

STRANGE DAZE

Infinite Universe,
Infinite Possibilities.
Possibly.

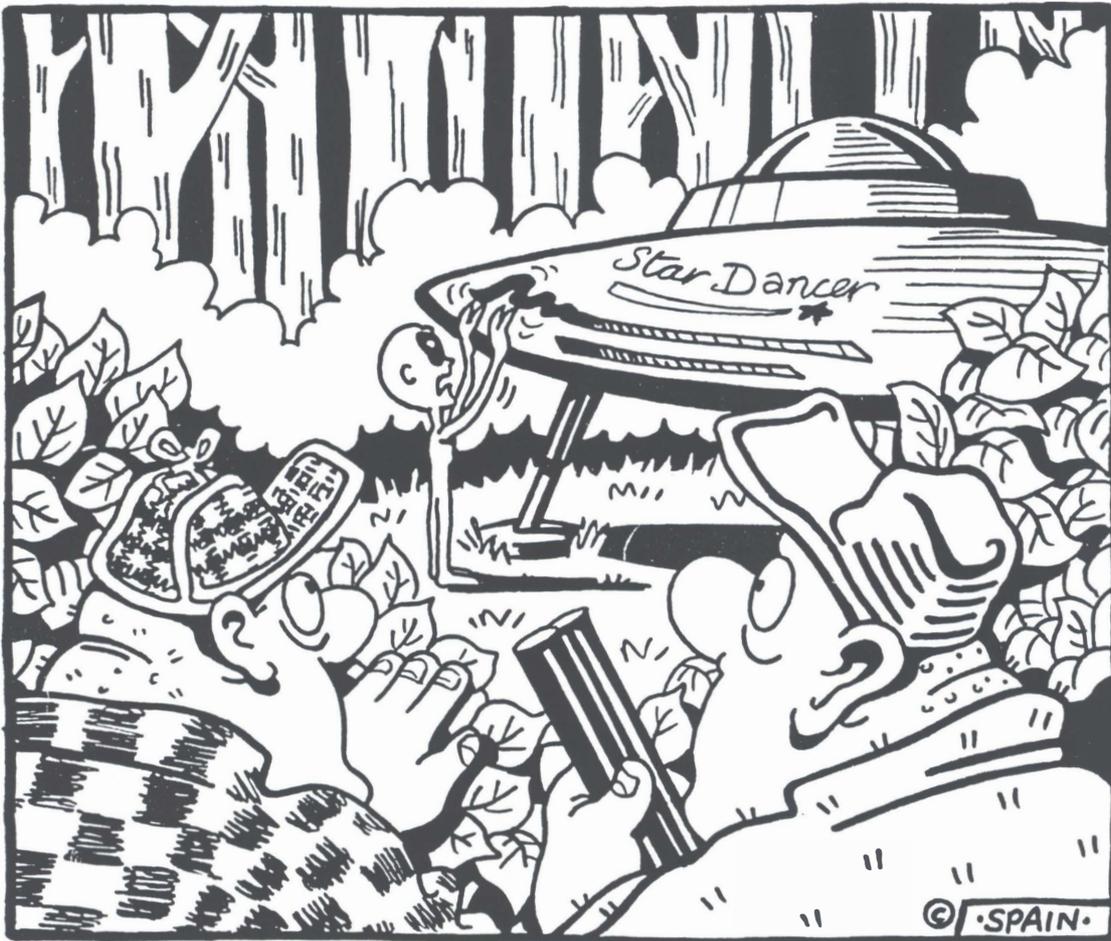


NUMBER 10

AUGUST 1996

Price: £1.00

Aug.13,1978,New England.Two hunters stumble across a landed saucer and its occupant....



News, reviews, articles and genuine cases of UFOs and the paranormal!
Everything you ever wanted to know about UFOs but were afraid to ask,
in case people thought you were a sad weirdo.

"Maybe it is intelligent,Hank, but it ain't never handled stick-on 'Go Faster Stripes' before..."

STRANGE DAZE Number 10 August 1996 Contents:

| | |
|---|----|
| Editorial..... | 3 |
| News..... | 3 |
| Case Investigations by Gloria Dixon | 5 |
| "Stair floating" - Cases of childhood levitation by Dave Newton.... | 9 |
| The Hidden Dangers of the Abductee by David Sivier..... | 10 |
| Independence Day and UFOlogy by Jay Dillon..... | 12 |
| The Biefeld-Brown Effect & Space Travel by Jay Dillon..... | 13 |
| Fall of the Idols by David Sivier..... | 15 |
| Flower of Silence by Dean James..... | 19 |
| Reviews: Conferences, Books, Magazines and S:AAB..... | 19 |
| Letters..... | 24 |
| Heck's Files..... | 27 |

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STRANGE DAZE is the publication of Northern UFO Research and Investigation (NUFORI). NUFORI is a small group of UFO investigators, researchers and writers. Since UFOlogists invariably end up falling out and pouring sand into each other's petrol tanks, NUFORI does not hold regular meetings. I blame it on global warming.

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Please send letters, queries, articles and subscriptions to the above address, marked for the attention of **Dave Newton**. All matters relating to investigations and UFO sightings should be marked for the attention of **Gloria Dixon**.

Subscription Rates: £1 per issue or £4 per year (which includes postage) payable in stamps, cash, postal orders, cheques, etc. Please make cheques payable to **D.A. Newton (not NUFORI)**.

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With thanks to Mark Spain for the cover illustration and cartoons. © Mark Spain 1996.
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Special thanks go to Ian Dixon for putting up with us all.
Extra special thanks go to God for the whole cosmos/life/UFO thing, and to Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries for making it all so much more enjoyable.

Strange Daze is printed on non-chlorine bleached paper made from wood, a renewable natural resource. Now available in a special, limited edition whaleskin binder.

STRANGE DAZE NUMBER 10 AUGUST 1996 Page 2

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EDITORIAL

What future for UFOlogy?

Few people could have missed the explosion of interest in the media for anything alien or paranormal over the past couple of years. The X-Files, which appeared at just the right time, is now so immensely popular that it is practically impossible to get away from X-Files products, advertising and imagery. Mulder and Scully seemed to catch the public's rising interest, and at the same time act as a catalyst for this present spell of alien fever. Whatever channel you tune into, it is hard to escape from programmes investigating the mysteries of the Cosmos. While there has been a steady stream of UFO books over the years, until "UFO Magazine" went newsstand, I don't think that there was a dedicated UFO journal available nationwide in the shops. Now, we also have Encounters, Sightings and UFO Reality to cater for (or cash in on) the public interest. For those wanting to get involved there are a wide selection of old and new UFO groups to choose from and plenty of cases to go around if anyone fancies becoming an investigator. I am too young to remember the classic period of UFOlogy in the 1950s and 60s, but I am assured that even then it was never this busy.

So then: Good or bad? Really, it has to be good. The hype is getting people interested and involved in a subject we think is important. Hopefully it will foster a more open and relaxed attitude, and willingness to listen to those with sightings and experiences to share - who won't be instantly branded drunks or nutcases.

But the hype does have its drawbacks. The X-Files is promoting an extraterrestrial answer for the UFO and abduction phenomena, which may be entertaining but most likely completely wrong. The popular image of the grey alien is now in everyone's subconscious, and we can't get away from it. There are some UFO groups out there who think that they already know the answers, that the aliens are responsible.

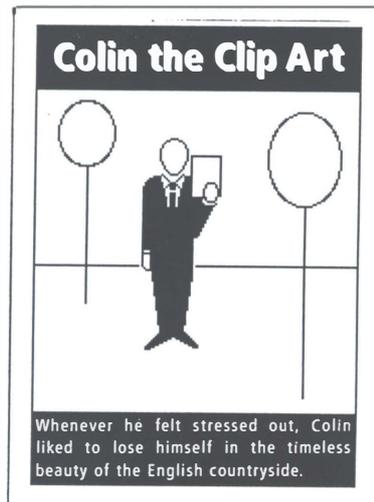
NEWS

KEN PHILLIPS DIES We have recently learned of the sudden death of Ken Phillips, the former editor of UFO Times and recently the Witness Support Group's magazine Rapport. It seems that Ken, aged 53, died of a massive heart attack on Thursday 18th July while attending a UFO conference in Wales. His death came as a shock to us all, and we would like to extend our deepest sympathy to his wife and family. He will be badly missed by all of us.

Some groups use regression hypnosis, which comes dangerously close to playing with people's minds. We don't use hypnosis in investigations, and I have no hesitation in condemning those groups that use it as a "magic weapon" to get at the truth. It doesn't work like that. As a therapeutic tool, it has its uses, certainly. But it is not the sort of thing untrained amateurs should be playing around with.

In his latest UFO Times editorial, Mike Wootten mentions that fact that one (unnamed) British "researcher" has been telling witnesses that the greys will be back to abduct them again, and their children, for their ongoing medical experiments! How frightening is that?

The abduction phenomenon may have nothing to do with UFOs, but we seem to be stuck with it. We will have to deal with it as best as we can. At least a group like BUFORA has a code of practice, and I hope that one day a similar code will be adopted by all the groups in this country. That would go a long way to getting rid of some of the idiots within UFOlogy, and ensure that witnesses get treated fairly and properly no matter which group they go to. If we can do that, the future looks good. If not, there may be trouble in store for all of us. - D.N.



PHILIP MANTLE - STILL BUFORA DoI - Rumours have been circulating that Philip Mantle has resigned his post as the BUFORA Director of Investigations and been replaced by his colleague, Gloria Dixon. As much as some UFOlogists would like to see the back of the much criticised Mantle, he is still the Director of Investigations. At the present time, the plan is for Mantle to remain in the post until April 1997, when he will stand down allowing Gloria Dixon to take up the directorship. The UFOlogical rumour-mill seems to work overtime where Philip Mantle is concerned and in this case, as per usual, the rumours are completely wrong.

UFO CONFERENCES. At the time of going to press, we do not have a confirmed date or speaker for the October lecture to be held by BUFORA at the University of Northumbria in Newcastle. Hopefully a lecture will be organised, so please watch out for details in the local media.

Here are details of some of the other lectures and conferences planned, for those able to travel around the country:

* Sunday 29th September 1996: Contact International's 1996 Conference at the Exeter Hall, Kidlington, Oxford. Speakers include Roy Dutton, Nick Pope, Roy Lake and Matthew Williams. Tickets cost £5 in advance, from Contact International, PO Box 23, Wheatley, Oxford, OX33 1FL.

* Saturday 16th November 1996: Philip Mantle will be speaking at the BUFORA lecture at the Haigh Conference Centre, Maryland Street, Liverpool. Contact Anthony Eccles on 0151 4866087 for more details.

* Sat 16th & Sun 17th November 1996: The Lancashire group LAPIS are holding their 1996 conference at the Lowther Pavilion, Lytham, near Blackpool, featuring Jenny Randles, Nick Pope, Philip Mantle and Derrel Sims from the US. Tickets cost £20 for both days or £12 for one of the days. For more details contact Paulette on 01253 391704.

* Saturday 9th November 1996: For those interested in Earth mysteries, The Ley Hunter are holding their CoreMoot at the University of London Students Union Halls, Malet Street, London WC1. Tickets cost £10 and are strictly limited - first come, first served.

* Sat 19th & Sun 20th April 1997: The Fortean Times are planning to hold next year's UnConvention at the Institute of Education, Bedford Way, London. The special topic will be "50 years of UFOlogy". BUFORA should also be holding a two day conference later in 1997.

UFO SIGHTINGS In the last issue we reported that there had been a wave of UFO sightings over Wearside. This seems to have been related to a laser light show at the opening of a new club in Sunderland. Further afield, the Birmingham UFO Society were called in to investigate a sighting of an oval craft with red and green lights seen from the Kidderminster Road, near Stourbridge, West Midlands. The 6th June sighting, witnessed by many people (including this editor's mother) could have been caused by an airship, but further investigation is required.

According to the Scottish magazine "Phenomenal News", a new UFO hotspot might be developing around the Ochil Hills, which run from Stirlingshire north easterly through Clackmannan. There have been sporadic sightings around the towns nearby (Alloa, Menstrie, Tillicoultry) and the most recent sighting was in

April involving a strange white light like a jellyfish. Earlier in the year UFOs had been spotted on the A1 near Torness, and four UFOs seen over West Lothian. With Bonnybridge too, Scotland seems like the place to be.

Also in April, UFOs were making repeated visits to Paraiba, a small state in Northeast Brazil. This was reported to be the biggest UFO flap in the region since 1971.

Back in March, there was also a UFO flap in Canada according to the latest Fortean Times. UFOs had been spotted around the Ottawa River and Quebec.

EL CHUPACABRAS - The Goatsucker. Some of our readers will know that Puerto Rico has been a very active part of the world in recent years, with UFOs being seen regularly and strange entities sighted around the island. In March 1995 this activity took a new direction, when islanders were reporting that numbers of small farm animals were being killed by having their blood drained through a single small puncture wound. The creature(s) responsible became known as "el Chupacabras", or Goatsucker. The first descriptions of the creature came in September, with one witness describing it as a kangaroo like entity with fangs and bulging red eyes. Reports of animal mutilations and sightings fell off at the start of 1996 but picked up again this March, and the phenomenon seems to have spread to Mexico. Stories from Mexico include tales of people being attacked by the goat-sucker. The goatsucker has well and truly entered mainstream culture, with goatsucker T-shirts, key rings and tours on offer. It will be interesting to see if the goatsucker phenomenon spreads into the United States and becomes integrated with the cattle mutilation mystery.

