

'At the going down of the sun and in the morning
we will remember'

STRANGE DAZE

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RIDERS ON ELECTRIC WINDS
DESIGNING THE FUTURE- NASA
UFOs - THE MEXICAN WAVE
UP CLOSE & PERSONAL
(WITH ANDY ROBERTS)
UNKNOWN WORLDS

Issue 21-Autumn

Lest we forget.....

Sixty years after the Battle of Britain was fought, this issue of *Strange Daze* is dedicated to
‘The Few’

They shall not grow old, as we who are left grow old
Age shall not weary them
Nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun
And in the morning
We will remember....

EDITORIAL
Gloria Heather Dixon

To begin this editorial I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the *Strange Daze* editorial team, consultants, and writers. Without all of you, SD would be impossible. In particular I would like to express my sincere thanks to Bill Rose for his continued support and extensive contributions to *Strange Daze*. My very special thanks go to Paul Cabby, for his work and role in the cover design and layout of SD, as well as taking on our web-site, so watch for some interesting updates and changes. I would also like to extend my thanks and appreciation to Kate Taylor, who has now left the editorial team of SD and her role as webmaster for the SD site. We shall miss her and on behalf of SD I would like to wish her every success in her continued ventures.

Last, but never least, we would like to express our thanks to all of you, our readers, and especially those, who have taken the time to contact us with their thoughts and comments. We hope that all of you will enjoy this extended issue.

This issue carries articles at the cutting edge of science in addition to articles on UFOs, earth mysteries and poltergeists culminating in a controversial and challenging interview with that master of straight talking, Andy Roberts, entertaining us and discussing his views on this strange universe and its even stranger inhabitants. In his interview Andy displays a real working knowledge of the role of nature combined with the human consciousness and how this creates a dynamic effect on our interpretations of some extraordinary experiences. He gave a great insight into this effect with his *Big Grey Man* article (SD issues 17/18) and also reinforces this with some of his comments in his interview in this issue

Whilst on holiday last month in the middle of a forest, all of this gave me some room for thought. Once

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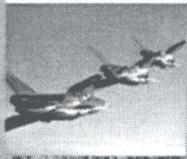


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RIDERS ON ELECT

Bill Rose

One hundred years ago, H.G. Wells invented a fictitious gravity masking material called "Cavorite" which appeared in his novel "The First Men in the Moon." Today, anti-gravity is perceived as an invisible force regulated by electronics that can be turned on and off at will. Although the idea of controlling gravity remains a science fiction concept, the Americans and (to a lesser extent) several other advanced nations have spent small fortunes on secret research.

Let me add that this is documented fact and not speculation on my part.

As a result, many conspiracy theorists now believe that this costly research has yielded results and a basic form of anti-gravity and some related propulsion technologies are already in use by America's military. Technical advances of this nature are likely to provide a powerful secret edge, which the Pentagon will hope to keep hidden for as long as possible. It is also apparent that the introduction of any new clean and economic propulsion technology will be strongly resisted by multinationals who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. So, for these and perhaps a dozen other reasons,



Thomas Townsend Brown (1905-1985)

we are unlikely to see anything new unveiled for many decades to come.

HIGH CAPACITANCE

Thomas Townsend Brown (1905-1985) was born into a prominent Zanesville, Ohio family. By the time he became a teenager, the precocious Townsend Brown had developed a fascination for electrical engineering and was conducting all manner of small-scale experiments. After joining Denison University in 1923, Townsend Brown attracted the attention of Professor Paul Alfred Biefeld who had studied physics alongside Einstein in Switzerland. Townsend Brown was soon undertaking research into the behaviour of capacitors, convinced that they generated a new unexplained force.

With Biefeld's help, Townsend Brown developed a complex theory, which suggested that the electrostatic charge between the two plates of a capacitor produced a small gravitational field. They finally decided to call this the "Biefeld-Brown Effect" and Townsend Brown spent the remainder of the 1920s studying it. In 1930, Townsend Brown joined the US Navy and by the start of World War Two, he was engaged in advanced minesweeping research with a staff of highly qualified scientists working for him. His name has often been linked to the notorious 1943 Philadelphia Experiment, which allegedly concerned radar invisibility. The US Navy has always insisted that the Philadelphia Experiment never took place, but Townsend Brown is said to have confirmed its existence on two separate occasions just before his death. In 1944, after suffering a mental breakdown, Townsend Brown left the Navy and was recruited by Lockheed's Skunk Works to undertake radar development.

