, it was just hovering there. I looked for some comparisons, mainly one which is obvious for us, that being that there is a factory with two red lights on a mast. At first I thought I had mistaken them for this UFO but the light I saw was too large for these. I thought of an aeroplane, there was at the time no engine noise so possibly this rules this out. There was, however, a plane approaching and I looked at this for a comparison - the plane had a white light and was, or appeared to be, approaching the red light. I looked again towards the red light, (I should say where it had been, as it had disappeared). My reaction was, "Oh, why should one light disappear when a plane was coming?". I looked round the sky to see if what I had seen was a plane, looking for a white light instead of a red one, but there was nothing except the plane which seemingly interrupted.

Well, that's all on UFOs. These sightings happened a few years ago now and I haven't seen any more though I have heard through a friend that there are still visits being made at the Hainault/Dagenham area.

There are a number of weird happenings which have been going on in and around the house since we moved here. These seemed to start up all of a sudden. One explanation I have been given is that UFOs could have opened up a "window" which is causing them to happen or that there is already an existing one..... However.....

The first of these things to happen was in broad daylight. I, my eldest son, Andrew and his brother (then both aged about 2 and 2½) were out in the garden. I had just finished putting washing on the line and turned towards the house Andrew was already standing near the house and there was about 5/6 ft between us. There, suddenly and from nowhere, appeared a semi-visible woman between us and preceded me into the house. My question at the time was the same as Andrews: "Who was that woman who walked into the house?". I clearly saw her walk through the back door but by the time I got into the kitchen she had gone. even a thorough search of the house proved fruitless. She obviously came the same way as she went, out of thin air, apparently.

Another incident involved my youngest son Christopher, then aged about 4. We were going shopping, walking along a deserted road in between lampposts, junction boxes and the like, when he suddenly fell backwards, pulling me back with him. At first I thought he had tripped, but as he picked himself up he was looking round him in puzzlement and asked me, "Who did I bump into"? I obviously said, "No one, Dear", as there wasn't a soul around but his insistence that there was someone leads me to believe that this is true. Unfortunately, neither of the boys remember these incidents.

As I said, lots of things have been happening indoors. I was met with the shadowy form of a figure one night just as I was getting into bed. It was impossible to tell whether it was male or female - there was just this shadowy figure/shape of a person, in the shape of a head attached to a body which "stood" there for a couple of seconds and must have disappeared. Previously to this on the same evening while watching TV, I had been very aware of someone being in the room with us, perhaps my question bought on this visitation.

Many times I have seen shadowy moving figures or shadows about the house and have often felt as if someone were standing watching as I either walked up or down stairs, sometimes this has happened with someone behind me, sometimes someone in front of me. Once the feeling of someone being in the house and the request to make their presence known bought on a chime of the front door bell. There was no wind that night and this rather un-nerved me. Several times I have moved from one room to another and seen it looking smoke-filled or foggy, even a friend of mine and my husband has commented on this. We all smoke but this has happened on occasions when none of us has been smoking in the room, it seems to happen more frequently in the living room but has happened in the kitchen also, and once I walked out of the living room into the passage, and into "something", the only thing I can describe it as is something like walking out of a warmly heated room into a colder one, as I turned to walk upstairs (the original intention) the feeling disappeared.

Once we bought a small billiard table. Being new, and my husband and I like big kids on occasion, we were playing with it in the living room. We were down to the last two balls, the atmosphere in the room was very still and we, rather my husband, was just about to "pot" the last ball when one either "jumped" or was lifted very gently over the other one and set down in another place on the table. At this we laughed, it was very funny at the time, he doesn't remember but I still wonder who or what our visitor was.

I believe I have had a personal psychic experience which concerned the death of my grandmother. This happened several years ago and still hurts when I think of it, so if you don't mind I won't tell you of this.

Well, you asked for experiences. There you have them.
I hope I haven't bored you.

With regards,
Mrs.A.W., Romford, Essex.....

Dear David,

Glad you enjoyed the latest MUF0B, and thanks for the good wishes. We're quite settled at our new address and MUF0B/MAGONIA at last has something which can be described as an office without too much bending of the English language! I hope the change of name will go over well, and possibly bring in some new readers who don't particularly think of themselves as ufologists, but who may well have a lot to offer our subject.

Yes, I enjoyed the latest SKYWATCH, tho' I cursed inwardly when I read your article on ethics. Not because I disagreed with what it said but because I have also got a piece on some of the ethical questions coming up in MAGONIA 1! Actually the two pieces complement each other quite well, I shall refer our readers to the SKYWATCH article. The MAGONIA piece is by Berthold Schwartz. This is of course a vital issue and becoming increasingly important with the emphasis on hypnotic regression and psychological investigations of percipients. If some of the more irresponsible elements in ufology do not really try and take a long hard look at what they are doing, I can forsee some percipients becoming very disturbed and traumatised. I think it important that this question is thoroughly aired, and welcome your magazine's piece as an important contribution to the debate - even tho' it does upstage MAGONIA's contribution. That's show-business, I suppose.

Yours, John Rimmer, Editor - MUF0B/MAGONIA, New Malden, Surrey.....

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The latest newsletter was published in mid-October.

MAPIT- - - - NEWSDESK

Picwinard Magazine which dealt with Wessex Leys and Folklore, has ceased publication. The last issue by Vince Russett was No.10.

I have just heard of the sad news that Ufologist David Gittens of NAPRA and ex-UNO has died. I met David at his home in Runcorn in 1974 and was most impressed by him; he also edited his group's newlinks and journals. My deepest sympathy to David's family - tragic news indeed, for someone so young!