ALIEN BIG CAT Closer to home, we have a sighting of a large black puma like creature seen on the evening of 19th July 1996. The witness was in the Castle Eden Walkway country park near to Norton, Stockton-on-Tees when he glimpsed the cat. "I almost stood on it" he said, before the creature shot off into the undergrowth.

ASTEROID NEAR MISSES The month of May was particularly interesting for some astronomers as two asteroids passed close to Earth. On 19th May an asteroid named 1996 JA-1 passed within 279,000 miles of our planet, travelling at 36,000 miles per hour. If it had struck our planet, the third of a mile across lump of rock would have gone off with a bang equivalent to almost all of the world's nuclear bombs being exploded simultaneously. Later in the month a larger asteroid, three quarters of a mile across passed within 1.9 million miles on 25th May.

PANSPERMIA Was the young planet Earth seeded by life from outer space? American scientists studying a 50 by 20 mile impact crater near Sudbury, Ontario have discovered carbon molecules named "Buckyballs", which must have originated in outer space. This means that complex organic molecules survived the impact by a Mount Everest sized lump of rock 1.85 billion years ago, and could perhaps have brought life to this planet. Comets and asteroids are known to contain compounds such as water and amino acids, but it was not thought that they could survive a direct impact. The buckminsterfullerene molecules were determined to be extraterrestrial by analysis of the helium isotopes trapped inside them.

FISH FALLS Perhaps life on this planet was seeded more directly: On 17th May we have a report of a fall of fish, around 6.30pm, at Hatfield in Hertfordshire. The weather was cool and overcast but not raining at the time. The fish were between 2 and 5 inches long, and thought to be young roach, rud or dab. Approximately 4 lbs of fish were collected by Mr and Mrs Harnett, out shopping at the time, and some local children.

FALLING STARS This year's Perseid meteor shower occurs over the weekend of 10th - 12th August and promises to be a good display as the Moon is not interfering. The shooting stars are caused as the Earth passes through a trail of debris left behind a comet. Particles the size of grains of sand burn up in the atmosphere leaving a bright trail across the sky. For details of local observing sessions please contact the editor.

CROP CIRCLES Summertime brings out the crop artists, and this season has so far produced a few spectacular patterns. A 648 ft long pattern appeared in a field at Old Manor Farm, Alton Barnes in Wiltshire. The pattern consists of more than 90 circles of varying sizes arranged in two strands. It seems to represent a DNA double helix. At a field in Upper Clatford, Hampshire, a pattern nicknamed "The star" has appeared and consists of a six pointed star inside a larger pattern. The evolution of the phenomenon from simple circles to complex patterns certainly rules out a natural explanation for the patterns; but are the artists human or alien?

If any reader spots a crop circle in the north east, please contact the editor. If I'm not out hugging trees, I will grab my benker detector and dowse the circle for any residual energy patterns or garden roller marks. Possibly.

UFOs - Uninhabited Farm 'Ouses. Whilst surfing the net, the following surreal explanation for UFOs was discovered (actually on a James Bond page):

"UFOs are actually 'very large cottages that appear to hover and suddenly arc and dip with phenomenal acceleration, and velocities comparable to a very fast olympic sprinter'.

- A quote from Thomas DeBrost's book: Advanced Logic and other methods.

UFO sightings are shrouded in mystery, and are often unbelievable - however, each reported sighting has one common factor: Table Tennis. "

Mystery solved. Possibly.

SPACE DEBRIS Compiled by Craig Carl Jackson.

Area 51 - The Nightclub.

It's official, a new nightclub will soon open its doors in Las Vegas based on the infamous Area 51 test site. The female staff will be dressed in alien costumes and the bouncers in military garb, not forgetting a crashed saucer on the roof. Only in America!

Source: Fate, April 1996.

Grey area?

The Greys have now become a line of construction kits. Kit manufacturers Testors, Re-shape and Strange-Light have all issued kits of the little fellas. Incredibly, the Strange-Light model is based directly on the alien seen in the Santilli film footage.

Source: Sci-Fi and Fantasy Models magazine, March/April 1996.

Roswell challenge.

The Roswell incident came up as a question on a recent edition of "University Challenge". Quizmaster Jeremy Paxman asked what was examined after the Roswell crash in July 1947. The answer came back "an alien" but surprisingly Paxman said "definite proof that they have visited us." Does he know something that we don't?

Source: University Challenge, BBC2, April 1996.

Top of the Greys

Pop group "Babylon Zoo" featured a five foot tall grey figure on a recent Top of the Pops programme; after all, their recent hit single was called "Spaceman". Source: TotP, April 1996.

CASE INVESTIGATIONS

By Gloria Dixon.

It is with great sadness that we have to inform you of the death of Ken Phillips. Ken was former editor of UFO Times and a past BUFORA Director of Investigations. His pioneering work on the anamnesis study and his support and compassion for the Witness Support Group, with whom he worked tirelessly and with great dedication, contributed in an enormous way towards an understanding of these compelling

experiences. George Spurgeon, coordinator of the group expressed it well when he said "Ken was the engine of the Witness Support Group". He will be sadly missed by his friends and colleagues within the UFO community. We would like to extend our deepest sympathy to his family at this time.

- Gloria.

Ghostly happenings in Cheltenham.

Location: Southam, Cheltenham.

Date: 15th May 1996.

Patricia Blackwell from Newcastle had taken a short vacation with friends and was staying at a quiet old hotel near Cheltenham. The hotel is possibly the oldest building in Gloucestershire, being built in 1485 during the time of Richard III. Previously it had been an old manor house and was converted into a hotel in 1973.

On her first night at the hotel and after spending a pleasant evening with her old American friends, Patricia said goodnight and climbed the many turret stairs to the third floor where her room, number 19 was located. There were only two rooms on this floor. Patricia went to bed and drifted off to sleep almost immediately after a long day of travelling and a three course dinner. During the night Patricia was awakened very suddenly with what she describes as "a terrific pressure of something or someone pushing on my back". Her bed was next to a wall and she had fallen asleep facing the wall. Terrified while this was going on she turned around and switched on the light to discover that there was nothing visible at all! She emphasises that she felt whatever it was that was pressing on her back was unpleasant, using the adjectives "bad and aggressive" to describe the feeling she had. Patricia slept for the rest of the night with the light on, when she finally felt relaxed enough to sleep again. The following morning she mentioned this experience to her friends at breakfast, who advised her to make some enquiries at the reception. After reporting this incident, the man on reception told Patricia that something similar had happened to him and also another member of staff, who, on climbing the turret stairs to the third floor had experienced a terrific "marching of feet and the sensation of a presence" surrounding her. Terrified by this, she did not enter the room but rushed downstairs to reception and refused to return.

It seems strange that Patricia did not change her room for the remainder of her stay, but has told me that this was due to the stairs in the hotel (there is no lift) and the fact that she is a lady of mature years. Another room could have been located on a higher floor, which would have meant even more stairs. During the next three nights of her stay she kept the light on all night, but even so at all times

in the room (even during the day) she could sense a presence from when she climbed the turret stairs to the third floor where her room was located, and always had the impression of an "eerie foreboding presence" in the room, as though she was not wanted there.

At one point prior to her departure she mentioned this to the manager, but he dismissed this very quickly and Patricia felt strongly that he did not want to discuss this incident at all. I would like to state that this lady, whom I know very well, is not in the least fantasy prone and certainly not easily frightened. After some investigation I believe that there are three unpleasant hauntings around the Prestbury area, which have been documented. This is also the area where the Battle of Bosworth was fought.

Footnote: I hope to visit this hotel at some point in the near future, and will give an update in a future issue of Strange Daze if I discover anything new.

A Childhood sighting in Liverpool.

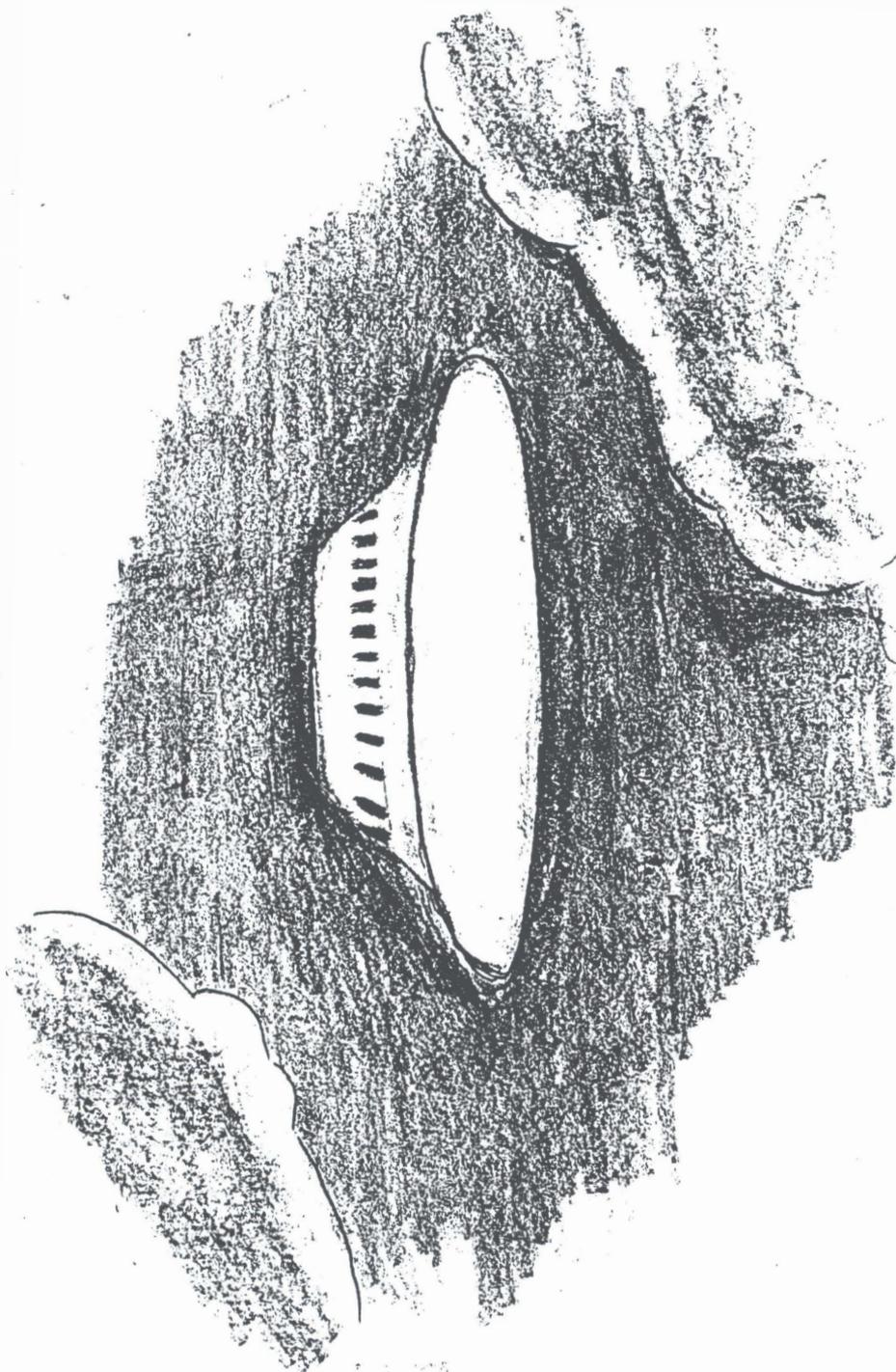
Location: Rushmere Road, Liverpool.

Date: 5th November 1959.

Ken D. from Bishop Auckland was nine years old and living in Liverpool at that time. It was bonfire night and he was watching a bonfire on waste ground near to his home. He remembers looking up at a bright cloud, which he initially thought was passing a bright full moon. As the cloud moved away, a shining disc shaped object, which had a dome and what appeared to be black windows, came into view. He watched the object for approximately one minute, maybe longer. It remained stationary as other clouds passed by. He attempted to find his elder brother to bring his attention to it, but unable to find him he ran the short distance home to inform his mother of what he had seen. She dismissed the idea as his imagination. He then left the house again to try to find his brother. As he left the garden path and turned to run along the pavement towards the waste ground, he was suddenly surrounded by a pale blue light. This light lasted for only five or ten seconds. While he was enveloped by this light he felt unable to move. He says that there was no smell or noise and the light ceased as quickly as it had appeared. Feeling apprehensive he ran back home. Ken is adamant about what he saw and remembers it vividly. He has recently written a letter to the Liverpool Echo about this experience to see if he can jolt anyone's memory about a similar incident that day. He has had some response but nothing definite so far.

The 1950s are an interesting period for UFO sightings, particularly in the early and middle fifties when there were visual/radar sightings during

CASE INVESTIGATIONS



OBJECT DRAWN BY KEND. AS OBSERVED IN LIVERPOOL - 1959

NATO exercises. [Presumably before the aliens had discovered stealth technology - Ed.] I also have a case on record from the North East on 22nd September 1951, when Gordon B. observed an object in **Sunderland** whilst on leave from his army regiment. He describes the object "like two soup plates stuck together, gradually dropping to about 10,000 feet before zig zagging upwards at incredible speed and disappearing". If anyone has any information from either of these dates so many years ago, please contact me at the Strange Daze address, or call me on 0191 2368375.

An entity in West Denton.

Location: West Denton, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Date: May/June 1994.