When the war ended, Townsend Brown established his own laboratory and returned to full time research of "electrogravitics." By the early 1950s, he was able to fly small tethered model discs using nothing more than field effect propulsion. Although these demonstrations were clearly impressive, some scientists suggested the models were propelled by the pressure of negative ions hitting the positive electrode rather than the actual generation of a gravity wave. As a consequence, the phenomena was christened

RIC WINDS



"Electric Wind," which prompted Townsend Brown and his fellow researcher Dr Mason Rose to conduct further experiments inside a vacuum chamber which seemed to conclusively prove that more was taking place than just ionic airflow.

In 1953, Townsend Brown finally secured the USAF's attention and put on a demonstration for senior Pentagon officers. He used a 3 feet diameter model disc attached to a 50 feet diameter test rig and the leading edge of his model was charged to 150,000 volts. Once in flight, the model rapidly accelerated to a speed of several hundred miles per hour. The small disc silently whirled around the test area, surrounded by a faintly perceptible blue-violet glow, which some observers described as rather eerie. The USAF brass were so impressed that the subject was immediately classified as "Top Secret" and most aspects of this work would remain under tight wraps until 1990, when USAF document 13-1-00034-5879 was released.

In the meantime, Townsend Brown began to develop a set of plans for an anti-gravity combat aircraft called Project Winterhaven.

PROJECT WINTERHAVEN

Townsend Brown's Winterhaven aircraft would use an electrostatic field generation propulsion system supported by conventional turbojets. Once it became airborne, the leading edge would be positively charged to several million volts, while the exhaust flow became negatively charged to the same value. This would (in theory) create a substantial gravity wave for the vehicle to ride on and Townsend Brown considered the disc shape ideal, because it made a large smooth dielectric area possible. The aircraft's primary turbojet

propulsion would now be operating in "flame jet generation" mode, running relatively cool and forming a component of the electrogravitic system. Engine thrust would no longer be responsible for pushing the aircraft forward and the relatively small fuel consumption was expected to provide intercontinental range.

At the same time, the engine's infrared signature would virtually disappear, along with a reduction or perhaps totally elimination of contrails. As the positively charged ion field softened the boundary layer, the aircraft could easily push through the supersonic barrier, reducing the effects of turbulence and virtually eliminating a sonic boom. Townsend Brown predicted very high levels of performance for his Winterhaven design, suggesting it would be capable of three and a half times the speed of sound, with a ceiling in excess of 100,000 feet.

Although this system wasn't a full-blown sci-fi style anti-gravity drive, it promised to be a massive step forward in aircraft propulsion technology.

As a consequence, the USAF began to draw up plans for the long term funding of Project Winterhaven in November 1954 and they issued a string of secret research contracts to aerospace specialists. These companies included Martin, Convair, Sperry Rand, Sikorsky, Lear, Douglas, Lockheed, Bell Aircraft, Hiller and Clark Electronics. Other contractors who started their own private research programmes were, Boeing, Curtiss-Wright and North American.

Although outside their normal area of interest, AT&T assigned scientists to electrogravitic

Almost immediately, the USAF took steps to close the leak, issuing stern warnings to all scientists and engineers employed on classified aerospace projects. Of course, the cat was now out of the bag.

research, which appears to have been secretly funded by the Pentagon. In addition, several major scientific institutions undertook USAF sponsored electrogravitic research and these were M.I.T, Princeton and the CalTech Radiation Laboratory. At long last, Townsend Brown had managed to create real interest in his cranky ideas and everyone was taking the subject very seriously. Initial hopes for electrogravitics and Project Winterhaven were very optimistic, but progress began to slow towards the end of 1955.

By spring of the following year, there were predictions that the effort to develop anti-gravity propulsion would probably surpass the Manhattan Project, (the first atomic bomb) in terms of scale and cost. This opinion soon became the official line and electrogravitics began to fade into the background as funding was scaled down. Townsend Brown continued to conduct electrogravitic research and founded the UFO research organisation NICAP in October 1956, but little more was heard of him or Project Winterhaven until the 1990s.