Is John Keel (of operation Trojan Horse fame) giving up Urology? Such is the rumour that I have heard. My correspondent - in Massachusetts, Barry Greenwood - says that while he cannot confirm this, Keel has been publishing very little of late.

Credit: UPNB - No.3 1979.

A new book out soon is "Encounters with the Past" by Peter Moss. It concerns hypnotic regressions experiments and the hypnotist involved is Joe Keeton (who performed the experiments on Gaynor Sunderland and her Close Encounter Three case). The book costs £7.95p - but includes two records, so you can hear the regressions!

The Reddish Close Encounter of the Third Kind case, which MAPIT investigated (it concerns a silver-suited entity) is featured in Flying Saucer Review Vol. 25 No.2, under the title of "Floating Entity at Reddish" (Pages 29 30 31). Price 85p from: FSR Publications Ltd., West Malling, Maidstone, Kent, England. This case is also featured in FUFOR's magazine 'UFO Insight', Vol.1.No.3 October 1979.

BUFORA's 1980 Provisional Kensington Library Lecture programme is as follows:

- 5th January - Extra-Terrestrial Life - Ian Ridpath.
- 2nd February - Satellites & UFO's - Neville Byford
- 1st March - UFO's and Apparitions - Richard Phillips.
- 12th April - Representative from a European UFO Society.
- 3rd May - Teaching UFOlogy - Lionel Beer - FRAS.
- 7th June - Ley-Line Field Research - Paul Devereux - BA.

Meetings from 7 - 10 p.m., Members 40p; Non-Members 80p.

Further details from: Betty Wood, 6 Cairn Avenue, London W5 5HX.

Ted Horton of UFOSIS informs me that their magazine is now called "Vision" and not Proteus. New Editor is: Eric Westley, 10 Alexander Road, Acocks Green Birmingham 27.

Issue No.15 of the Metemperical UFO Bulletin (MUF0B) will have a new name - this will be "MAGONIA"! This issue will in fact be the 50th. Well done, John Rimmer and Co!

A new illustrated book is published this autumn entitled - Mysteries of the World - Edited by Christopher Pick and published by Lyric Books - Price £4.95 Contributions include: UFO's by John Rimmer; Loch Ness Monster by Tim Dinsdale and a section by Bob Rickard on Religious Stigmata.

Rocky Wood of ECRA, New Zealand, has certainly been globe-trotting in 1979. He attended a conference in Munich and lectured in London during June and in July he attended a symposium in San Francisco, as well as visiting Hynes Centre in Evanston! Rocky, you must have unlimited wealth - You Lucky Fellow!!

UAPROL of Leicester have been undergoing some changes recently. The cause was the departure of their President, Trevor Thornton, who has left Britain to work in Iran. UAPROL have had to reorganise a new committee and the contact address: John Barden, 19 Coates Avenue, New Parks Estate, Leicester. Tel: Leicester 311666. The latest newsletter was published in mid-October.

Cosmology Newlink will no longer be available in the United Kingdom after November 1979. CNK is to continue for the EEC countries only; on the subject of CNK, it's Editor, Edward Harris, recently sent to me "The Certificate of Recognition" Award, to quote: "This certificate has been awarded to you, David, for the scientific way that you have undertaken to investigate UFO's and related phenomena. It has been given also because of your SKYWATCH Magazine, which if publicly printed and sold in the UK would be great as a contribution to science as some others which are now on sale. Therefore, this certificate has been sent for your forward-looking SKYWATCH Magazine, one of the finest in the country! Long may it run!" Thanks, Ted, all the best for your European venture.

A new magazine soon to appear is called "Second Look", and is published in Washington, DC. Writers include: Allen Hynek, Colin Wilson, Isaac Asimov, Sir Bernard Lovell, Erich Von Daniken, Ray Bradbury, Robert Heinlein, Jacques Vallee and Robert Temple, amongst others. Write to: Second Look, 10 E Street SE, Washington DC. 20003, USA, for details.

Letter received from UFO International in Bristol reads - "I have to announce the dismissal of Terry Hooper". No reason given. The new address for the Group and Quest is: Allan Parsons, 160 Courtyard Road, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 2RN.

MAPIT had mention in the media recently. First in "Today", an article entitled "UFO on the Mind" - October 1979 and also "Car Chased by UFO" - Lancashire Evening Post - August 10th. This case has not been investigated as the witnesses are not forthcoming.

In the last issue of SKYWATCH, regular readers will have been sent a "Statement of Intent". Should anyone wish a copy to be sent to them, send a SAE to the Editorial Address.

The following books are required for research purposes and inclusion in the MAPIT Reference Library: Gods of Aquarius, by Brad Steiger; The Ghosts of Borley, by Peter Underwood and Paul Tabori, and Bigfoot, by Ann Slate and Alan Berry. Should you be able to help, then send details to Editorial Address.

Two new books to look out for are Alien Animals, by Janet and Colin Bord (Paul Elek Ltd) and The Dyfed Enigma, by Randall Jonse Puch (Faber).

Finally, may I wish all members, fellow researchers and overseas contacts a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in 1980. See you soon.

D. L. REES.

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REVIEWS

MESSENGERS OF DECEPTION - by Jacques Vallee (and/or Press 1979).