CW was unable to sleep because of the outside security light (working on a passive infra-red system) flashing on and off continually. He was intending to switch it off, as there was nothing there and he assumed there was a fault, but then he noticed that the light was flashing on and off at exactly twenty second intervals. CW's detector was set to warn of multiple minimum movement in the back garden, which was accessible to the storage area for his business. He felt slightly uneasy and concerned as he was unable to see why the light was activating like this, which has been going on for several minutes by now. He then had the feeling of a presence and when he looked around then room from his bed he noticed about two to three feet from the bottom of his bed what he describes as a small childlike creature keeping very still and appearing to make eye contact with him. He felt in a state of shock and disbelief and checked himself to make sure he wasn't dreaming. He states that he did not immediately feel threatened, but very surprised. He describes the eyes of this creature as being large, black and glassy, oval shaped and they seemed to be the main feature of the face and head. The mouth was very small. He goes on to say that the head looked too heavy for the body. By this time he felt very uneasy and he explains that "I started to realise somehow that it was as concerned as I was about it being there and me looking at it. It was as if I had it trapped in my gaze and it knew that I knew, I wasn't dreaming." He was now in the process of trying to awaken his wife, which made the situation worse. CW states that he felt that if he looked away from this creature it would "escape". He was unable to awaken her by calling her and touching her, and he became very apprehensive about the situation, wondering why he could not wake her up. He looked away from the creature momentarily in trying to wake up his wife, and he noticed it "vanish" in that it moved from one side of the room to the window wall. It

vanished through the outside wall in less than the blink of an eye. CW then managed to finally wake up his wife, who told him that she was aware of him trying to wake her, but she just could not respond. CW went to the window, but saw and heard nothing.

I have spoken with both CW and his wife after they completed a report form and Mrs W. confirms her husband's problem in trying to awaken her that night. She told me it was very strange because she was very aware that her husband was trying to wake her up, but she was totally unable to do so. I shall be visiting them in the near future and will document and new information in a future issue.

I would like to comment here on the tremendous increase in sighting reports, particularly with a UFO flavour [I prefer cheese & onion myself - Ed.] As no-one could fail to be aware, reports of inexplicable events are rising rapidly. The high profile of the X-Files and strong coverage of all extraordinary events has lifted UFO sightings and paranormal events to an all time high in the last year or so. Because of this and hopefully because people feel more comfortable reporting these strange incidents, we are able to look at the significant reports that are coming into the many UFO and paranormal organisations around Britain. However, because of the focus on these phenomena, many more people are looking towards the skies and photographing and reporting many objects that they believe to be UFOs. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, and there are many misinterpretations of technological and astronomical objects that can look unusual in our skies. Venus has been a major culprit over the last few months, both on camcorder footage and stills. This is an extremely brilliant planet and it can appear to move (if the camcorder is hand-held rather than on a tripod) and take on all manner of shapes and colours as the lens zooms in on it and it goes out of focus. Another culprit is advanced laser light shows which generate many UFO reports and which can be seen within a thirty mile radius, sometimes up to sixty miles, from where the show is located. This in no way discredits those who report UFO sightings, but I would just like to emphasise how easy it can be to misidentify something in our skies. In order to isolate genuine UFO sighting, we must use our resources to identify sightings before jumping to the conclusion that the dramatic increase in reports means that there are more UFOs buzzing around. This may not be the case, and when we have looked at every explanation, only than can we conclude that there are some UFOs that do not become IFOs (identified flying objects) no matter how much we try to explain them. These are the UFO sightings that are paramount to our research.

- Gloria Dixon.



Stair floating - Some cases of childhood levitation.

Some readers might just remember the case of Sarah Jones, which we covered in a previous issue of Strange Daze. At the time, what interested us most in Sarah's story was the "werewolf" figure that she saw (see the drawing by Sarah's brother, below) climbing up the stairs of their house in Horden, County Durham, at Christmas time, 1979. Sarah was about four years old at the time. What I would like to do now is concentrate on a minor part of the case that we included in that issue of Strange Daze.

Sarah had other unusual experiences during her childhood before the "werewolf" encounter. As a child, she was always terrified of the stairs and the area outside her parents bedroom. She said that she would get out of bed in the very early hours, fully conscious, and walk to the top of the stairs in the dark. This would normally be a frightening ordeal for Sarah, but on these particular occasions she would be totally relaxed and fearless. Once she reached the stairs, "I would simply lift my feet and sit in an invisible chair, as I always called it, and float down the stairs. Sometimes instead of sitting, I would leap as if there was no gravity and land softly halfway down the stairs." She could never understand why she was floating down the stairs, but always enjoyed it. She recalls her disappointment that she could never float back up the stairs and that she always had to walk back up!

This was the first case of "stair floating" that I came across, but it was not the last. I was contacted by one reader, a little shaken after reading Sarah's report. Although he had never seen a werewolf on the stairs, he, too, used to play the



"floating game" at night down the stairs. He described it as like sitting back in an invisible armchair, and floating gently down the stairs. Like Sarah, he could never float back up.

More recently, I spoke to another gentleman who could remember levitating down the stairs at home as a small boy, perhaps four years old. "It was great fun. I would stand at the top of the stairs and concentrate really hard. It was like a cloud would appear around my feet and I would be able to float down to the bottom". Like Sarah, he was disappointed by the fact that he could never float back up. Then one day, he innocently mentioned it to his father, who was, shall we say, less than impressed with his son's story that he was able to float down the stairs. After being suitably chastised, "I was never able to do it again."

There are many records of adults who have exhibited the ability to levitate or fly around: For example, St Joseph of Copertino, the "flying monk", was able to float while in an a religious ecstasy, and seemed able to control his flying antics. One story tells of how he was able to lift into place a heavy wooden cross that a group of workmen were struggling with.

Perhaps the most famous levitator was Daniel Dunglas Home, born in Currie, near Edinburgh, in 1833. He was a sickly child, suffering from tuberculosis from an early age, and interested in the arts. He developed into a staggeringly good medium, able to levitate tables and furniture as well as himself. On one occasion, he seemed surprised when his host pointed out that he was floating two inches above the cushion of his armchair. In July 1871, Home attended a spirit-session at a London flat with Lord Adair, who reported what happened at this well known event: "During the sitting Mr Home went into a trance, and in that state was carried out of the window in the room next to where we were, and was brought in at our window." His abilities were well known, but not unique.

Perhaps many people are able to defy gravity at least partially (being able to float down the stairs, but not up, suggests a partial levitative ability) when they are children. It is almost as though, being too young to understand the meaning of gravity, and what is possible and what is not, some children are able to bend the rules of nature through childish ignorance. Perhaps this "stair floating" phenomenon has been overlooked as just childhood fantasy up to now, which is why it is not well known. I am willing to bet that there are many people out there, perhaps some readers of Strange Daze, with similar stories to tell. If this article jogs your memory, please write in or call us with your own experiences, as I feel that this could be an important and overlooked phenomenon.

- Dave Newton.



THE HIDDEN DANGERS OF THE ABDUCTEE by David Sivier.

It is always interesting reading UFO reports. They provide the raw material for the shaky theoretical edifices most UFOlogists erect at some time or other, whether of the psychosocial or nuts-and-bolts UFOs-are-alien-spacecraft school. It is especially gratifying that there are still people willing to seek out "extreme possibilities" despite the danger of ridicule and abuse. Sometimes this abuse unfortunately comes from their fellow UFOlogists. Jerome Clarke, Hynek's successor at the Centre for UFO Studies was especially loud in the investigators' defence in the Forum column of the June 1996 Fortean Times. He was attempting to counterattack the savaging armchair UFOlogists were giving genuine investigators in the field. The real issue, however, seemed to be an attempt to prop up the extraterrestrial hypothesis against the increasingly loud criticism of the psychosocial school.

He has a point. Despite the massive feuding and infighting going on in UFology at the moment, not every researcher is a self-seeking cynic with a book manuscript under his arm, not even the ever-growing ranks of abduction researchers. The danger of contaminating your witnesses' evidence with your own ideas is very real, however.

Social researchers are trained, when interviewing their subjects, to avoid asking leading questions and phrasing their questions in such a way as to influence their subjects' thinking. This is something all too easy to do. Everyone brings their own ideological baggage to an investigation and an unfortunate phrase can easily bring a subject to give you the answers they think you want. Hypnosis is especially dangerous in this instance, as the subject can confabulate false memories of an experience - in our case, largely abductions - to please an investigator. The FBI considered and abandoned hypnosis as a tool for recovering suppressed memories as far back as 1957 because of this. The use of hypnosis and leading questions by legal authorities and social workers investigating the abuse of children has led to a number of prosecutions against them for implanting false memories in the children by the parents accused of these crimes. Such issues directly affect the current abduction phenomenon, and it may well be a matter of time until a researcher is accused by an abductee or an abductee's family of implanting false memories in them. I would hate anyone from NUFORI to be exposed to this risk.

The CGPRG - Cheltenham & Gloucester Psychical Research Group - had some experience of the pitfalls of this type of UFO research. The CGPRG was a Midlands investigative group which sadly met its demise last year when most of its youthful membership drifted

away. I should add here, that it was pressures of work or college that caused the break up, not legal battles. All good things must come to an end, and small groups relying on little more than enthusiasm and home computers are especially prone to fission. I was a member until the end, and so knew something about the group's problems.

They were approached several times by concerned individuals who believed that they were being abducted by aliens of the small and grey type, and had been so abused since childhood. Like so many other abductees, the people in question had even been snatched from their beds while their partners slept peacefully, undisturbed by the pesky critters from Zeta Reticuli. These people were, not unnaturally, terrified by these experiences and either had, or were, considering buying guard dogs to defend themselves from further alien assaults. They also tried various security devices wired around their homes, and some were even so terrified as to give serious consideration to hiring private security guards, regardless of the immense cost.

The group's leader was sufficiently open minded to investigate these claims. He interviewed the abductees and did as much personal investigation as time and resources would allow. Then, shortly after being approached, he told the abductees that he could not help them and passed them on to an abductee support group in the Midlands. Of course it is passing the buck, but he had excellent reasons for doing so. Despite an examination of the house and grounds, he found no physical evidence of any alien or other-worldly presence. The abductees' spouses usually had not been disturbed and neither had their guard dogs. In short, outside of the testimony of the percipients, there was no proof of any kind of paranormal activity.

This is common to the abduction phenomenon. Many abductees report that other people near them are "switched off" during their assault, and remain blissfully unaware of the bizarre events unfolding around them. Now it could be that an advanced alien race has found ways of switching human beings off while kidnapping the Earthling of their choice. It is a possibility. On the other hand, there is ample evidence that the abduction experience is a purely internal event generated by poorly understood neurological mechanisms in the brain.

You see my point. Any honest, sceptical researcher investigating an abduction is caught between a rock and a hard place. If he/she considers that the experience is internal, then he or she has the unfortunate job of telling the percipient that they were mistaken or hallucinating. Not an easy job at the best of times. He/she will naturally appear dismissive and the abductee may well feel let down. They, at least, were convinced of the reality of their exper-

ience. They may have come to the researcher partly seeking confirmation of the experience. One skeptical American psychotherapist who treats abductees complained that despite his best efforts, his patients left him as convinced of the reality of their abductions as when they went in. Unless you can present an airtight, convincing case the abductee will not believe the investigator and consider him or her unhelpful. If a trained medical professional cannot convince his patients that their experience was internal, then I doubt that the average UFOlogist will fare any better. Most of us are, after all, unpaid amateurs with little or no medical training. In addition to this, there is always the possibility, however unlikely, that the abductee's experiences are real. In which case, you are imposing your own mistaken belief onto them.

On the other hand, a researcher could end up agreeing that the percipient is being abducted by aliens, in which case they are reinforcing a belief the percipient obviously finds unpleasant and distressing. There is evidence that the abduction experience runs in families, so that the abductee's children could begin sharing their parents' experiences. Not a pleasant thought. Kevin McClure, in a recent article in Magonia, drew parallels between some abduction research and literature and the Fred and Rose West case. He was remarking on the way both were drawing children into a destructive life of pain. This is strong stuff. Mack, Hopkins and Jacobs certainly aren't perverts like the aforementioned Gloucestershire monsters. A postgraduate literature student I know did remark, however, that the accounts of alien examinations and rape used the same "discourse" - literary structure - as Victorian sado-masochistic pornography. This seems to support McClure's contention that much of the works of Budd Hopkins, John Mack and David Jacobs resemble paedophile porn, not something in which I would care to have any part. Added to this, there is the distinct possibility of a court case should the percipient decide that the experience was a false memory and somehow implanted by the investigator. There is also evidence that some memories of abduction by aliens could be garbled memories of genuine childhood abuse by human adults. The victim in that case finds such memories genuinely uncomfortable and so disguises them in the clothing of an abduction by aliens.

In either case if you research alien abductions you are far out of your depth. Even John Mack, who is a highly qualified psychiatrist, faced charges by the Senate of Harvard University. The only thing you can do is drop the case and advise the poor s** who comes to you where else they can seek help. The problem with this approach is that there seem to be all too few professional psychologists and psychiatrists willing to investigate the phenomenon.

Left to untrained or semi-trained enthusiasts, the abduction experience can only grow and become more severe. McClure wanted accounts of abduction by aliens restricted to properly refereed scientific and medical textbooks, presumably to stop them contaminating impressionable minds on the one hand and voyeurs on the other. I feel that unfortunately we are a long way from that yet.