Recent documents have shown that the US was not the only country to investigate the "Biefeld-Brown Effect" and during mid-1950s, British scientists conducted electrogravitic research. A French organisation went one step further and employed Townsend Brown as their consultant, although the project came to an abrupt halt when a company merger took place and Townsend Brown walked away from the programme in total disgust. It also seems probable that the Soviets undertook electrogravitic research during the 1950s. No details of this work have surfaced, but there were suggestions that Russian scientists tested field effect technology on a MiG-29 fighter during the 1990s.

Astonishingly, a very technical report on electrogravitics surfaced in December 1956, which was written by two highly respected British scientists called Richard Worcester and John Longbent. Their paper entitled "The Gravitics Situation" indicated real substance to Project Winterhaven, although this analysis never reached any aviation journals or the wider media at that time.

A MOVE SIDWAYS?

From the beginning of World War Two, America's military began to take an interest in 5 disc shaped aircraft, which promised VTOL or

STOL, (vertical/short take off and landing) combined with high-speed performance. The US Navy came first with its circular winged Flying Flapjacks built by Vought and these prototypes seem to have spawned a series of more advanced secret concepts, intended for carrier based operations. During the early 1950s, virtually every major US aviation company was looking at the idea of building a military discplane, although the biggest USAF programme was undertaken by a foreign contractor called Avro-Canada based near Toronto.

Details of this research continue to emerge, but the main unanswered question is whether any of Avro-Canada's jet powered flying saucers actually flew. Rather curiously, Avro-Canada's secret research programme to build a Mach 4 disc shaped interceptor called Project 1794 came to an abrupt unexplained halt in 1957. The prototype P.1794 had almost been completed and tethered test flights were about to begin when it disappeared from the Malton test site. Perhaps the USAF simply decided that P.1794 was expensive dead end technology and dropped the programme, although this seems unlikely because Avro-Canada continued to work on a less promising discplane concept. Alternatively, the development of P.1794 may have been switched to a American contractor as a result of political pressure, with the prototype being completed and flight tested in the U.S.

It is also conceivable that something far superior came along, which literally made P.1794 obsolete overnight.

Intriguingly, Avro-Canada's parent company in Manchester, England (Avro UK) is now believed to have conducted electrogravitic research during the mid-1950s and test rigs were built in collaboration with the National Physical Research Laboratory, supported by Ministry of Supply funding. This lends weight to the possibility that Avro UK scientists envisaged electrogravitic craft as the logical follow-on to Avro-Canada's flying disc programme. Most the advanced Avro-Canada discplanes used very exotic gas turbine engines which were inseparable from the airframe and it is interesting to see that the Winterhaven airframe was described as "indivisible from the engine."

Conceivably, the P.1794 prototype was used to develop a more advanced aircraft, which employed electrogravitic propulsion and this led to a secret test programme, which has continued to the present day. Testing would have been undertaken at a remote location such as Groom or Pappoose Dry Lake, Nevada and it is just possible that this technology is now being used in at least one USAF combat aircraft.

OPERATIONAL ELECTROGRAVITICS

On March 9 1992, the well-respected technical publication "Aviation Week & Space Technology" carried an article, which claimed that the Northrop-Grumman B-2A Spirit stealth bomber utilised a secondary electrostatic propulsion system. It was then suggested by other sources that this field effect system was pulsed at very high frequency, perhaps in the region of one million cycles per second, which seemed to indicate that Townsend Brown's electrogravitic concept was far from dead. The disclosure about the B-2A had apparently been passed to AW&ST magazine by a small group of disgruntled West Coast scientists who were concerned that work of this importance was being withheld by the government.

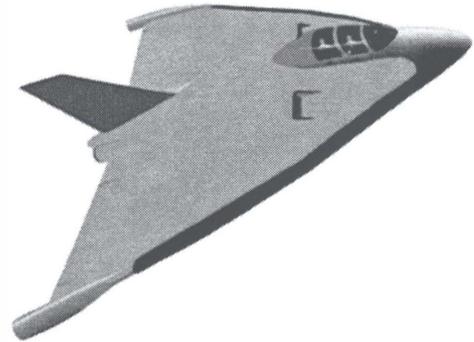
Almost immediately, the USAF took steps to close the leak, issuing stern warnings to all scientists and engineers employed on classified aerospace projects. Of course, the cat was now out of the bag.