This book may be very disturbing to some people, since it represents one of the furthest swings to the left that I have observed in modern ufology. Vallee has been examining contactee reports for several years now, and in his latest book suggests that such stories deserve more attention than normally given by most researchers. This is a direct result of his theory of "conditioning" which he described in earlier works. UFOs do represent some form of manipulation by entities terrestrial or extra-terrestrial, Vallee says, then contactees represent individuals who are greatly affected by the direction. Vallee indicates that the manipulators may be super-secret government agents, unknown to everyone but themselves. The theory of Government origin of UFOs has been last on the list of most ufologists for years now, so it is hard to judge reaction to this. At one point, Vallee encourages paranoia by claiming that some friends of UFO researchers may be working for the manipulators, "milking" the ufologists for information. The book also contains some interesting thoughts on cattle mutilations, a welcome addition to any UFO tome, discussing secret goings-on. In all, the book is an excellent source of contemporary thoughts on UFOs and I recommend it to all serious researchers.

It is not, however for casual readers and armchair Ufologists who might be led astray by some of Vallee's comments.
Credit: Chris Rutkowski - SWAMP GAS Journal, Vol.1 No.4 June 1979.
(This book is available in Britain from Compendium Books, 234 Camden High St., London N.1. £4.50 + 40p p & p).

GNOME NEWS - Published by the Gnome Club, West Putford, Devon, EX22 7XE. (See Advertisement in this issue).

This newsletter is delightful and makes fascinating reading. It is well-produced and lay-out is good also. Throughout its pages you will find illustrations/Articles such as - Gnomes and Politics; The Cottingley Photos; How to contact Gnomes; The Relevance of Gnomes and other Little People to Modern Thought; Book Reviews; Letters; in fact lots of small items which collectively make it a joy to read. Try it - you'll enjoy it! (DLR).

THE JOURNAL OF TRANSIENT AERIAL PHENOMENA - Vol.1. No.1. July-August 1979.
Write to: Tony Pace, Research Director, New Chapel Observatory, Newchapel, Stoke on Trent, Staffs.

TAP is to be published twice yearly in connection with the BUFORA Journal
To quote Editor Tony Pace: "The new journal will avoid printing the sensational "scoop" reports which invariably turn out to be nothing more than the misperception of ordinary events when subjected to careful evaluation", and in this, the first issue, Tony goes on to say TAP "is devoted to providing advice and guide-lines to potential researchers". The whole concept of TAP is a fine idea, a journal providing longer research articles/in-depth case studies and statistical data is long overdue. The format of the journal is based on scientific publications and will appeal to the academic community. Peter Hill, Robert Digby, Steven Gamble, Charles Lockwood and Dr. Joachim Kuettnner are contributors to this first issue. The journal is the ideal medium to encourage academic interest in the UFO phenomena. I am sure once it gets settled down it will prove of great service to UFOlogy. (DLR).

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OVERSEAS' SIGHTINGS

GREECE - UFO OVER THESSALONIKI?

Date: Friday 24th August 1979
Time: Approx. 2230 hrs.

Witnesses: Panos Theodoroglou, Irene Fraggodimitraki and Omiros Karajas.
Location: The seaside area of the Macedonian Pallas Hotel.

"We were walking by the sea, talking. There was in fact seven of us. For a moment Panos, Irene and myself (Omiros) stayed back and left the others. Suddenly in the clear sky two large lights, hear to each other - side by side, the colour being that of a common lamp. I pointed them out to the other two, and we thought that it may be an aircraft preparing to land, but except for the two lights, no navigational lights were visible on the wings. Suddenly the lights went out and in their place were five small red lights in a circular formation, flashing on and off continuously. Panos said, "Loo, it leaves small lights!" Indeed, we looked carefully and saw that many smaller lights were leaving the red ones, and these moved in other directions. I then pointed out to the others the possibility of this being a UFO. No one laughed about this suggestion. The two large lights then suddenly reappeared with the red ones disappearing, after a few seconds one of the lights went out, leaving the other alone in the sky. This began moving slowly over and behind houses until out of sight to the east!" One theory put forward is that the witnesses saw a Dakota aircraft discharging balloons!

Credit: Omiros Karajas.

TASMANIA - Maatsuyker Island - March 30th 1979 - 2140 hrs.

Two witnesses were taking weather details when they saw an intense yellowish light approaching fast from the South. It lit up the island as it came closer. It was difficult to look at and the witnesses turned away. Looking back seconds later, they found it had receded into the southern sky. It remained stationary over the sea, occasionally dropping off a blue- to white-like light. The witnesses' dog had played up during the close approach of the light, but had quietened down later. Finally in the early hours of the morning the light moved away to the south-east and took on more of a blue colour. The witnesses being tired went to bed. The tasmanian UFO Investigation Centre, has 338 unexplained cases on its files covering the period 1948 to the end of 1978. The sightings are made up of 203 nocturnal lights, 57 CE1, 39 CE2 30 daylight discs and 9 CE3 cases.

Credit: Tufoic Newsletter. October.No.28 1979.

AUSTRALIA - 4th March 1979 - 2200 hrs. Pipers River.

Ten people were sitting round a campfire, when they noticed a bright orange light above sea level, which was hovering for approximately 10 minutes. While in this position, there was a bright red reflection coming off the water underneath the object. The object suddenly manoeuvred closer to the coast, tilting at an angle and disappearing into the ocean. When first seen, the object was cigar-shaped, then to a saucer as it angled its dive into the sea.

Credit: ACOS Bulletin No.19 - June 1979.