I am aware that this is a grim article. Well, there's no way to make it cheerful. I don't know what policy NUFORI has on abduction research. From the general standard of Strange Daze the researchers seem sensible, ethical people aware of the issues involved. I did feel, however, that as the abduction furore shows no sign of abating, the experience of other groups facing the phenomenon may be useful. Telling people to avoid it may not be a lot of help in investigating a genuine puzzle, but it might be the only way of avoiding later unpleasantness. Like lawyers

In the meantime, I shall continue to read Strange Daze's reports with interest and amazement. The weirdness is still out there, and it is better that it is investigated by people who are genuinely interested in the phenomenon than the Donald Menzels of this world. Or worse, Damned by academic silence. Keep up the good work.



EDITOR'S NOTE. Abduction research can be grim, particularly if one looks at the American scene. And where America leads, Britain usually follows. Particularly worrying are the abduction cases involving children, such as "The Abduction of Jason Williams", an eleven year old boy, which appeared in the March /April 1996 issue of Quest's "UFO Magazine". Alien abduction could possibly be used as some form of a cover for abuse from a human source, as Mr Sivier correctly points out above. The welfare of the witness is the absolute priority in such cases, and I would advise anyone dealing with such a case to inform the professional child welfare agencies. None of the investigators here in NUFORI use regression hypnosis with witnesses, and perhaps because of that we still have some of the weirdness and variety in reported entities. It also avoids the potential legal minefield of "False memory syndrome", where leading questions and witness manipulation during hypnosis can implant false memories. We prefer to let the witness tell their own story, from what they can consciously recall, and not try to make it fit into any theories we may have. We take great pains to avoid leading questions.

The volume of material dealing with "alien abductions" available in the popular media means that most people are now familiar to some extent with the phenomenon. While this hopefully means that there is greater public awareness of the phenomenon and

greater acceptance of people with abduction experiences to share, it does have its drawbacks. Now, at least subconsciously, people know what an abduction is "supposed to be like" and they know what an alien "should" look like, thanks to Hopkins, et al. This may explain some of the uniformity that emerges in abduction stories when hypnosis is used. The aliens are certainly amazing: they can walk through walls, vanish at will, switch off potential witnesses, but still leave scars and memories. To me, the ETH is far too simplistic to explain the phenomenon adequately. These encounters can be positive life changing experiences related to a range of other mystical experiences. The origins of the abduction experience may lie with sleep paralysis or electromagnetic hypersensitivity, but there are other social and psychological factors which need to be explored, too. I would not advise amateur investigators to avoid these cases, but to proceed with extreme caution and an open mind. At this point in the study of a new phenomenon, are the "trained professionals" any better placed to understand it than we are?

I am concerned that some UFO groups may encounter legal problems if they continue along their present paths. I have already mentioned Quest International and their publication "UFO Magazine", which included the first big child abduction case in this country. Quest are big proponents of the extraterrestrial hypothesis and regularly use regression hypnosis in cases. If some kind of legal action were to be taken over a child abduction/abuse or false memory case, Quest could well be the group affected. I hope



that Tony Dodd, their director of investigations, knows what he is potentially getting himself into. With their newsstand magazine, Quest may be the most well known UFO group in the country. A serious legal case would damage the credibility of all groups. Let's hope it doesn't come to that.

David Sivier, like myself, does not believe that the abduction phenomenon is related to physical extraterrestrial beings; but I would not agree that the only alternative is that the witness is always hallucinating and is thus suffering from some sort of illness, to be cured by a good enough psycho-therapist. These experiences are often accompanied by other forms of paranormal activity, newfound artistic or other abilities, and can lead to some very positive changes in the percipient's life. Although the phenomenon can have an unpleasant side, I do not think that the percipient should be seen as either a victim or a patient in need of curing. The UFOlogist in these cases needs to be part investigator and part counsellor, offering help, support and understanding as the percipient comes to terms with the events. Sometimes, the witness will have no-one else to trust or confide in. In some cases, this can no doubt lead to an unhealthy relationship developing, something else for an investigator to beware of. All too often though, I fear that those people who experience the "abduction" come to the conclusion that aliens are responsible; and they seek out those groups and investigators they know are all too willing to accept that they have indeed been abducted by aliens. Here, both parties are victims, lost in a little world of self deception.

- D.N.

**INDEPENDENCE DAY:
WOULD COSMIC UFOs SUC-
CUMB TO THE OLD 'TROJAN
HORSE' TRICK AND A DINKY
COMPUTER VIRUS? WOULD
ALIEN SPACE LOCUSTS AL-
LOW US TO ACCESS THEIR
NETWORK? I DOUBT IT! GET
A CLUE! AND TELL THE OF-
FICE GEEK TO GET A VOICE!**

By Jay Dillon.

There are so many things wrong with the blockbuster movie *Independence Day* that it's hard to know exactly where to begin criticizing it. Clearly, for all its high-tech special effects wizardry, this movie is destined to be a flop in many respects. But it has made a breakthrough in some ways, bringing some important issues to the mind of the general public. The collateral problem/damage is that the issues are so poorly brought forward and so lamely acted that few people in their right mind will be inspired by this movie to look more deeply into the subjects of UFO "mythology" and presu-

able government secrecy (see *Clear Intent* by Fawcett/Greenwood; and *Above Top Secret* by a British author whose name escapes me at this moment). [Tim Good - Ed.]

I have been interested in the UFO question since 1959 when an astronomer hired by the Air Force labeled some Michigan sightings as "swamp gas." In later explanations of this incident, Dr. J. Allen Hynek stated that he had mentioned swamp gas as one of any number of possible natural explanations for UFO sightings of that period. He later became convinced that some UFOs are extraterrestrial spacecraft, and dedicated the remainder of his extraordinarily courageous and productive career to constructing a rational scientific explanation of UFOs.

Over the past decade I have become increasingly interested in UFO studies. This topic brings people to the point of bitter disputes that can damage long-standing friendships and promising ca-

reers. Even many of us who purchase crystals, chant various mantras, study non-mainstream religions and theories. or clack rosaries are often "alien"ated by this topic. Some people seemed to think I was mentally ill for studying cattle mutilations, for example, a phenomenon closely related to some UFO sighting reports, especially in Colorado (cf. Linda Moulton Howe's ground-breaking research and video documentaries). Why is this subject so charged emotionally and so bitterly disputed by those charismatic, pseudoskeptical hypocrites who otherwise claim the high ground of open-mindedness, nonprejudice, and unbiased learning?

There is no doubt in my mind that UFOs are real, but I have difficulty figuring out what that reality could be. I have read upwards of 200 books on the subject, some far better than others, and have watched numerous videos and read many tabloids and magazines on the topic. The UFO question is undoubtedly the primary paradigm-shifting question in the world today.

As a kid who grew up in a rather impressively crazed family environment, I used to enjoy going outdoors of a summer's night with a flashlight and signaling upward into the heavens to see if I could contact other planets and UFOs. I imagined the light beam traveling outward into space at 186,000 miles per second. It gave me a feeling of power (otherwise quite unavailable) and awe to know that with my humble little Eveready flashlight I could send a signal that fast and infinitely far. But I have never seen a UFO unless you count the "green fireball" I saw in the midsixties, and I know that it is possible I never will see a bona fide UFO. I envy those who have, and I tend to believe the stories of some of the more credible observers, who include folks from all walks of life and all levels of education and social standing.

The latest UFO book I have purchased is an example in point—Paul Hill's book, *Unconventional Flying Objects: A Scientific Analysis* (1995). This book was published posthumously by Paul Hill's daughter. Hill was a respected NASA scientist for many years and undoubtedly preserved his retirement benefits by not publishing before his death.

Paul Hill states that he saw a bona fide UFO on July 16, 1952. He describes the three-minute sighting in detail, ending by saying "There is a lot of truth in the old saying, 'It's different when it happens to you.' It was within my line of business to know that no Earthcraft could remotely approach those maneuvers" (p. 45).

It may surprise many people to know that when movies such as *Independence Day* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* are made, they often rely on years and years of dedicated research and investigation by dozens of sincere scientific and amateur investigators. Thus when Area 51 in Nevada is mentioned, for example, there is more than just a dramatic reason for the screenwriter doing so. There is a wealth of data available in the UFO literature pointing to Area 51 as being one of several US military storage and research facilities for what may well be interstellar spacecraft. The difficulty arises in the fact that some information that has been generated and embellished about Area 51 is purely mythological, though perhaps derived from kernels of truth, and the task of a sane person becomes one of sorting and collating stories and bona fide investigations, trying to discern if and when any truth is being conveyed. All that said, I believe there is some truth to many of these fantastic stories.

One of the top investigators today, maintaining a rigorous scientific approach to the UFO problem, is Stanton Friedman, a physicist who was intimately associated with government nuclear developments and military/space applications of nuclear power. He has produced a CD-ROM disk with vast amounts of well-established information on the subject, and this is the type of information that should be accessed by sincere investigators. And for goodness sake, please *do not ridicule the entire field if you know nothing about it*, nor taken time to look for bona fide information sources on the subject.

It would be supremely exciting and productive to establish communication and cooperation with other planets in our average-sized galaxy of about 250 billion stars (thank you Carl Sagan), in a "known" (whatever that means) universe of roughly 250 billion-plus galaxies. Films like *Independence Day* at least bring the possibility of contact to the consciousness of many people. But the aliens, from all that I have read, are something far beyond the self-limited imagination of many human beings, and I prefer to see them as more positive, benign entities than envisioned in *Independence Day* (telepathically controlling space locusts). It seems we have a hard time respecting something new unless we are afraid of it—a sad commentary on us generally as a race of purportedly intelligent cosmic citizens.

I used to say I found the topic of UFOlogy interesting even if there is nothing to it. Now I would say that the topic is fascinating, and there is so much to it *that there is no subject more worthy of careful scrutiny*. Real contact with the observed UFOs, in my opinion, will be the long-awaited reconnection of this planet with the rest of the universe, and will entail an awakening of cosmic consciousness of infinite range and potential. For this reason, the UFO question will not go away. The mystery and beauty of UFOlogy will deepen and expand exponentially. There is no limit to this phenomenon, and the last word on the subject will never be written.

THE BEGINNING



THE BIEFELD-BROWN EFFECT AND SPACE TRAVEL

by Jay Dillon.

Those of us who study UFOs and related theories and technologies will eventually encounter the name of Thomas Townsend Brown. Who was this man, and why is it that his work may be a key element in our understanding of the UFO phenomenon?

I recently came across Brown's name in a book by Charles Berlitz and William Moore, "The Philadelphia Experiment: Project Invisibility" (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1979 [published in the UK by Souvenir Press in 1979 and in paperback by Panther books, 1980 - Ed.]). I was intrigued by the information about Brown because, although he had extremely good credentials in physics and had shown scientific prowess from an early age, he is not commonly written up in physics reference books.

According to Berlitz and Moore, Brown was born in Zanesville, Ohio in 1905. He experimented with

electronics from an early age and discovered a propulsive force caused by high voltage impulses before graduating from high school. He attended Caltech in Pasadena, California, beginning in 1922 and was a student of the Nobel laureate physicist Robert A. Millikan. He transferred to Kenyon College in Ohio in 1923 where he studied electronics under Paul Biefeld, a former classmate of Albert Einstein.

Biefeld was interested in Brown's discovery of the high voltage propulsive effect. Together they developed an understanding of this physical principle which came to be referred to (informally) as the Biefeld-Brown effect. This effect is simply the motion of a heavily charged electrical condenser [capacitor] in the direction of the positive pole. It is somewhat difficult for me to understand the difference between this seemingly unnoticed discovery by Biefeld and Brown in 1923 and the apparently synonymous de Haas-van Alphen effect, discovered in 1930. Perhaps readers with more physics under their belts could correspond with me on this question.

Brown was on the staff of the Swazey Observatory in Ohio for four years, then went to work for the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C., specialising in radiation, field physics and spectroscopy. He took part in the Navy's International Gravity Expedition to the West Indies in 1932, and the Johnson-Smithsonian Deep Sea Expedition in 1933.

In 1934 Brown was granted a patent by the U.S. Patent Office for his "Electrostatic Motor" (U.S. Patent Number 1974483). He received other patents relating to electronics in later years, but this one seems to be of primary importance for aerospace applications.

Budget cuts forced him to work as a soil engineer for the Federal Relief Administration and as an administrator for the Civilian Conservation Corps in Ohio.

Brown became a Lieutenant in the Navy Reserve and in 1939 moved to Maryland to work for the Glenn L. Martin Company (later Martin Aerospace). The Navy assigned him to develop minesweepers and he later headed the Navy's Atlantic Fleet Radar School. In this period of time it is thought that Brown may have had some part in Navy efforts to produce invisibility for camouflage purposes in warfare, using electromagnetic fields. Brown was retired from the Navy in 1943.

In 1944 Brown began work in radar technology with Lockheed in California. He continued to work privately on his propulsion system, which he called the "gravitor". He left Lockheed to continue working on the gravitor in Hawaii with support from Arthur Radford, Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet and later Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President Eisenhower (1953-57).

According to Moore and Berlitz, an experiment in 1952 brought Brown's gravitor to the point where it could lift more than its own weight. Brown postulated an observable connection between gravitation and electricity. He worked with dielectrics, materials that are electrical insulators. Brown focused on dielectrics which could be charged and discharged at extremely high potential several thousand times per second. He was able to build disc-shaped objects that could fly under their own power, "emitting a slight hum and a bluish electrical glow," according to Moore and Berlitz.