Exactly when Northrop began to take an interest in the use of charged fields for aerodynamic shaping and propulsion remains unknown, because the company is not thought to have participated (to any extent) in the Project Winterhaven programme. However, recently discovered reports show that Northrop began to conduct studies of the "Biefeld-Brown Effect" on wind tunnel models in January 1968 and this might have been the time when it was discovered that a flying wing or triangular shape was a better configuration for electrogravitic propulsion than a disc.

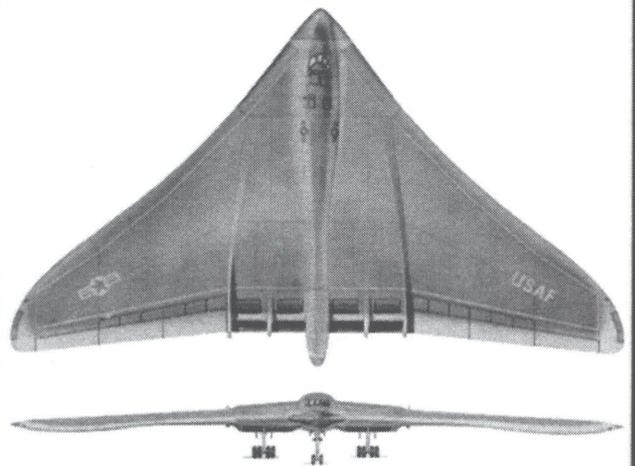
Whether any other major US contractors were undertaking this type of research during the late 1960s remains unknown, but the USAF's Flight Dynamics Laboratory at Wright-Patterson AFB were definitely engaged in field effect studies. By 1972, a semi secret USAF review called Project Outgrowth identified field effect propulsion as offering the greatest potential for a future system. If electrogravitics were a planned feature of the B-2A stealth bomber, this might go some way to explaining the aircraft's phenomenal development costs and its apparent shortcomings as a conventional military aircraft, which were highlighted by the aviation engineer Tony Gonsalves.

According to Dr Paul LaViolette who has written extensively on this issue, the B-2A's sharp leading edge is energised to about 15 million volts positive and the engine exhaust uses the same negative value. When this system is engaged, the B-2A's four General Electric F118 turbofans switch from providing propulsive thrust to acting as flame generators that operate at temperatures not much higher than the surrounding atmosphere. In electrogravitic mode, the B-2A (perceived as a subsonic aircraft) may become capable of supersonic speed, while retaining its stealthy qualities and producing little in terms of vapour trails. Many years ago, the USAF claimed that contrails could be prevented from forming behind the

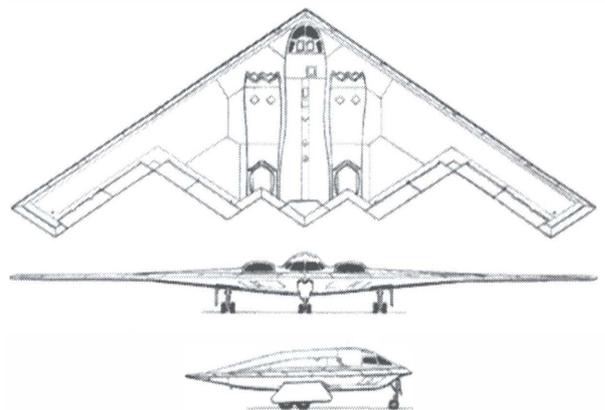
B-2A by injecting highly corrosive chlorofluorosulphonic acid into the exhaust stream. Then the USAF had a change of mind and said that contrail suppression was achieved by regulating the exhaust temperature. This



AVRO Electrogravitic Aircraft



An early B-2 Bomber concept



B-2A Bomber

suggestion was described as "nonsense," by the eminent aviation writer Bill Gunston in an article, which appeared in the January 2000 issue of "Air International." However, while discussing the possibility that electrogravitics might form part of the B-2A's propulsive system, Gunston went 6

on to point out that channels downstream of the jetpipes appeared to be fabricated from carbon fibre composite which seems inappropriate, because bonding agents shouldn't be able to withstand normal exhaust temperatures. The black surface coating on the B-2A is officially RAM (radar absorbing material) but it has been suggested that this is actually some kind of ceramic based super dielectric material which allows the generation of a sizeable gravity wave.