COLOMBIA - UFO - A FLEET ALARMED A WHOLE TOWN:

A Fleet of UFOs alarmed early this morning (10th May 1979) the residents of a large region located a few kilometres to the north of Bogota, reported the afternoon paper, "El Bogatano". The UFOs - between 10 and 15 according to witnesses - flew for several hours over the villages of Suesca, Sesquile, Nemaon and Choconta, causing the flight of domestic animals as well as a local blackout. Eight of the objects that gave off light changing from red to blue passing through orange and yellow "examined" for several minutes the installations of the Satellite Tracking Station at Choconta, owned by Telecom, before swiftly climbing and disappearing in space. Members of the Colombian Institute for the investigation of the UFO Phenomenon went to those places to interview the dismayed peasants, many still trying this morning to find their hens, dogs and cattle, lost because of those "Bright Tin Plates", as they said.

Credit: UFO Newscipping Service - July - No.120 - 1979.

ENGLAND

Date: 26th June 1979, a Tuesday.

Time: 1815 hrs.

Location: Blantyre Avenue, Walkden, Greater Manchester.

Witness: Alan Openshaw, a clerk, and his 5 year old son.

Alan was in his garden on this particular evening; his son, having a great interest in aeroplanes travelling around about their area, was observing the sky. His son in fact first spotted the object. It was silver and saucer-shaped, travelling noiseless across a clear patch of blue sky for approx.15 seconds. It disappeared from view because of trees/houses in the way. They both went upstairs to see if they could follow the object, but nothing was seen. The direction in which the object travelled was from north-west to south-east. The Lancashire Aero Club based at nearby Barton Aerodrome, had no sightings reported to them. The area being well-populated reported no sightings on this date. It is strange that only Alan and his son saw the "UFO". Investigation still in progress.

Highlight for me was the excellent paper on the 1978 Italian case by Eduardo Russo and Dr Roberto Finotti (with cases that made me wonder what had happened to BUFORA investigator lately), and Dr Hynes's well thought out paper on the development of a new two-level classification system for UFO reports (we will be hearing more of this, no doubt). The other papers, with a couple of exceptions, fell somewhere between these extremes. It was interesting to see

THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS - A Personal View - Jenny Randles.

I am not really sure what I expected out of Britain's first "International UFO Congress" - so its hard to tell if I got it. An air of expectancy certainly hung over the foyer of London's plush Mount Royal Hotel on Sunday, August 26th - at the start of this long awaited two-day event. Congress (as opposed to Conference) was a new word for me and I remember asking Allen Hynek what the difference was as we walked through the door. - "Well," he said in his distinctive accent, "They call them congresses down south and conferences up north".

By this Sunday morning it had already been quite a weekend for me, so perhaps I was not quite wide enough awake to pass fair judgement. Peter Warrington, myself and our respective fiancées had travelled to London early on the Friday, as Peter and I had to do some promotional interviews for our new book. Late nights followed by an early Sunday breakfast with Allen Hynek left us unprepared for the sea of people that ebbed and flowed all over the conference rooms. By Monday night we departed with a complex barrage of emotions; frustration, some pleasure, a few smiles, optimism, disappointment and, more than any other, utter exhaustion! Such seems to be the way of UFO conferences.

This was BUFORA's third event that I had been to, and I knew from experience they always have two distinctive facets - that which goes on behind the scenes, and the public facade. This time there was even a third facet - a kind of 'top secret' discussion on UFO terminology, between ufologist selected by BUFORA (of course).

First - the public facade, since this is after all what most people paid £10 for (conference fees seem to rise out of all proportion to inflation, although I suppose one could argue that in this instance a free show at the London Planetarium and a BUFORA pen shaped like nuts and bolts were thrown in!). There is no doubt from this point of view BUFORA reaped their harvest, as there were 500 people there plus (more than double any previous attendance). At times it looked as if BUFORA were as overwhelmed as anyone of us, desperately searching for seats in the lecture hall.

The lectures varied in quality and interest enormously. Unfortunately, the all-important first one (when the media were there with their flashguns) was possibly the worst. I felt sorry for BUFORA NIC, Larry Dale. He is a nice enough fellow but he was subjected to an incredible botch-up in the audio-visual department with a ten-minute pantomime of slide after awfully wrong slide. Finally, when they did get it right, Larry was so nervous following his ordeal that his report on "Recent British Cases" was abysmal. The cases were none-starters (lights or ones which investigators told me later they had identified!) He concluded that BUFORA had had a concentration of reports from the south during 1977-1979 (the very period which saw them fall out of favour with NUFON groups and receive few reports from the north!) This point should have been obvious when he produced map after map of sighting concentrations which, surprise-surprise, bore remarkable correlation with the location of active BUFORA investigators!

Fortunately, things did get better (although there still a few smiles when things went wrong with the lighting, as is almost inevitable at any conference). What I noticed most clearly, however, was the different levels at which the foreign speakers were aiming as compared with BUFORA officers. The latter seemed to cater more for the average ufologist (who by definition has just a modicum of knowledge and interest) whereas the former often went above the heads of all but a few delegates.

Highlight for me was the excellent paper on the 1978 Italian wave by Eduardo Russo and Dr Roberto Pinotti (with cases that made one wonder what had happened to BUFORAs investigators lately), and Dr. Hynek's well thought out paper on the development of a new two-level classification system for UFO reports (we will be hearing more of this, no doubt). The other papers, with a couple of exceptions, fell somewhere between these extremes. It was interesting to see

how nobody got what they really wanted (except the hard core ufologists) when following Hynek's paper everybody questioned him about cover-ups and the CIA and nobody at all referred to his paper!