Scientists who observed Brown's demonstrations in 1953 were sceptical, attributing the observed motive force to "electrical wind" rather than accepting Brown's interpretation of the motion as evidence of a possible unification between gravitation and electricity. (Interestingly, this "electric wind" has come to public attention this year in new technology that improves the efficiency of automobile spark plugs and can be applied to extinguish oil fires.) Still underfunded, Brown went to France and

demonstrated his work to a company called La Societe Nationale de Construction Aeronautique Sud Ouest. There he found that his discs actually worked more efficiently in a vacuum, and that the speed and efficiency increased with greater voltages. When Sud Ouest merged with a larger company, Brown's funding fell apart once again. He returned to the United States in 1956, becoming the head of research and development for the Whitehall-Rand project, focusing on potential antigravity technology. The primary funder for this project, Agnew Bahnson, was killed when his private plane hit a high tension wire.

Brown became increasingly interested in UFOs. He founded the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) in 1956. This group lobbied intensively to end government secrecy about UFOs and intimidation of UFO observers. It was headed by retired U.S. Marine Corps Major Donald E. Keyhoe [who wrote several important and popular books on the UFO subject himself - Ed.]

In 1958, Brown started his own corporation called Rand International. Brown was able to secure patents both inside and outside the United States. In Great Britain he holds patent number 300,311 according to The Anti-Gravity Handbook by D. Hatcher Childress (see "Up In The Air over Anti-Gravity?" by W.P. Donovan in Childress's book). Perhaps it would be a good idea to assemble and reproduce all of Brown's patented inventions, with sufficient funding to test all prototypes. Childress provides a list of several dozen "Antigravity Space Drives" on pages 138-9 of his book. The only device of Brown's that he mentions is the "Electrokinetic Device" dated 1960 (no patent number listed).

In the early 1960s Brown worked for Electrokinetics Inc., of Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, and was later associated with a project at the Stanford Research Institute, with assistance from the University of California and the Ames Research Center of NASA.

This short article has leaned heavily on Moore and Berlitz's book and provides in outline form the key information in their chapter entitled "The Force Fields of Townsend Brown". I am interested in locating readers of Strange Daze who may have physics and electronics training and sufficient resources to assist me in further research and development of Brown's technology. Please contact me via the Strange Daze editorial address.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Thanks to Jay Dillon for that look at Townsend Brown and his UFO related work. Brown was an interesting character and I hope that some of our readers will be able to help with research into Brown's devices. At the very least, it would be great fun and a challenge to recreate on of his

hovering discs.

In some respects it matters little whether or not Brown's drive system worked by manipulating gravity. All flying machines are in some way "anti-gravity" devices because they allow us to escape from the surface of the Earth for a while. As we approach a new century and a new range of aeroplanes and spacecraft, engineers are looking at new types of propulsion systems, alternatives to the traditionally chemical powered jets and rockets. Ion drives and Biefeld-Brown effect engines may one day prove more effective than our present engines.

Brown's name has been connected with the infamous "Philadelphia Experiment, but his exact involvement is unclear. NICAP, the group he founded in 1956,

had some very interesting connections with the intelligence community: Vice Admiral Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter, a former director of the CIA was a member of the NICAP board until he resigned in 1962. Hillenkoetter's name is also on the list of Majestic-12 members. Also in NICAP were Colonel Joseph J. Bryan III (a chief of the CIA's psychological warfare staff - a NICAP board member); Count Nicolas de Rochefort (CIA psychological warfare staff - a NICAP vice chairman); John Acuff (possible CIA connection - Keyhoe's replacement in 1969); and Alan N. Hall (CIA agent - Acuff's successor). NICAP, a strong critic of the Air Force, was disbanded in 1973.

- D.N.



In the second of his major articles this issue, David Sivier looks at science, pseudoscience and the skeptical backlash heading our way in the wake of The X-Files.

- Ed.

FALL OF THE IDOLS

By David Sivier.

Slartibartfast: "Science has done some wonderful things, but I'd far rather be happy than right."

Arthur: "And are you?"

Slartibartfast: "No. That's where it all falls down, of course."

- Douglas Adams, The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.

It had to come. After the wave of popular programmes on the paranormal, like Strange But True, The Paranormal World of Paul McKenna and the fictional weirdness of The X-Files, the reaction has set in. The Skeptics are fighting back. And in the forefront of the conflict is Catherine Bennett.

Catherine Bennett is a journalist with a mission: to root out and combat the burgeoning waves of superstition and pseudoscience threatening to overwhelm us. Or at least, that's what she said in the first programme of her new series "Strange Days". Transmitted at the graveyard slot of 11.15pm on Tuesday 18th June 1996, the first programme did its best to attack as many of these superstitions as possible. In a packed 30 minutes she launched an assault on Chinese geomancy, parapsychology, UFOlogy, astrology and "mind, body and spirit" sections of bookshops and the publishers responsible, making sideswipes along the way at the National Lottery and Greenpeace.

Strange But True was earmarked for especial treatment. The prime polluter of otherwise rational minds, a psychologist called it "a disgrace" and expressed disgust that it should be broadcast as popular entertainment. According to him, people base their own personal belief in such matters not

according to their own personal experience, but on those of their friends, stories they have heard. He exuded scholarly disgust at the corruption of all the impressionable minds out there, watching.

To prove her point that "few of the people who make those programmes or put horoscopes in the papers believe in them"¹ she tracked down the producer of Strange But True and one of the publishers responsible for some of the paranormal output of William Heinemann. Neither of them did. The producer of Strange But True nevertheless felt that as many people did, they had a duty to broadcast such material, and considered that the programme presented the rational case quite well. Or at least, that Bennett didn't have any evidence to the contrary - a claim flatly contradicted by the excerpts from the offending programme she chose to prove her case.

Superstition thrived, she said, in periods of jolting change, when life becomes insecure and all the old certainties are under threat. People are afraid of "downsizing" - management speak for getting rid of a lot of company staff very quickly - unemployment, poverty. And when faith in the old ways is undermined, what is the replacement? Well, Providence, if you believe her. Especially Providence in the form of a windfall from the National Lottery. This was particularly irrational as the odds are 14 million to one against and you stand a far better chance of being hit twice by lightning.

Then off to maul parapsychology. Up she went North of the Border to interview Robert Morris, who holds the controversial Arthur Koestler Chair of Parapsychology at Edinburgh University. In conversation Dr Morris seemed entirely reasonable. Many people believed in ESP and psychic powers and felt ignored by Science, he said. There was therefore sufficient reason to investigate these claims. If these powers did not exist, then an argument had to be found to convince people that they didn't exist. All very reasonable. Except to Bennett, who fell back on the time-honoured Skeptics' weapons of abuse

and ridicule. "So", she sneered, "If you see fairies at the bottom of your garden, you can apply for a research grant to investigate it." She wasn't even above a little bit of name calling. Robert Morris was "mystic Bob". Well, sticks and stones...

Another talking head emerged to state that parapsychology was, in fact, an anti-science. One view of materialist science was very cold, disturbing and so people used a belief in these supernatural powers to make the universe a bit more comforting. By pursuing these powers, parapsychology was attacking rational, atheistic materialistic science. It was an anti-science. Diane Kossey in her book "Kooks" says much the same thing too, although she said it about the library of bizarre and discarded notions kept in the basement of MIT. Kossey was also far more positive. These ideas were actually a form of liberation, of people refusing to accept the chilly definitions of themselves and the world foisted upon them by modern science. A nice thought, but it still doesn't make them true though.

Bennett then went on to explain that people had lost their faith in science. Science was supposed to be responsible for nuclear weapons, pollution and other evils of the modern world. Lots of shots were shown of nuclear explosions. This allowed her to take a swipe at Greenpeace and the press for getting their facts wrong about certain chemicals causing shrinking willies and the Brent Spar fiasco. Many scientists, she stated, had believed that sinking the Brent Spar in deep water was the only ecologically sound way of disposing of the platform. In the hysteria surrounding the case, this was ignored. It was only when the wretched thing was towed into a Norwegian fjord did Greenpeace realise they'd got their facts wrong. And so Greenpeace joined the ranks of the paranormal damned in her personal demonology. Well, as Fort said:

"All would be well.

All would be heavenly -

If only the damned would stay damned."²

In all fairness, she did make some good points. I worry about the mind-numbing rubbish being published for the credulous by some of the paranormal publishing houses. The current abduction craze scares me rigid, though not with the fear that aliens will whisk me out of bed in the middle of the night to suck out my semen and stick probes where the Sun don't shine. As for beliefs that are 2,000 years old...well, 2,000 years ago people did sacrifice each other and commit all kinds of bizarre acts in the name of religion and faith which would (hopefully) be repugnant to the modern mind. A thousand years of belief does not necessarily make that belief benign or true, merely ancient. I certainly can't see how a Feng Shui expert who charges £350 an hour can change the

problems of unemployment, poverty and racism in Bethnall Green, especially when he advised the discontinuation of the rail service ferrying commuters to work elsewhere.

Nevertheless, her views are based on a fundamentally flawed assumption. Science progresses through investigation of anomalies. For example, inconsistencies in the Ptolemaic, Earth-centred view of the cosmos caused that system to be overthrown in favour of the heliocentric Copernican view of the Solar System. The aether, aristotelian humours, phlogiston (a mysterious fluid that was believed to be the chemical constituent of fire) were all overthrown when they couldn't deal with anomalous facts that dogged them, despite the fact that to the scientists and physicians of their day they were eminently rational, self-evident theories. A good scientist tests the strength of his/her theories by seeking out inconsistencies - any fact that could prove him/her wrong. Only when no anomalies arise can the theory be judged to be "proven".

Parapsychology does just that. For all Madame Bennett's scorn that if these powers exist, then why aren't we all communicating telepathically and saving on telephone bills, it does address a very real issue. And not all parapsychologists are believers. Dr Susan Blackmore of the University of the West of England is a noted skeptic. Yet that has not stopped her investigating anomalous experiences such as Near Death Experiences and alien abductions. By investigating these things we still stand to learn something new about the way the human mind works and perceives the world. If a ghost or UFO is a mistake or hallucination, it is still valuable to know why the percipient saw a ghost or UFO. But I suspect that I'm preaching to the converted here.

The other notable mistake is her attachment to the Enlightenment. This was the period in the 18th Century when scholars moved to a modern, mechanistic understanding of the Cosmos based around reason and natural laws. It was a time when reason first attacked religion, marshalling its forces to disenchant the universe of the supernatural entities then pervading it. In place of the God of the Bible and the spirits and demons of popular belief, the French revolutionaries put up the Goddess of Pure Reason, to whom incense and perfumes were sacrificed. Religion and superstition gave way to Deism, agnosticism and finally atheism. A complete break had been made with the past...

Or had it? Well, er, no actually. The medieval theologians had inherited the veneration of the Greek philosophers towards Rationality. God was identified with reason and order, through which the universe was built and structured. John D. Barrow, professor of Astronomy at Sussex University remarked in his

book "Theories of Everything"³ that if you replaced "God" with "mathematics" in much of medieval theological writings, the passages would still make sense, so closely were the two ideas linked in the medieval mind. The similarity is strengthened when you consider that in the Apocrypha, Sophia (the Divine Wisdom) is female. In fact, rational revolutionary France wasn't that different from the ideal commonwealths dreamed up in the 16th Century by thinkers such as Thomas Harrington, who also based their social experiments upon science and reason. Their science might contain copious amounts of Christian doctrine and astrology, but that was because these things to them were eminently reasonable and "scientific". Organised religion has often been attacked, and tragically with good reason, for encouraging intolerance and bigotry. But materialist science has done the same. Nazism and Communism are both aggressively atheistic systems of belief, under whom religious believers and their clergy were savagely persecuted. In some instances it is very much the case of the pot calling the kettle black. Something to remember when next you hear Madame Bennett denounce "keeping an open mind" as being a carte blanche "to fill it with any old rubbish".

The other thing to note about the Enlightenment was that far from banishing superstition, it actively encouraged it. The advances in science in the 18th Century were so rapid that even professional scientists and members of the academies were confused and demanding a new unifying system, while science supplanted literature as a craze for the educated public. "So strong was the popular enthusiasm for science in the 1780's that it almost erased the line (never very clear until the 19th Century) dividing science from pseudoscience."⁴ Like today, any attempt by the scientific authorities to assert their authority in sorting out the scientific sheep from the goats resulted in attacks on their right to do just that. "The attempt of the academies to direct traffic through the unknown exposed them to charges of unenlightened despotism, while new scientific fantasies appeared faster than they could build detours around the old."⁵ Science this century has expanded rapidly at an ever dizzying pace. To the interested lay person, it can seem that some paradigm of reality is broken every day. Many New Age beliefs claim a scientific basis, often invoking Quantum Physics as proof they are rooted in scientific fact. Rather than being a symptom of the decline of science in the popular imagination, such beliefs could be seen as a result of science's triumphant victory in the public's imagination.