It is also possible that once the electrogravitic system becomes operational, it may be possible to change direction and steer the aircraft by varying the electrical charge. Supporters of this exotic technology mention the many convincing demonstrations given by Townsend Brown and the fact that most of the big US defence contractors were working on the "Biefeld-Brown Effect" before this research disappeared from sight. On the other hand, sceptics point to the major problem of generating sufficient electrical power to make such a system viable. They also express concern about the effects of very high voltages on avionics, radar and perhaps crewmembers.

Another potential concern is flashover or arcing and it is a fact that the build-up of static electricity in aircraft through friction represented a serious problem until static dischargers were fitted. Many of these sceptics now believe that Townsend Brown simply demonstrated an elementary form of ionic propulsion and the vacuum chamber tests, which followed, were inconclusive. There are certainly many similarities between electrogravitics and ionic propulsion which is another closely related technology that may have been fully developed within the black projects domain.

THOSE ELUSIVE BLACK TRIANGLES

By the mid 1950s, triangular aircraft had started to appear in British skies. These were not specialised delta winged prototypes; they were the RAF's front line Gloster Javelin fighter and Avro Vulcan bomber. Although the Javelin and Vulcan were not entirely triangular, they were closer to the pure delta shape than any other (past or present) production aircraft and the Vulcan remained in service until the early 1980s, when it was used operationally during the Falklands War.

To an untrained observer, a Javelin or Vulcan at altitude might appear to be a perfect black flying triangle, although it seems curious that so few triangular shaped UFOs were reported when RAF pilots were flying delta winged aircraft.

7 However, since the end of the 1980s, there

has been a steady increase in reports of unidentified triangular objects above Northern Europe and North America. This suggests that either the triangular shape was adopted by aliens for their atmospheric vehicles, or an entirely new class of secret aircraft have been undergoing trials.

These largely nocturnal triangles are regularly described as featureless, apart from the occasional use of navigation lights and they are silent in flight. Sometimes, a faint blue electric glow or discharge has been reported surrounding them, which may be a direct indication of their unusual propulsive systems.

The size of triangular UFOs is regularly reported as anything between 100 to 1000 feet in width, although trained observers are aware that it is impossible to make accurate estimates of dimensions without any points of reference and nearly all claims regarding size must be treated with great caution. On the other hand, highly advanced techniques are not required to build 1000 feet long LTA (Lighter Than Air) vehicle and the pre-war hydrogen filled German Hindenberg airship was 814 feet in length, 135 feet in diameter and supported by nothing more exotic than 14 miles of aluminium.

The real problem for anyone secretly operating a very big LTA vehicle lies with handling and storage on the ground, which is bound to generate some formidable concealment challenges.

Beginning in the 1970s, Lockheed investigated the idea of building very large remotely piloted LTA (lighter than air) vehicles fabricated from Kevlar, with dimensions in excess of 500 feet. One design called Hi-Spot (High Altitude Surveillance Platform) was intended to remain on station at an altitude of 70-80,000 feet for 100 days, using a small hydrogen fuelled engine to make positional changes. Like many unusual military research programmes, these Lockheed studies faded away, which may indicate that they continued in the black domain.

Intriguingly, there have been numerous sightings of large triangular and boomerang shaped UFOs in Georgia and these reports have led to speculation within MUFON that secret LTA craft are being tested at Lockheed-Martin's Marietta facility.