What I was pleased to see this time was that the schedule was kept to, more or less and there was usually ten minutes for questions at the end of each paper. All in all the standard was up to previous years with two or perhaps three papers which really did make contributions to ufology to counteract those which were - to be kind - rather thin.

Level Two at any conference is the personal interactions that go on, and literally here one was swept off one's feet. At some stages it seemed to me like everyone in Europe was trying to make contact with me, and I distinctly recall one intensely frustrating moment when I had to try to turn my head four ways at once with different people trying to gain my attention. This aspect of a conference often leads to one missing lectures (and I was very sorry to miss out on Dr. Leo Sprinkle - who I gather was excellent if rather extreme in his viewpoints for a psychologist). Nevertheless, to my mind it is more important than any other - since interactions of ideas take place, sometimes without one realising that such things are possible amidst the cacophony of noise that seems bent on driving you into the ground. Things were made worse for Peter and I with people asking for copies of our book to be autographed and making various comments about its content. I can remember desperately trying to think of a way of getting away from a nice man who was showing me page after page of cuttings referring to 'Alien Satellites in earth orbit' when I saw Allen Hynek was standing close by. One does not like to offend anyone's sense of belonging to such an occasion - as illustrated by this same man who a few moments later, after I had talked to Hynek, said to me "How does it feel to be back amongst mere mortals?". My only answer was - "He's just a nice man, actually" - and he is.

The congress was certainly well attended by ufological luminaries and opportunities arose to talk to many of them. On the Sunday night we 'retired' to the home of Charles Bowen in the Surrey countryside to pass on numerous messages from people disappointed not to see him there.

I think my nicest memory will come from talks with Edoardo Russo of CUN in Italy. He is a small, young man - but when it comes to thinking ufologically he towered above most people there. "We always used to look to Britain for our example", he said, "We formed a network after NUFON began, then we set up a similar system to UFOIN but now your country seems to be dividing itself into war camps again". To which I said, "Don't follow that example, will you?"

Our discussion with Allen Hynek, amidst gallons of coffee, was intriguing, too. It was clear how enraptured he had become by Stephen Spielberg - "I was there - actually there in his flat - when he turned down \$1 Million to do JAWS 2". Spielberg is to film a sequel to CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND, for 1982 release. We exchanged ideas on the advice that should be given to him when work begins next month. Meanwhile CE3K mark two comes out next Spring with a tightened up middle bit and new scenes that show inside of the UFO. It was interesting too, to hear his views on such things as Blue Book and Condon.

Since I am regarded as 'Public Enemy Number One' by BUFORA for some reason I was not able to take part in the committee discussions on classification. Hynek was puzzled by this ("You should be involved - I mention your work on classification in my paper"), but he understood about the stupidity of politics and was astute at sensing the causations of it in this country.

From talking to those who were involved it seems that it took a long, long time to make any headway whatsoever. One delegate said "BUFORA seem to have come along with preconceived ideas about what we were all going to do". There were of course vast differences in opinion, and little concrete was done - except agree that talks must continue. When Peter Hill presented a summary of what had transpired, at the close of the congress, it became obvious that hasty decisions had been taken in order to have 'something to say'. The 'new' definition of UFO REPORT was given, which to say the least was ludicrous. As

John Hind stood up and said "This definition is so broad that it means you would have to investigate everything - even a double decker bus!" In essence, the panel had swept away 'flying' and 'object' from the definition - leaving just 'unidentified events of a physical and psychological nature'. Peter Hill did admit that John's point was 'interesting' and would be 'considered'.

No doubt there is great potential for things to happen in these talks, but as Allen Hynek said as the conference ended, "I think we will do it but it will be a long, long road".

And so - for the four of us it was back to a welcoming rest before the long trek home. Rosaline, Peter's fiancée, had not been to a conference before (although she is interested in the subject a great deal). Her remarks were 'Are they all like that?' As for Paul, my fiancé, he may have had the right idea. He missed much of the conference and went to the Earl's Court Motor Show instead!

COMMENT ON LAST ARTICLE - by Lionel Beer

I have just received a copy of Jenny Randles's view of the London Congress, which I asked you for. As the article is clearly a personal (and some might say egotistical) view rather than a factual report, I will not comment on minor inaccuracies.

Jenny's comments on the Working Party, which she did not attend, are misleading. There was nothing secret about this, and it was mentioned in Congress notices widely circulating since March. So far as I know, my letter, mentioning the Working Party Sessions, was circulated without prejudice to all known UK groups, with the exception of the Aetherius Society, in early June. This letter asked people with a strong interest in contributing to the sessions to write to Peter Hill, and said "...we do not wish anyone to feel excluded..." Even if the copy to NUFON failed to reach Jenny, she cannot pretend she did not know about this.

I understand that agreements formulated by the International members of the Working Party were arrived at unanimously and there was no need to call for any voting. Clearly recommendations on terminology and classification are only workable if they are arrived at by common consent. It is anticipated that the preliminary conclusions will be circulated as widely as possible so that a consensus can eventually be reached. Also some of the working party were keen to meet again in a few months in sub-committee so as not to lose this initiative. Presumably a full meeting of international ufologists would be timed to coincide with another congress in 12-18 months time, but not necessarily in the UK, although BUFORA would endeavour to send a delegate. No doubt other groups in the UK would also see the importance of being represented.

Lionel Beer - Chairman BUFORA.