Another point should be made here. Many scientists are worried about the current millennial turmoil both here and abroad as we approach the year 2000. These are the Last Days. Depending upon whom you

believe, Christ is returning, the poles are about to shift or aliens are about to turn up to carry us off to an extraterrestrial Land of Milk and Honey (or whatever it is that Val Thor and his fellow Venusians eat). While these fears shouldn't be underestimated, it is possible to exaggerate them. The Financial Times' science correspondent, Clive Cookson, in reviewing Carl Sagan's "The Demon Haunted World" remarked that what actually surprised him was how little of it had emerged. He also takes Sagan to task in his assertion that people are becoming more ignorant of science: "I do not accept his assertion that the problem is becoming worse. He tells entertaining stories about alien abductions, "chanelling" and similar absurdities of the 1990's. But the heyday of UFO hysteria was, after all, in the 1950's."⁶ The Daily Mail reported that Michael Heseltine was having a particularly difficult job persuading companies to finance the Millennium Fund. This placed the whole millennial celebrations in jeopardy, the article reported. If nothing else, this should tell you that the people aren't as enthusiastic about the millennium as they are expected to be.

Her cardinal mistake is, I think, the way she mistakes the model for the reality. [Ah, that old chestnut - Ed] Scientists don't have a mystical knowledge of the cosmos. Science has built up its view of reality through a patient process of observation, experiment and conjecture through which a series of models of reality, or paradigms, have been constructed. These models are however, still the products of human reason. They are an attempt to provide an accurate picture of reality, not the reality itself. Barrow remarked in the aforementioned book that there was no reason why the universe should not contain surds (irrational elements) or prove itself amenable to finite human reason. "The universe is not only queerer than we imagine" said J.B.S. Haldane, "but queerer than we CAN imagine." The materialist, atheist paradigm of the universe holds true at the moment, but there may well be forces at work in the cosmos of which we are as yet completely ignorant. I think a milk-drinking statue is unlikely, but the testimony of witnesses should not be dismissed out of hand, no matter how improbable we think it is.

She seems to believe that if we stop broadcasting and watching programmes on the paranormal, or reading astrology columns or books on the occult, then we shall all live richer, more rational lives and not be bothered by these experiences. Well, perhaps. But I think people would continue to have strange, inexplicable experiences, such as ghosts and UFOs and monsters. Prodigies and wonders would still appear and be all the more terrible as their percipients were marginalised as aberrants and maniacs. And there would be no emotionally satisfying belief to comfort

them. "For all our wisdom", Goethe said, "Tegel still is haunted".⁷ In fact, experience of these events might actually increase. C.G. Jung noted that the people who generally saw UFOs were all described as being reliable, rational people. [Quite true - unlike UFOlogists, a scurrilous, wild eyed bunch - Ed] Jung concluded from this that their experiences were therefore their irrational natures becoming increasingly forceful in order to make their presence felt. People are not wholly rational animals. There is therefore a very real danger that the more irrational side of human nature is suppressed, the more terrible its expression will be when it finally breaks out.

Well, now that I've attacked the programme's general weaknesses, I'd better get back to what you're really interested in. I watched Strange Days to see what she would say about UFOs. Actually, she didn't say an awful lot. Malcolm Robinson and a group from Strange Phenomena Investigations were shown on a skywatch around Bonnybridge. In a very brief interview he was shown agreeing with her that programmes on the the paranormal had produced greater awareness of strange phenomena and UFOs - which was her point against such programmes. And that was it, except for a brief comment that "aliens haven't landed". SPI did have a laudably sceptical attitude towards investigating Strange Phenomena. UFO means Unidentified Flying Object, not flying saucer or alien space craft, although I'm not sure these should be ruled out as some UFOlogists are doing. SPI seemed to be aware of this, and I wondered how many of them really believed that aliens had arrived.

It is clear she seemed to think the producers of such paranormal books, articles and programmes were cynically exploiting people's gullibility and need to believe in a higher power. Perhaps this is the case with some. But people still have a right to their beliefs, no matter how mistaken they may be to someone else. Television companies and book publishers exist to supply the public's demand for entertainment and education. If they fail to do this then they lose money and their audience/readership at the same time. Dictating what people should believe is a slippery slope that leads ultimately to indoctrination and dictatorship. People cannot be forced to be free.

In the meantime, Bennett has shown herself a true daughter of CSICOP and the scientific exclusionists. Any datum that does not fit her paradigm must be ignored or suppressed. I dare say that if it was left to her we would all still be left in ignorance of the existence of meteorites, as only peasants believed that stones fell from the sky.

The paranormal, or weird, whatever we say or think will still continue. Fort noted "The irresistibility of things that neither threaten nor jeer

nor defy, but arrange themselves in mass formations that pass and pass and keep on passing."⁸ And long may they do so.

NOTES.

1. Catherine Bennett, Radio Times, 15-21 June 1996, page 12.
2. Charles Fort, The Book of the Damned (revised by X), John Brown Publishing, 1995, p.13.
3. John D. Barrow, Theories of Everything, Vintage, 1992.
4. Robert Darnton, Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France, Harvard University Press, 1968, p.29.
5. Ibid, p.17.
6. Clive Cookson, "Irrational about Pseudo-Science", Financial Times Weekend supplement for 9th/10th March 1996.
7. Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, Faust Part 1, translated by Philip Wayne, Penguin Classics, 1949, p.178.
8. Charles Fort, op.cit., p.1.

POSTSCRIPT: SCIENCE THEN AND NOW -
Comment on the 18th and 20th Centuries.

In his aforementioned book on Mesmerism, the American historian Darnton backs up his argument that science was the great passion of the late 18th Century reading public with a quotation from a letter to the Annee Litteraire by "an old fashioned literary type". This person complained that "this scientific mania" was too much. "For literature one has but a cold esteem bordering on indifference, while the sciences...excite a universal enthusiasm. Physics, chemistry, natural history have become a craze."¹

Melvin Bragg, professional novelist and South Bank intellectual expresses much the same sentiments in the July 1996 issue of Focus magazine. " 'As a man of letters' ", he says, "I am increasingly aware that science is, to a certain extent, taking over the role once exclusively reserved for art: explaining the great truths and meanings of our existence. Modern cosmology and astronomy are making new discoveries about the universe every day - and these discoveries have implications that are quasi-religious. Are we alone? What is the meaning of life? What is our place in the universe?"

"Religion doesn't have answers any more, and younger people no longer look for answers in literature as my generation did...Their enthusiasm is undoubtedly fired by these influences, and the sciences are now at the cutting edge of contemporary philosophy and metaphysical speculation."²

The more things change....

NOTES.

1. Darnton, op.cit., p.27 quoting Priestly, The History and Present State of Electricity, II,

- 134-138, and the Annee Litteraire 1 (1785).
 2. Melvin Bragg, Science for Art's Sake, Focus,
 July 1996, p.98.



FLOWER OF SILENCE

by Dean James.

Allen H. Greenfield speculates that publication of his book "Secret Cipher of the UFOnuts" will render New Aeon English Qabala Cipher 6 (NAEQ6) obsolete as a magical weapon and relegate it to the role of "astro-archaeological tool". There are signs that this is happening already, he adds, pointing out that the cipher works best when applied to vintage cases in which "funny names" figure prominently.

Albert K. Bender's 1962 potboiler "Flying Saucers and the Three Men" is a case in point. The text contains only one funny name ("Kazik") but nevertheless rewards careful study.

Bender himself exhibited a degree of paranoia unmatched by his contemporaries. Preoccupied with the occult, he spent the early 1950s brooding on UFOs in a specially appointed "chamber of horrors" and eventually fell prey to some form of psychic attack (albeit many latter-day readers are likely to find his symptoms indicative of nothing more sinister than migraine). Flying Saucers and the Three Men relates how he arrived at an undisclosed "secret" regarding the origin and purpose of flying saucers and was later visited by three Men In Black who whisked him off to Antarctica for further astounding revelations. No firm indication is given as to the nature of these revelations but NAEQ6 provides several tantalising clues.

To begin with, the letters comprising ALBERT K. BENDER have a value of 195, which, as Stephen Dziklewicz points out, also equals ALIEN ABDUCTIONS. Significantly, Gray Barker's roman a clef The Silver Bridge deliberately shortens Bender's name to AL K. BENDER which has a value of 114, THE NAME (i.e., Bender's name held the key to his experiences) and even more unambiguously, CHOSEN ONE.

The Silver Bridge also refers to Bender's alien visitors as "the lurking horror", a phrase reminiscent of H.P. Lovecraft. LURKING HORROR equals 142, the same value as MEN IN BLACK. This spectacular direct hit for NAEQ6 should be enough to convince even the most hardened sceptics that some force beyond mere coincidence is at work here.

Intriguingly, 142 also equals BACKWARD DARKNESS and ALL LONELY PLACES, cryptic phrases hinting at the MIB's real point of origin.

Toward the end of his first full-blown encounter Bender was entrusted with the cant-language shibboleth "Kazik" and told to repeat it whenever he wanted to invoke the MIB again. KAZIK = 50 and MIB = 64,

values which combined equal 114: AL K. BENDER. What's more, the sum of KAZIK (50) and THREE MEN (150) is 200: BLACK PILGRIMAGE. Evidently Bender's uneasy relationship with the MIB was merely one stage in a much wider process of initiation.



REVIEWS

(By the editor unless otherwise stated.)

Conference Review: Quest International's "Keeper of Genesis" Conference, Leeds University,
 1st June 1996.

We have survived! - No, not Diana Ross - but the Quest International "Keeper of Genesis" conference. We attended the conference with open hearts and minds. Immediately it was apparent that the only stall was under the control of Quest International. It brought out the closet Thatcherite in both of us, but we found the lack of variety in merchandise on sale and the emphasis on merchandise produced for and by Quest International disconcerting. The conference started at 11.00am. The first big mistake. Prior to the conference we had both read "Fingerprints of the Gods" and "Keeper of Genesis" and both are excellent, thought provoking books which we would not hesitate in recommending to anyone. Consequently we were looking forwards to hearing the authors, Bauval and Hancock. Regarding Richard Hoagland, we were less certain. From what we had read from "third parties" concerning him, it made us think that we might find his ideas bizarre to say the least. To our surprise we found the opposite to be true. Hoagland was the star of the show. As the first speaker, he spoke for a staggering two and a half hours - a time that passed very quickly. For us he provided the enduring image of the conference, a stunning "3D" computer enhanced image of the Cydonia region of Mars taken from an oblique angle. We challenge anyone to look at that picture and not agree with Hoagland's assertion that it really is worth going back to Mars to see what really is there. Whilst we agreed with his hypotheses regarding Mars, we found his assertions regarding the "arcologies" and ruins on the Moon hit our established prejudices head on. The reflected image in the visor of one of the Apollo 12 astronauts was thought provoking and worthy of further investigation. Hoagland stated it was a reflection of a "mile high" ruin; personally, we saw only the reflection of a strange bright object hanging over the lunar surface. He then went on to discuss "multi-dimensional tetrahedral geometry" which gradually lost us completely, although it does give reproduceable results, particularly at 19.5° latitude on a sphere. He then went on to the ruins and arcologies on the Moon. His photographs, presentations and evidence show there are anomalies on the

lunar photographs worthy of explanation, but we found his concept of mile high glass ruins on the Moon hard to grasp. Could they account for the transient lunar phenomena observed by Earth based astronomers? He then ended his excellent presentation with the idea that the ruins on Mars and the Moon are not evidence of extraterrestrial civilizations, but that of our own forgotten "prediluvian" civilization.

After this the conference went rapidly downhill. Hancock gave a lacklustre performance which was basically a synopsis of "Fingerprints of the Gods". By this time, the auditorium was hot and stuffy. The air conditioning, if it existed, was not up to the task, and all around us people (including ourselves) were fighting to stay awake. After a fifteen minute break, Bauval then spoke. He was the better speaker of the two, charming with his French accent, but oh so long winded. He gave a detailed synopsis of the "Keeper of Genesis". We felt sorry for those at the conference who purchased their books, as all both men did was to tell the audience what they would subsequently read, regarding their hypothesis of a forgotten terrestrial pre-diluvian civilization. Both men then came on stage together to give a detailed account of the political infighting in the Egyptian Antiquities organisation and to complain about their self-confessed voluntary exclusion from the forthcoming 1996 expeditions to explore the hidden chambers in the Great Pyramid and below the Sphinx. They implied they had a right to be there, and implied a conspiracy as the Cayce Foundation was funding both projects through cover organisations. How is it that conspiracies figure so prominently in alternative research? In the end both men came across as sorry, unhappy individuals whose overriding message was "never, ever trust an Egyptologist".

At 7.10pm Graham Birdsall informed us that after a ten minute break, Richard Hoagland would speak again and that they had an extension on the conference auditorium until 8.30pm. Enough was enough, and at that point a large number of people including ourselves gave up and went home. Much as we would have liked to hear Hoagland again, we had stalwartly endured 8½ hours in an uncomfortable, hot, badly ventilated auditorium and we, like the others, had reached the limit of our endurance.

All in all, not a pleasant experience. Graham Birdsall seemed in awe of his three speakers and constantly referred to their "stature and fame" as an excuse for their over-runs. The conference should have started at 10.00am. Each speaker, irregardless of their intellectual standing, should have had a strict time limit imposed on them. Future conferences should be held in a well ventilated, air conditioned and comfortable conference venue. All in all, a conference to be missed, and a medal should be struck for the survivors.

- M & N Coomber.

Lecture Review: BUFORA's quarterly lecture with Jenny Randles, University of Northumbria, 27th July 1996.

This was a lively, well attended event with this country's best known UFOlogist, Jenny Randles. The mood was dampened slightly at the start, with Gloria announcing the sad death of Ken Phillips, and echoed by Jenny Randles. Her talk was entitled "Worth a thousand words - the photographic evidence" and was a careful analysis of the photographic cases from over the years, backed up by a slide show. Jenny raised some important questions, including "Where have all the photographers gone?" - The number of photographic UFO cases has fallen drastically since the 1950s and 60s, but at the same time camera technology has improved drastically and camera ownership has tripled.