Effectively supporting the idea that Britain's MoD (Ministry of Defence) has something interesting to hide is Nick Pope who previously ran the MoD's SEC(AS)2a desk. He has supplemented his civil service income nicely with MoD approved books that suggest these mysterious black triangles have no earthly origin and must come from outer space. Pope's claims were welcomed and accepted by a general public who had been suitably hyped by TV shows like the "X-Files" and were ready to believe in anything that suggested extraterrestrial visitation. However, there is a growing belief amongst serious ufologists that Pope fronted a cleverly orchestrated programme of disinformation intended to divert attention away from a substantial

black budget aviation programme. Although the "true believers in all things alien" continue to accept Pope's assertions, it should be remembered that he was, and still is an official employed by one of the world's most secretive organisations, who's employees are all bound by Britain's repressive Official Secrets Act.

During 1997, (not recently, as claimed by several UFO publications) a story appeared in America, which indicated that a media clampdown had taken place within the UK and this had been endorsed by a former BBC producer who worked on a popular science programme. He is alleged to have told a UFO group that the BBC had been "heavily D-Noticed" by the MoD in respect of the flying triangle issue. Apparently, MoD officials advised senior BBC staff that black triangles were part of a highly sensitive military programme and no reports concerning them should be broadcast by the Corporation.

While there is no way of confirming this, I cannot recall one BBC programme, which has dealt with the issue of mystery triangles or black project aircraft during the last ten years.

NIGHT STALKERS

If there are a handful of experimental LTA craft undergoing trials on either side of the Atlantic, they are probably designed to undertake a variety of fairly obvious tasks. Applications for such craft would be surveillance, electronic eavesdropping and data relay. They would also be useful as high altitude air defence radar platforms capable of carrying a large fully enclosed antenna. Linked to a ground site this might form part of a bi-static radar system, specifically designed to detect stealth aircraft like Russia's new top secret Sukhoi T-60S supercruise bomber. As a substitute for an AWAC (Airborne Warning and Control System) aircraft, LTA platforms could remain on station for much longer periods of time, perhaps functioning as automated unmanned craft. Some informed sources have suggested that two operational LTA platforms could eventually take over the RAF's air defence system for the entire British Isles and they would be significantly more capable than existing ground based systems.

In terms of cost effectiveness, a suitable LTA platform might win hands down against high cost AWAC or JSTARS (ground surveillance radar system) aircraft, or exotic intelligence gathering satellites placed in geostationary orbit. Using passive sensors and/or laser radar, an LTA platform operating at very high altitude above a combat zone would be hard to detect. At an altitude of 150-200,000 feet a LTA craft would be almost invulnerable to existing conventional weapons and equipped with infrared detectors, it might be able to track the distant heat signatures of tactical ballistic missiles during their boost phase. Such an LTA craft might eventually carry a directed energy weapon capable of

destroying missiles in flight, or hostile aircraft in a "no fly" zone, although such a system would have the potential for some very sinister alternative applications.

Exactly who is building the craft seen above the UK is unknown and while BAe Systems (formerly BAe) might appear to be the obvious candidate, there is nothing of any substance which links them to a R&D programme of this nature. Of course, BAe Systems (who are currently re-examining field effect propulsion under a programme called Project Greenglow) might be up to their neck in just such a venture, but it is just as likely that an American defence contractor based in the UK is responsible.

MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU

So what form of propulsion might be used for these mystery triangles? Assuming there are exotic LTA vehicles undergoing trials, they may be equipped with conventional gas turbines for propulsion and to power their electronic systems. On the other hand, they may use something called ionic airflow propulsion, which has much in common with Townsend Brown's electrogravitic proposals and promises major gains over conventional technologies. Ionic airflow propulsion may also be responsible for the triangular shape of these secret LTA vehicles. Silent in operation and entirely powered by electricity, the noticeable difference between an ionic field effect propulsion and the electrogravitic system suggested for the B-2A, appears to be the absence of turbojets as flame generators to electrostatically charge an exhaust stream.

Ionic propulsion has been around for several decades and the first acknowledged inventor was Major Alexander P. De Seversky who filed a US patent in August 1959. By 1964, De Seversky was able to levitate and fly a small remote controlled model aircraft that apparently looked rather like a kite made of wire mesh. Operating along similar lines to Townsend Brown's experiments, a high voltage was used to produce a negative ion field surrounding the model, which pulled the surrounding air along its flow path, although De Seversky made no claims concerning gravity waves. Electronatom Inc, the New York company representing De Seversky, had high hopes for future developments, but a lack of investment appears to have brought the project to a halt within a year or two the company had disappeared without a trace. Nevertheless, some of the larger aerospace contractors were already working on similar field effect propulsion programmes, although little information about

this has ever reached the public domain.