CONGRESS COMMENT by John Rimmer

The BUFORA Conference was certainly one of the best organised UFO events I have ever been to. In view of some of the ones I have been to that may sound like a back-handed compliment, but it's not meant to. I think the main problem with all these events is the one I touch on in the MUF0B piece. In one extent they're too organised. There is very little time for socialising and general chit-chat. It's very seldom that one gets such a crowd of ufologists in one place. You see people you know by repute and perhaps admire their work. As soon as you get into an interesting conversation with them they are whisked off to a seminar, working-party, lecture or some such. On the other hand the lectures are not organised enough. Somebody talking for three quarters of an hour - you can't really take in what they're saying first time - there's no opportunity to go over specific points - question periods are a rushed jumble of questions and comments of varying relevance or are missed altogether. And often the lectures, excellent though many at a BUFORA meeting were, are more suited to leisurely perusal than desperate on-the-spot note-taking.

I do think the whole concept should be carefully thought through by the major organisations. Is the big open conference like the one we have just had the best way of disseminating and exchanging views? Many of the people at the open conferences are just there to hear exciting tales of UFO encounters. - nothing wrong in that. But I think this sometimes puts the audience's expectations rather at odds with the intentions of the speakers (the classic example of this was the infamous Scunthorpe Conference, which I had a hand in - here there was practically no contact at all between speakers and audience!)

Maybe the big congresses should be largely public relations exercises, in which 'hame' speakers can give the public what they want, in a sensible and interesting way. But the conferences for the actual ufologists, the people who are contributing to what the public want to hear, should perhaps be organised on a more intimate scale. They should be real conferences, in which the partipants confer and discuss on the topics that are raised. Brief papers by the principle contributors could be circulated in advance, and the conference itself consisting of small groups (not 'working parties' trying to put out an agreed report) debating the issues raised. This would still allow contributors to offer details of their recent research, new cases, etc. but also allow other participants the opportunity to actually get to meet these people, learn something new, and discuss it in some depth.

In short: let's have more conferring at conferences! I like them, I enjoyed the BUFORA Congress, but I think somebody should be considering what a UFO conference is really setting out to do.

FIRST LONDON INTERNATIONAL UFO CONGRESS - 1979

Report on Working Party on Standards in UFO Research

Peter A Hill AMR FMS FSS Working Party Chairman.

1. INTRODUCTION

Standard terminology, definitions and classifications in UFO research were considered to be necessary by the British UFO Research Association. In view of the possibility of transferring data to computer, it was also considered essential to have a common data base and, possibly, common software. Systems must at least be compatible if international statistical analysis of data were to become possible.

BUFORW, whilst well aware that it was not in the lead in such developments, considered London to be a suitable site for an international meeting and offered to host an International Congress simultaneously with a Working Party on standards. The result was most encouraging, with some 400 persons attending from 21 countries.

Clearly the detailed discussion required to debate standards could not be conducted in a meeting of 400. The Working Party, therefore, consisted of individuals from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, Yugoslavia, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, U.K., and USA. It was not easy to select who should be invited. From overseas, the question was sometimes resolved by inviting the best known suitable figure or by individuals volunteering. The British representatives were picked for expertise on specific topics. The two principal British Societies represented were BUFORA and Contact U.K. Approximately 30 other groups and individuals were invited to let the Working Party have their ideas and comments.

2. WORKING PARTY

Those who took part in the Working Party sessions were :

- BELGIUM : Rudy De Groot
- CANADA : David A. Haisell
- DENMARK : Per Andersen
- FRANCE : Dr. Alain Esterle (in an unofficial capacity)
- ITALY : Francesco Izzo; Dr. Roberto Pinnotti; Edoardo Russo

JUGOSLAVIA : Milos Krmelj
 NETHERLANDS : Douwe J Bosga
 SPAIN : V-J Ballester Olmos; Antonio Ribera
 SWEDEN : Bertil Kuhlemann
 U.K. : Lawrence Dale; J Bernard Delair; Robert S Digby;
 Stephen Gamble, Denis Hallam; Peter A Hill;
 Graham F.N.Knewstubb; Charles F Lockwood;
 Anthony R Pace; Stephen L Smith
 USA : Dr.J.Allen Hynek; Dr.R.Leo Sprinkle.

3. TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

The definition of 'UFO Report' agreed is based on the Hynek definition. The word 'object' was deleted because of the implication of an objective, measurable artifact or natural phenomenon. The words '....in the air or on the ground..' were also deleted in order to include unidentified phenomena in space or under water.

The International Definition of UFO Report was agreed to be :

"A Statement by a person or persons judged responsible and psychologically normal by commonly accepted standards, describing a personal visual or instrumentally aided perception of a phenomenon and/or its assumed physical effects, that does not specify any known physical event, object or process or any psychological event or process".

The term UFO was discussed. Although it was considered to be an inappropriate term, it was agreed not to attempt to change it at present. This was because 'UFO' was now part of our language and it was thought more important to agree on what was meant by the term than to change it for the sake of perfectionism. 'UFO' was defined as :

"The stimulus giving rise to the UFO report"

This refers to those reports which remain UFOs after investigation. Where they become IFOs, the stimulus will be a known phenomenon, such as aircraft.

4. CLASSIFICATIONS

Classification was discussed at length. It was agreed that no available classification was suitable for research. It was also agreed to continue this item at a future meeting and to base a research classification on the following criteria :

- (a) suitable as a research tool
- (b) capable of growth
- (c) flexible.

It was suggested that the classification might be based on a matrix and include a factor indicating depth of investigation. It was proposed that a common formula be developed, quantifying the credibility of UFO reports. Such a formula would include all attributes found to be significant to the reliability of reports.