After the intermission, Jenny continued (due to the non-appearance of Linda Jones) with a critical look at the MoD and Nick Pope, with particular reference to photographic cases. Are the government behind the "men in black" who visit UFO witnesses and try to get hold of photographic evidence, often succeeding? Quite possible. The classic American MIB sometimes appear to be aliens themselves, but in this country they often claim to be military personnel, UFO investigators or perhaps journalists. Jenny presented good evidence that the MoD has several departments interested in UFO cases (whether Nick Pope knows it or not) and on occasion they are willing to go to extraordinary lengths to obtain evidence.

Jenny was in top form this day, despite the projector spitting out half a dozen of her important slides. The auditorium was not quite full to capacity, a great pity as this was one of the most thought provoking and worthwhile lectures I have heard in the last couple of years. You can't please everyone, though: "...not enough about ley lines..." was heard on the way out. Sometimes I despair. Never mind; thank you, Jenny, for coming to Newcastle and sharing your valuable research with us all.

Video review: "Voyagers of the Sixth Sun", VHS Video. Genesis Three Productions, 1996.

The third video covering the Mexican UFO wave which began in 1991, this is another breathtaking programme of both day and night camcorder footage of anomalous airborne objects.

The unknowns or OVNIS (objecto volante no identificado) seem to be becoming more daring in their flying with low level runs a regular occurrence. One striking clip shows a spherical rotating object flying directly in the path of approaching helicopters. Amazing.

Also featured are dramatic clips from Germany and Korea which prove that it is not just Mexico that is experiencing outstanding UFO sightings.

In all, a stunning visual treat for anyone interested in UFOlogy - I thoroughly recommend it.

- Craig Carl Jackson.

Book Review: ZOLAR "The Master of the Occult" - The Encyclopedia of Ancient and Forbidden Knowledge. Souvenir Press. £10.99, Large format paperback, 472 pages. ISBN 0 285 63316 3.

When I picked this book out to review from the selection kindly sent by the Souvenir Press, I imagined that it would be some Ancient and Hideous History of Cosmic and Monstrous Horrors that the feeble minds of men could scarce endure. Unfortunately however, this hefty grimoire (which ideally should have been bound in musty human skin) features instruction in astrology and prophecy padded out with mysticism. I cannot report whether ZOLAR's methods are efficacious as I believe the editor would rather have this review back before the end of a lifetime spent in the studious pursuit of occult arts.

The introduction has a science bashing disposition which manages to shoot itself in the foot with a classic misunderstanding of the scientific method. As I am sure the Editor has pointed out in the past, scientists conduct their experiments in an attempt to disprove their hypotheses; not as claimed here to prove them.

I am not sure whether I am able to offer any effective critique of a book which has such statements as "The Divine Self of the human Soul is absolutely atomic" when it is so far removed from my understanding. The belief system contained here however, makes for a diverting and flaky read.

In summary, this is a good book if you wish to write a "Psychic Probe" like Linda Robson's in the Herald & Post, or if you wish to bluff people into thinking you are a Russell Grant.

- J.A. Lee.

Book review: Charles Berlitz - "The Bermuda Triangle". Souvenir Press. £6.99. Large format paperback; 201 pages with illustrations, 16 pages of plates, select bibliography. ISBN 0 285 633260.

"The Bermuda Triangle" is apparently "Incredible but True!", "The worldwide megaseller that investigates one of the world's most extraordinary unsolved mysteries" and is probably the only book to be reviewed this issue to have a Top 10 hit named after it. [Would that be the Barry Manilow one? - Ed.]

This "massive bestseller" was the first book of a Fortean bent that I ever bought and strangely enough it too disappeared under mysterious circumstances. Reading this new edition, I find it as informative, fascinating and hilarious as ever.

For the first third of the book Berlitz generally confines himself to a reasonably calm recounting of dematerializing modes of transport. As expected

an in-depth account is given of Flight 19, and the eye-witness accounts of this and other events are interesting. At this stage discussion of possible natural causes is only occasionally enlightened by occult Atlanteans with mysterious powers. Nevertheless the last two thirds live up to expectations with a full compliment of antigravity warps (?), flying saucers, ancient astronauts, Ezekiel, and of course the immemorial epics of Gilgamesh and The Mahabhrata. (Plus, check out the lovely drawing of a lamppost on page 111.)

This, of course, brings us on to the wonderful subject of references, and whether any book which namechecks The Mahabhrata should be immediately binned. The Mahabhrata is the Classic of Hindu culture which seemed to be on BBC2 every Sunday morning for about 50 years. It is used by writers to prove points as no-one can be arsed leafing through the 5000 odd pages in order to check up on details. Certainly not most authors, who then go on to repeat what they have read. Mind you, most of the bibliography seems to be of the order of "My Ladybird Bumper Fun Book of Sea Mysteries". I am probably being unfair as this is no dull-but-worthy work of academia, but a good bedside read to be taken with your sense of incredulity placed firmly in neutral.

Two final points: Firstly, don't cancel any holidays you might have already booked, as Mrs Ed. has recently returned unscathed from a fact-finding and gin-swilling mission in the Bahamas; Secondly, why buy this book new at £6.99 when charity shops can't get rid of it at 25p a throw?

- J.A. Lee.

Book review: Charles Berlitz - "Mysteries from Forgotten Worlds". Souvenir Press. £6.99, Large format paperback; 225 pages with illustrations and plates, bibliography, no index. ISBN 0 285 62929 8.

I used to be a big fan of Charles Berlitz's books; I say used to be, not because I don't like them anymore, but rather because I haven't read one of his books in a long while. I was quite pleased then to have a copy of this book drop with a loud (imaginary) thump into my (virtual) in tray. In this book Berlitz gallops around the globe, selecting evidence for his theory that once upon a time, there lived a race of technologically advanced people who were wiped out by a world-wide cataclysm around the time of the Great Flood. How do we know that these ancient and forgotten peoples were advanced? Look at what they left behind: he gives us the pyramids, the Nasca lines in Peru, the Piri Reis map of Antarctica, legends of Atlantis, etc. Actually, much the same as you would find in a von Daniken book. What caused the world-wide cataclysm? Immanuel Velikovsky and his comet get a mention, but Berlitz's final conclusion seems to be that nuclear armageddon was the culprit. He quotes several ancient texts

that seemingly describe nuclear explosions and the after effects, including (of course) the Mahabharata.

Prehistoric nuclear wars were mentioned in many books like this back in the 1970s (this one was originally released in 1972); some of them were better than this book, others were worse. This, at least is an entertaining and well written book, even if the whole idea is rather unlikely. Hopefully the interested reader would use it as an introduction to the field and then go on to track down more academic works. The verdict: typically speculative and good fun from the 70s.

Book reviews: Erich von Daniken -

"According to the Evidence". Souvenir Press.

Large format paperback, £9.99, 348 pages.

"Signs of the Gods?" Souvenir Press.

Large format paperback, £7.99, 252 pages with index.

ISBNs: 0 285 63315 5 and 0 285 63270 1.

Surely everyone knows who Erich von Daniken is by now and what his book are about? The German superstar of the 1970s believes that "In prehistoric and early historic times the Earth was visited by unknown beings from the cosmos. These unknown beings created human intelligence by a deliberate genetic mutation. The extra-terrestrials ennobled hominids "in their own image". These visits to Earth by alien beings from the cosmos were recorded and handed down in religions, mythologies and popular legends. In some places the extraterrestrials also deposited physical signs of their presence on Earth." So says the introduction to "Accordinging...", and these books present his evidence to back up that theory.

These books are reissues, the originals being printed back in 1977 and 1979 respectively. Erich shot to fame in the early 70s with his books "Chariots of the Gods?" (Souvenir, 1969) and "Return to the Stars" (Souvenir, 1970) and in all honesty I would have to recommend those two books (which cost me a total sum of 70 pence to buy second hand) rather than the two volumes here. I think he used his best evidence up in the first books and these later ones just don't carry enough weight to be convincing.

EvD spawned a whole series of atrocious (but immensely entertaining) books from his immitators, but Erich was not the first, or the best, author to tackle the "ancient astronaut" theory. Rather than spending money on these two volumes, I would have to say that readers would be better off getting on the bus to North Shields and digging round the second hand book shops for copies of W. Raymond Drake's "Gods and Spacemen..." series from the late 1960s and early 70s. Not only did Drake do it better and earlier than EvD, he was also a local, living in Sunderland. If there is sufficient interest in ancient astronauts to reprint these books of EvD's lets hope that someone like Souvenir Press might also reprint some of the better volumes on the subject.

Book review: Alec Maclellan - "The Lost World of Agharti". Souvenir press. Large format paperback, £7.99, 231 pages, bibliography, no index. ISBN 0 285 63314 7.

Subtitled "The Mystery of Vrill Power", this book is all about mysterious people who live inside the Earth, are possibly of Atlantean stock, and have mysterious powers. Is the Earth hollow? I don't think so. But it is riddled with tunnels and caves, possibly to the extent that Maclellan suggests. Is this where UFOs come from? Hey, it is at least as likely as the extraterrestrial hypothesis.

In this book, the original of which appeared in 1982, there is a lot of quoting from other people's work and not enough original new evidence for me. Maclellan quotes from Dr Raymond Bernard, "one of today's greatest experts on subterranean legends". Dr Bernard may be remembered for his astonishing book "Menstruation: its cause and cure", which worries me somewhat about the validity of some of the contents. For me, the most important part of the book is Chapter One, in which the author relates his own curious experience while investigating a tunnel in a hillside midway between the villages of Kettlewell and Starbottom, near Grassington in Yorkshire. There's no smoke without fire, or Teros without Deros.

Not entirely convincing, but the evidence to the contrary is not entirely dissuasive. This book is worth reading, at least as an introduction to the Hollow Earth theories. Anyone fancy a field trip to Grassington?

MAGAZINE REVIEWS:

UFO Times Issue 41, May/June 1996. A little behind schedule, but boy is this worth waiting for! Now with a colour cover and an improved layout, Mike Wootten and Andy Roberts are doing wonders with the BUFORA magazine. Copies were on sale at the Jenny Randles lecture in Newcastle for £2.50 each, which I thought was a bit steep for 20 pages, but a great improvement on the old style magazine. If they can get a few more regular contributors to increase the volume, this may be the next magazine to hit the shelves of your local W.H. Smiths. Nice work, boys.

Southampton UFO Group Newsletter. A monthly newsletter produced by Steve Gerrard. Full of reviews and newspaper articles, this is a gem if you want to know what has been in the papers or on TV recently. In the most recent issue (No 68), Steve Gerrard notes the resignation of Philip Mantle as BUFORA's director of investigations: Check your sources, Steve! A single phone call to BUFORA central office would have put you straight on this issue. And check out this howler in a review in issue 67: "It was basically divided into three halves"...

£5.00 for 12 issues to Steve Gerrard, 25 Weston Grove

Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9EE.

COVER UP Issue 3. The newsletter from David Colman's Scottish group, Lothian Unexplained Phenomena Research. A mixture of short articles, cases, newspaper cuttings and comment, this is developing nicely. Not one for taking prisoners, check out this comment on some hoaxed photos that appeared in the Scottish Sun: "Bring back the noose and stretch some necks for crimes against Ufology!" Come on Davy, are you getting soft hearted in your old age? :-)
£1.00 plus a stamp per issue from David Colman, 48 Limefield Crescent, Bathgate, West Lothian, EH48 1RF.

NARO MINDED Issue 2, April 1996. The latest issue from the North Western group NARO had gone to A4 in size and increased the content to 31 pages. This is a big improvement over the first issue, and that wasn't bad. Still has a few rough edges but contains a range of good articles from researchers like Peter Hough and Mervyn Gale. Recommended.
Quarterly, £8 per year payable to NARO. Contact Stephen Mera, 3 Paignton Drive, Ashton-on-Mersey, Sale, Cheshire, M33 5HJ.

Magonia 56. An indispensable read for anyone hoping to keep up with the latest thinking in alternatives to the ETH and other Fortean subjects. This issue covers organ snatching rumours, Peter Brooksmith's article on UFOs and religion, and Hohn Harney becoming sceptical about the sceptics. A quality item.
£5 for 4 issues. Send cheques payable to John Rimmer, John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard London SW14 8HB.

INTELLIGENCE Issue 7, June 1996. This is the "very humble" magazine from Eric Morris's group BUFOSC, who "have such a fantastic rapport with other groups that I WANT to tell everyone about it". So said Eric Morris in his defensive editorial, probably in answer to my review in the last Strange Daze. Predictably, he then went on to blow the BUFOSC trumpet once again. Very humble. A mixture of articles and cases from the BUFOSC area in Cheshire. Not as good as NARO Minded, also from the Cheshire area.

£7 per year to Eric Morris, 52 Dart Walk, Wharton, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 3JE.

*** I wonder how many readers like myself had to pick up their copies of Intelligence from the post office and pay a surcharge, because the postage was underpaid? Not impressed.***

Phenomenal News from Scotland No 3, Summer 1996. An interesting little magazine from the Scottish Earth Mysteries Research group. This issue contains a report by Ron Halliday on his Arthur's Seat dowsing programme, and a great article on human spontaneous involuntary invisibility, along with news and cases. Unfortunately I missed the first dowsing session

on Arthur's Seat, the hill overlooking Edinburgh, due to the weather; hopefully the NUFORI team will get chance to go up there again soon.