The upper performance limits of a full sized vehicle are unknown, but there have been suggestions that an ionically propelled LTA vehicle could easily achieve supersonic speeds and reach an altitude in excess of 200,000 feet. Such a vehicle, roughly the size of a B-1B bomber might use gas turbines to generate the necessary electrical energy, possibly supplemented by solar power. Another option for a fixed high altitude platform would be the transmission of microwave or laser energy along a line of sight. This concept was first studied by Raytheon during the early 1960s and it re-emerged during the 1990s as a proposed orbital power source for the Myrabo "Lightship" discussed shortly.

From the engineering viewpoint, a very large LTA vehicle is quite feasible and it has been suggested that the bigger the dielectric surface the greater the efficiency of the ionic flow system. The problem then becomes one of finding a suitable power supply and the only present option appears to be nuclear fission. Of course, the use of nuclear energy in any aircraft raises major environmental issues and for this reason alone, this technology would remain permanently secret, barring any accidents. In addition, a nuclear powered LTA platform would be very attractive to the military because there would be readily available megawatt levels of electricity to support high powered radar or directed energy weapons. In fact, an unmanned vehicle is the more attractive option, because it would be possible to reduce bulky radiation shielding to a minimum.

A LTA craft propelled by a field effect system would be steered by applying different voltages to various parts of the aircraft and a selective boost in voltage would lift or turn that particular area of the craft. By switching polarity around the periphery of the vehicle, it would be possible to manoeuvre through three dimensions with relative ease. A computer with GPS access could hold a precise position at high altitude, probably with the same accuracy as a geosynchronous satellite which needs occasional thruster correction to counteract drift.

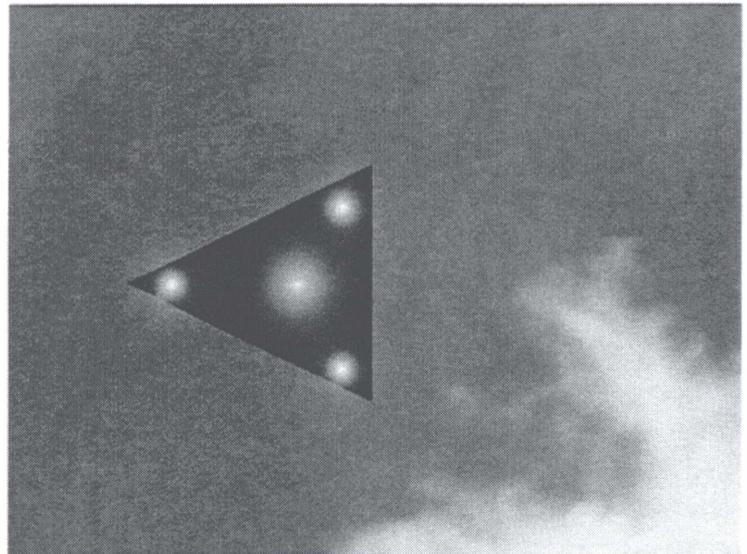
Many factors concerning the design of an exotic LTA vehicle can only be guessed and there appears to be no easy way to determine size in relation to lift gas for the payload and altitude

requirements. Having said that, a vehicle with a 500 ft span does seem to be favoured size for the high altitude AWACs role. Operating as an unmanned high altitude battlefield reconnaissance vehicle, the size would be substantially smaller, although dimensions may be totally dependant on the power plant and dielectric area.

LIGHTSHIPS

A third very exotic form of propulsion for possible use with a LTA design is Magnetohydrodynamics (MHD) which has been under development since 1959. A form of MHD has already been demonstrated in the marine environment and continues to be secretly tested as advanced silent submarine propulsion. The MHD system accelerates airflow around the vehicle and relies on Lorentz forces to produce thrust. Aviation applications present specific problems, because the low conductivity of atmospheric gases probably makes seeding necessary. There are also issues concerning very high temperatures and the need for powerful magnetic containment.