5. DATA PROCESSING

Data processing was discussed by a sub-group to save time. An international standard data base was discussed. The case header was thought to need to include reference code, date, time, location of percipient and other items required were discussed. Existing national projects were presented for information. It was agreed that data needed to be compatible if international statistical analyses were to be undertaken. BUFORA had developed a minimum data requirement based on matrices and this could form a basis for future discussions. There was a promise of data exchange between several countries.

BEELGIUM : Rudy de Groot
 CANADA : David A. Haisell
 DENMARK : Per Andersen
 FRANCE : Dr. Alain Esterle (in an unofficial capacity)
 ITALY : Francesco Izzo; Dr. Roberto Pinnotti; Edoardo Russo

6. PROVISIONAL INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

It was unanimously agreed to continue international co-operation and a Provisional International Committee was set up to continue the work begun in London. The members were not elected as individuals, but nations were nominated to continue the project.

It was agreed that the Provisional International Committee include :

France; Italy; Scandinavia; Spain; U.K.; U.S.A.

7. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

Following adjournment of the Working Party, discussion was held by the Chairman with the Danish and Swedish representation on the Provisional International Committee. It was agreed that both Denmark and Sweden be represented. It was considered appropriate to call a meeting of the Provisional Committee in the Spring of 1980 in London.

8. RIDER BY BUFORA

BUFORA has no wish to have a monopoly of the international discussions. A member of Contact U.K. was included in the Working Party, whilst representatives from other U.K. groups sat in as observers. Comment and contributions to the project are welcome from all groups and individuals.

On behalf of the Working Party on International Standards in UFO Research - London : August 1979.

Peter A. Hill
CHAIRMAN.

BUFORA 1979 International Congress

As I was on the Reception Desk most of the time, I only managed to get in to hear two or three of the lectures. However, I had the pleasure of talking to quite a number of people from varied backgrounds and it seemed to me that most were enjoying themselves. Unfortunately very few people from other UFO groups came and introduced themselves, although I did manage to collect a few more addresses that can be sent to enquirers of any particular area. I might add that I regularly forward the address of local groups to enquirers wanting to join a group in their area. I would be very pleased to hear from any groups who would like to be included.

There are, of course, always some genuine complaints at large public occasions such as this - gremlins in the equipment, misunderstandings and mishaps of various kinds. But on the whole, my impressions, reinforced with a number of letters, congress feedback forms, and individual comments, is that most thought it well worth while. There are always the individuals who are determined not to enjoy themselves - such as the man who wrote on his feedback form that everything was "Good" or at least "Adequate" but then decided he hadn't had value for his money! Here are those who thought it too technical and those who thought it not technical enough - it's impossible to please everyone all the time, but we did strive to create a balance.

One of the most important aspects in my opinion, and perhaps one which could be developed more in future, is the chance it gave for "experts" and "ordinary" folk alike to get together and exchange notes; to relate their UFO experiences and theories to each other. The speakers mostly showed great patience in answering all manner of enquiries when tackled privately and we have had a number of appreciative letters in this respect.

To those who have complained (very few) that the sum of £10 was too much to ask for a 2-day Congress, I would ask them to look around at other current events of a similar nature which are a lot more expensive and do not always include morning and afternoon refreshments.

UFOs are certainly the most intriguing mystery of our times and while there has been no great break-through as yet and little really new to say, I feel that our speakers covered a fairly wide spectrum, tackling the subject from many different angles. To those people who have been kind enough to send constructive criticism, I may say that we will find this very useful in planning future Conferences.

Betty Wood
Hon. Secretary, BUFORA.

THE FIRST LONDON INTERNATIONAL UFO CONGRESS - A PERSONAL VIEW.

Peter A Hill, AMR, FMS, FSS Chairman, Working Party on International UFO Research. Secretary, Edinburgh Branch BUFORA.

For over two years I have felt the need for a greater uniformity in UFO research. The terminology and definitions varied and there were many classifications in simultaneous use. Those most widely used, the Hynek and Vallee classifications were often used without writers stating which they were using. A Type 1 event (Vallee) and a CE 11 (Hynek) would appear in the same Journal without any reference to the Classification. This could be confusing to the experienced. It must have seemed nonsensical to the newly interested reader.

Neither of these Classifications had the essential attribute of mutually exclusive categories. So some cases could fit more than one category; others were hard to fit into the schemes at all. For research, the need was for one standard classification, so that data could be compared with some confidence that we were comparing like with like.

At the 1976 Birmingham BUFORA Conference, a statistical sub-committee was convened which agreed on a new style of Classification which quantified the principal attributes of the assumed stimulus of the UFO report. However, as this was a British product only, it had the obvious deficiency that other nations were also working independently.

In the summer of 1978, I had the pleasure of entertaining for several hours a physicist and ufologist from the United States, en route from England to Scandinavia. In conversation, I asked him what response he would expect from the United States if an international congress were to be convened in Britain. He replied that he felt that such a move would be welcomed. This confirmed the impression I had received from Ted Bloecher, at Birmingham, who welcomed the concept of an international classification and told me that he was confident that Dr. Hynek would also be glad to see such a development.

The idea of such an international gathering was passed to BUFORA for consideration and action. The concept was accepted and I was asked to see what ufologists could come from overseas. The response was magnificent, some 400 participants coming from 21 countries. I imagine that it must have been the largest, and the most representative, meeting of ufologists ever held in Britain.