Quarterly, £4 per year payable to R Halliday, 35 Fountain Road, Bridge of Allan, FK9 4AU.

OVNI July 1996. The monthly newsletter of the Phenomenon Research Association based in Derby. As you would expect being monthly, this magazine is quite slim (around 12 pages per issue) but contains some interesting articles and cases. It is surely a good sign that I keep referring to articles in back issues. Useful to have and not bad value at £1 per issue plus postage. This issue also contains some fantastic pictures of this year's crop circles - it is a shame they don't copy better. Contact Omar Fowler, 94 The Circle, Sinfin, Derby, DE24 9HR.

REVIEW:

Space : Above and Beyond

Sky One Wednesdays 8pm. Shortly coming to BBC2

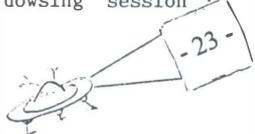
With all of the publicity surrounding Fox's latest blockbuster, *Independence Day*, it has come as a great surprise to many fans of the sci-fi genre that Fox has chosen to cancel *Space: Above and Beyond* after its first season. Although the show did not fare particularly well during its first season in the US, it certainly fared no worse than Fox's other well known genre show, the *X-Files* during its first season. The poor showing in the ratings must be due in part to the poor time slot it was allocated, 7pm on a Sunday, and the fact that it was constantly pre-empted so that Fox could show American Football (can you tell that I'm disgruntled?).

Although, like many shows, the season premiere was rather weak, being a checklist of apparently stereotypical characters introduced in a very formulaic way, the series then goes from strength to strength with many of our assumptions about the characters being challenged. We get to watch the characters grow considerably over the course of the series and several of the episodes are genuinely moving. Melrose Space it ain't, despite what you may have read. If you like good characterisation, plots about honour and integrity, subplots on the deviousness of Government and Big Business, aliens who may not be as alien as they seem, and lots of cool battle sequences (hoo-rah) then I would definitely persevere past first impressions.

Fans of the show, also known as SAABers or affectionately 'those weirdoes without lives' by Fox executives (note the sarcasm) whose lives they are currently making a misery, feel that S:AAB was ideally suited to exploit *Independence Day*. The show has managed to generate substantial interest on the Internet, spawning many discussion groups and Web sites. The discussion groups are fast and furious, with many theories being swapped as to why Fox would make this (extraordinary) decision, given the fact that many of the other American networks are currently jumping on the *Independence Day* bandwagon, and fans feel that the cancellation smacks of political motives. Among the theories being expounded are that the MIBs had something to do with the cancellation. Current favourite for this title is Chris Carter, the man behind the *X-Files*.

It is felt that since Glen Morgan and James Wong, the men behind S:AAB, left the *X-Files* the quality of the writing has declined. Fans have complained about this. It is also known that Morgan and Wong's contracts had a clause in them that if S:AAB failed they had to return to the *X-Files*. Paranoid?

K A L I S T I



Hey - perhaps I've been married to the Ed for too long.

I feel that this would make an ideal case for Mulder and Scully.

Semper Fi

Mrs Ed, suffering severe S:AAB withdrawal symptoms. Hoo-Rah!

Note:

For those who are interested, you can join the S:AAB mailing list by accessing the Space: Mission Status Site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.microserve.net/space:aab/>. Also at this site can be found details of the current efforts being made to save the show. Alternatively, if you have e-mail but no web access you can subscribe by sending mail to "listserv@server.microserve.net" with the first line of the message being "subscribe space-1 your name". You will get confirmation by e-mail that you are subscribed. Anyone who has yet to join the twenty first century :-) who would like to join the fight to save S:AAB, please contact the Ed's better half for details.

Space Above and Beyond:

No friendly aliens...
No cute robots...
No holodecks...
No mercy.



LETTERS

Sir/

With all of the hype about UFOs, aliens and abductions coming to light in the media and TV, might I make a few suggestions?

Might the "greys" be of reptilian origin, with their black eyes, nostrils but no nose, and tight lipped mouths? Also, their apparent thin limbs and fingers. If so, and if they have been "visiting" our backwards planet for some time, might they have been the original "snake" gods of ancient civilizations such as the Egyptians and Babylonians? Might the wings on the glyphs in pyramids be modes of "vessel to surface" transportation - such as jet packs or the like, experimented with by the U.S. in the 1960 and 1970s? Also, might the strange looking headgear of the Egyptian gods be helmets of some sort?

It is my view that ancient "stories" and writings are misinterpreted and changed to suit whoever is in "power" at the time of their being passed on. Therefore, what was taken to be magic, or a miracle, was little more than what would now be called science or modern medicine. The practice of such knowledge was credited to the powers of the "gods", or so the ignorant masses were led to believe.

If a knowledgeable few build up a mystique around their practices, they can then declare themselves as instruments of the "Gods". (Sound familiar?)

Cataracts can be cured, if in the early stages, by ointments. [Can they? - I didn't know that. Ed.]

Who is to say that the "blindman" in the Bible was not totally blind but merely partially sighted due to cataracts? Of course, the religious amongst us will not agree, because it is offering an alternative explanation to the "miracles" of Christ. True, Jesus Christ did exist. There is plenty of evidence to tell us so. True, Jesus Christ did perform what were known as miracles, to the ignorant masses. However, turning water into wine has been successfully copied by a small group of students in Germany or Austria. They have succeeded in turning water into Pilsner, merely by adding tablets that they have developed. They refuse to sell the idea to any of the breweries and quite rightly so!

I am not religious (surprise! surprise!) however I do believe in Christ.

One benefit of travelling the length and breadth of Britain is that the variety of people you meet is amazing. I have met "train spotter" types, they are easy to spot, and so avoid; "Intellectuals", who have a tendency to look too deeply into a situation and in so doing, miss what may be the obvious answer; "Nutters", who have little interest in another's views, or anything other than what they will be doing that night; and reasonable, open minded people, willing to discuss a subject, without political or religious bigotry.

The leading religions all preach about a God of love and peace, and yet they are at each others throats over who is right. Therefore I am not religious.

But then, who am I to say what is right and what is wrong?

Joe Publik.

Editor's response: I can think of half a dozen books that deal with the possibility that the Egyptian or Middle Eastern history and religion have been influenced by extraterrestrials. One book, by G.R. Steinhauser, is entitled "Jesus Christ - Heir to the Astronauts"! Erich von Daniken of course did much to publicise the "ancient astronaut" theory. It has been suggested before that the greys are reptilian in structure, but our knowledge of these entities is, of course, very limited.

Write in to us: What do you think? Was Jesus Christ an E.T.? Was the Red Sea parted by a Velikovskyan comet? Was...oh, forget it. Can't be arsed.

Sir/

I too attended the Day of Abductions conference in April - my full review of the event will be published in the Summer '96 issue of UFO Enquirer - and I found your comments about Paulinne Delcour-Min's presentation to be unjustifiably dismissive and ill-considered. In my opinion Paulinne made an excellent attempt to present a wealth of information concerning non-physical aspects of the universe within

a highly academic environment (a university lecture theatre) and in a very restricted space of time. It is often the case that, after reading a few books on occultism and eastern philosophy, someone will imagine that they have a clear understanding of such complex subjects as reincarnation, karma, and supra-physical planes of existence; Paulinne, however, came across as being very sincere insofar as she provided evidence of having experimented with past life regressions and altered states of consciousness herself, with a particular emphasis on transferring consciousness to the astral plane. If you are not prepared to consider such ideas as anything more than "new age fantasy" then I am curious to know what you are doing editing a UFO journal.

With regard to the film footage shown as part of Whitley Strieber's presentation, I was intrigued by your comment that you "feel that the objects will ultimately prove to be quite normal." The first piece of film showed an amazing array of bright luminous objects of various shapes and sizes moving in a chaotic yet intelligently-controlled fashion [Is that possible? - Ed.] through the dusky sky above a ranch in the Western USA. The objects appeared to be unlike any normally visible earthly organisms, nor did they resemble any known aircraft or meteorological phenomenon. So what is it, Dave, that gives you such a feeling? The second clip featured a long narrow object - metallic in appearance and reflecting sunlight - travelling high in the sky, again over the Western USA. The object was estimated to be approximately one mile in length. A mile long aircraft - does that "feel" "normal"? Sometimes I wonder what kind of evidence it would take to shake some people out of their blasé attitude to the UFO phenomenon. Caution and scepticism are, of course, valid intellectual tools for achieving a broad understanding of certain issues; but if you have no idea what something is, why be so apathetic as to assume that it has a mundane explanation? [My underlining - Ed.]

I'd also like to comment on M. Therion's point on reincarnation. The fact that the number of humans on Earth is rapidly increasing only raises difficulties for the reincarnation theory if you assume (a) that all souls reincarnate after having been disincarnate (out of body) for a standard period of time, and (b) that all human souls must necessarily reincarnate on Earth. It is probably fair to assume that everyone reading this will have at least considered the idea of intelligent life forms on other planets, thus it is not too enormous a leap to suggest that souls which enjoyed previous incarnations on other worlds - and perhaps in other dimensions or planes of existence - may now be incarnating on Earth. M. Therion's idea of a universal or "collective" soul is not a new one - in fact it is a central tenet of the ancient wisdom: in Hinduism it is called

brahman - but to do away with the the notion of an individual soul (atman) would, on the Hindu and ancient wisdom model, be to banish the very meaning and purpose from life, which purpose is - ironically - to discover that brahman and atman are one.

Yours, Mick Burley.
Leicester.

Editor's response: Regarding my review of Paulinne Delcour-Min at the BUFORA conference, I stand by everything that I wrote. Compared to many of the comments that I heard from other delegates, I think I was very kind. It may surprise you to learn that I am perfectly willing to consider and accept the possibility of concepts such as reincarnation, karma and astral-planing. I am also in no doubt that the people that go to Ms. Min for her relaxation therapy find it very helpful and, well...therapeutic. But let us not forget what the major question is here: Are people being physically abducted by an alien intelligence, or is this experience an internal, non-physical event? When Ms. Min's therapy starts revealing stories of space crickets from Venus, or memories of striding across the stars with smoking black holes for feet, it is pretty obvious that these things never physically happened. As an explanation for the abduction phenomenon, she offered us a concoction of past lives, greys, nordics and reptoids, astral bodies, karma (and I would say a fair bit of imagination, too); sorry, but I'm not swallowing it, and I don't think many of the other delegates in Sheffield did.

You are curious to know what I am doing editing a UFO journal; well, I'm interested in UFOs and I think that we (NUFORI and all the Strange Daze contributors) have something worthwhile to say on the subject. I don't see why editing a UFO magazine means that I should have to swallow hook, line and sinker every bit of new age claptrap that happens my way.

Moving on to Whitley's film footage, my first impression was that the camcorders had captured some strange looking, but essentially normal, phenomena. I haven't had chance to see the footage since, so I have not been able to scrutinise it. In fact, the footage hardly seems to have set the world on fire - as I haven't seen it again since the conference, I suspect that what was captured probably has turned out to be entirely normal. In the first section of film, it looked to me initially as though the camcorder was looking at flies, moving in the hot air above the house. The thermal layers above the roof would cause the sun's light to refract in odd ways. In the second section, a mile long aircraft would definitely be unusual! Where were the U.S.A.F. jets, pursuing it? Where are all the other witnesses who must have seen it? If not an artifact of the lens, I suggest that the object is much nearer and smaller.

Just because I don't have a 100% solid explanation, do I really have to conclude that we saw a mile long spaceship? If erring on the side of caution is "apathetic", I would much rather be apathetic than credulous.



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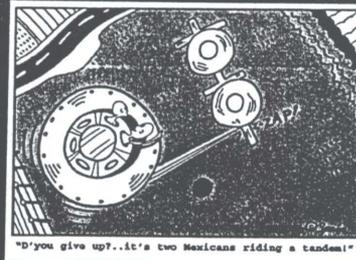
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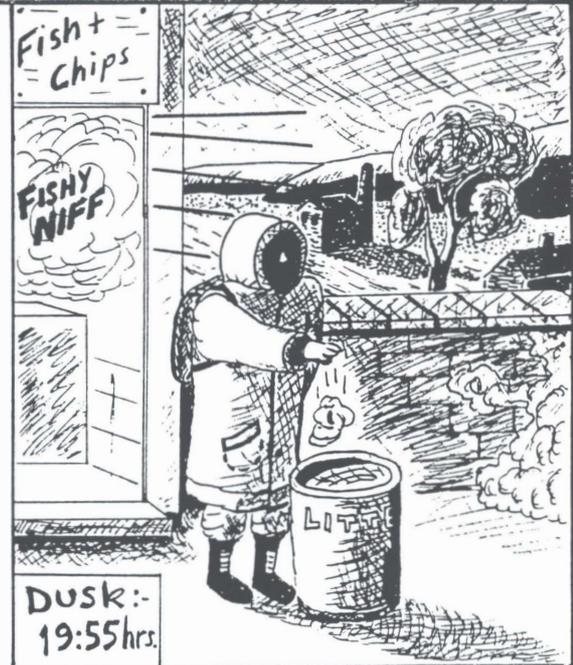
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Hector Humphries in:- **Heck's Files.** * Mik* 1996 ©

Hector, a mild
mannered
Yorkshireman,
was in
Cleckhuddersfax,
for a night of
'Skywatching.'



The intrepid
investigator
on the move,

starts to
remember
recent
cases...

Oops!!!



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