Obviously, to discuss the details of definitions, classifications and data processing would have been impracticable in such a large meeting. A Working Party was set up to examine these matters and report back to the main Congress. West Europe was well represented in the Working Party, along with two from the United States, a representative from Canada and one from Yugoslavia.

The calibre of delegate was exceptionally satisfactory, including Dr. Hynek (US) and Dr. Esterle (France) in his personal capacity. The presence of Dr. Hynek was especially useful, as, in his modest way, he said that his classification was unsuited as a research tool and readily agreed to its modification. Dr. Esterle suggested that a new classification should be based on a matrix principal. This met with general agreement. It was considered unwise to take hurried decisions, rather than correct ones. It was at Dr. Hynek's suggestion that we did not attempt to resolve the matter in one weekend, but set up a continuing body and allow a new system to evolve.

The concept of a continuing liaison, already on the agenda for discussion, met with unanimous approval. It would be hard to over-estimate the importance of this development to world ufology. For the first time there is a multi-organisational international link, as distinct from international groups such as Contact International. The new body has been called the Provisional International Committee as it would be wrong to assume that it is yet properly representative of world ufology. I am anxious to make it clear that the countries on this body do not assume any greater authority but have volunteered to undertake preparatory work. Similarly, BUFORA, far from wanting to monopolise the British input seeks the co-operation, comment and viewpoints of other Societies. A useful link with Contact U.K. was the presence on the Working Party of J. Bernard Delair, a member of both BUFORA and Contact. Personally, I also belong to SIGAP and WATSUP. No doubt, other participants had dual membership in some cases.

May I take this opportunity to say that all readers of SKYWATCH will be welcome to let me have their views on the new international body and on ways in which it can be made more representative without making the committee unwieldy.

The London Congress generally was immensely stimulating. Just to meet people from so many diverse places was most interesting. J. Allen Hynek delivered a honourous but impressive paper in which he made a strong appeal for research to be objective and gave powerful support for the international link.

Others present reads like a bibliography of UFO literature: Delair, Esterle; Pinnotti; Randles; Ballester-Olmos; Ribera; Sprinkle; Fowler, Andersen and many others. I think that BUFORA feels somewhat humble at having gathered such distinguished company together. Certainly, the response left me feeling humbled, grateful and somewhat overwhelmed. This feeling is not to be mistaken for 'hero-worship'. But, as BUFORA is aware that its research is not yet in the same league as some others, their generosity in accepting London as a natural place to meet and allowing us the honour of being the hosts speaks volumes for the goodwill in the world UFO research field. This is a great omen for the future of ufology.

LINCON CONGRESS by Perry Petrakis

I did enjoy my stay in London although I didn't have much time for walking round. I was glad to meet Hynek and Esterle as I did not know them. There was however a problem, as the Congress was open to Ufologists as well as the public we did not learn very much, as all work was deliberately "Enlightened" It also seemed BUFORA is a very commercial group. Finally the only interesting fact is that I met people from around the world, but that may seem a little poor for such a long journey.

P.P.AESV, 40, Rue Mignet, 13100 Aix En Provence, France.....

I was at the Congress, as was Graham. We found it most interesting even though we only went into one of the lectures (the one by Dr. J.A). Sprinkle was a good bloke, knew his stuff. We spend most of the time with Clive Harold and friend, drinking in the bar. I met Hynek for bout 5 seconds and Mrs. Hingley, witness to the Rowley Regis flying entities case, got the prize though for being the biggest spanner in the works for Ufology in many years. She managed to make BUFORA look silly just by being there at the Congress. The guys from Italy, Belgium and France are seemingly heading in the right direction.

In a few words, I certainly enjoyed myself and will go next year. We will be reviewing it in issue three of S.P.

Andrew Collins.

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THE ENDBITS

People who saw meteors in the past were very much in the same boat as those who see UFOs nowadays, Thomas Jefferson, sometime President of the USA, said in response to a report by a Yale chemist who had personally witnessed a meteor falling to earth - "It is easier to believe that a Yankee Professor would lie than that a stone would fall from the sky".

Credit: Chrysis - Vol.2 No.3 1979.

QUOTES:

Man was always man, dog was always dog, a cat was always a cat, and a frog never became a prince. - Dr. Richard Bliss.

Genius does what it has to: Talent does what it can do. - Dorothy Booth.

The true insomniac is one who knows he's awake even when he's asleep. -
Mabel Wagthorpe.

Don't bother telling people your problems because half don't care to hear them, and the other half are glad you have them - Gordon Irving.

POEM - NESSIE'S NIGHT by Jane Hibbert.

Nessie comes out every night
Only when the moon is bright,
She looks to make sure nobody's there,
Then darts about all the night long
Once she knows that nothing's wrong.
But just as it strikes 12 o'clock
Mysterious Nessie sinks back in the Loch.
The next morning people wondered what they heard,
They could have come out but nobody dared.
The trace of Nessie has completely gone,
So the Loch Ness Mystery lingers on.

Credit: Nessletter - November No.24 1977.

MORE QUOTES:

An optimist shuts his eyes and doesn't see the dark:
A pessimist opens his and doesn't see the light - Carruthers.

How can we have any new ideas or fresh outlooks when 90 per cent of all the scientists who have ever lived have still not died - Alan L Mackay, 1969.

A new record out by Sarah Brightman on Ariola Records is called "Love in a UFO"
A sample of the lyrics go: "Oh, what a trip, it was so cosmically orgasmic,
I'd no idea this android was made from plastic". Somehow I don't think it will be a hit!

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