A further development of this technology is the magnetoplasmadynamic (MPD) engine under development by NASA for deep space applications. MPD works on much the same principle as MHD, but utilises argon, hydrogen or lithium as a propellant. MHD propulsion is currently being studied in several US laboratories and the leading figure in this field is Professor Leik Myrabo of New York's Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, who is undertaking USAF and NASA funded research. Myrabo has drawn up plans for a MHD propelled spacecraft he calls the "Lightship," which has no internal power source and



In the case of the mysterious black triangles, the sheer number of reliable sightings suggests these are real experimental aircraft operated by the USAF and US Navy in America and by the RAF or possibly the British Army in UK airspace.

would take its energy from a series of orbital powersats that are used to illuminate each vehicle in a tight 10 billion-watt microwave beam. Antennas (called rectennas) within the craft focus this energy around the vehicle's rim, turning the air below the vehicle into plasma that is regulated and shaped by superconducting magnets encircling the craft.

In this mode, the craft would be capable of supersonic flight, (up to about Mach 3) but could be accelerated to hypersonic velocity by using part of the supplied microwave energy to literally cut a forward path through the atmosphere. To do this a tight microwave or laser beam described as an "air spike" is directed to a precise point just ahead of the vehicle. Surface heating would be dramatically reduced as the airflow formed a shock wave just beyond the vehicle, propelling it to a speed of Mach 25 and providing a low orbit capability.

Of course, there are no orbital platforms capable of beaming down billions of watts of microwave energy and the massive cost of establishing such a system, let alone its potential use as a weapon system pushes the idea into another era. However, it seems clear MHD and the air spike are being developed in the black domain and may have some future military

DELTA DELIBERATIONS

applications.

The triangular shaped aircraft would appear to have come a long way since the German aerodynamicist Dr Alexander Lippisch, coined the descriptive term "delta" in the early 1930s, which he took from the three sided Greek letter. A pure delta offers substantial internal capacity; high lift and the shape may be optimal for field effect propulsion. While the B-2A Spirit stealth bomber is a low aspect ratio flying wing, all the original designs for the ATB (Advanced Technology bomber) were triangular which may have been linked to early field effect propulsion studies.

In the case of the mysterious black triangles, the sheer number of reliable sightings suggests these are real experimental aircraft operated by the USAF and US Navy in America and by the RAF or possibly the British Army in UK airspace.

The various field effect propulsion technologies I've discussed are some way removed from a sci-fi inertia less drive, but there have been hints that this may also be a possibility.

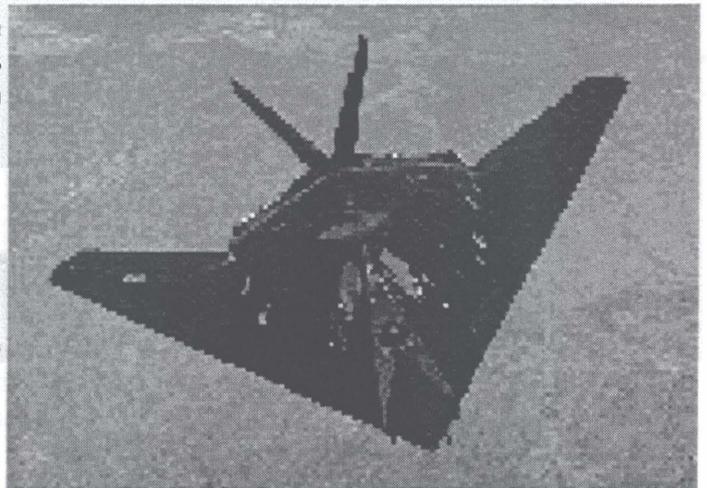
MASKING GRAVITY

While the introduction of basic electrogravitics would have a very significant impact on the world, it would be nothing in comparison to a fully-fledged anti-gravity system. An ability to levitate objects would revolutionize power production, transport, the

assembly of large structures and a thousand other civil uses. Anti-Gravity would provide the means for low cost "airline style" trips to the Moon and make space elevators or perhaps even interstellar flight a reality.

During the last century, many inventors claimed to have built anti-gravity machines, but none were satisfactorily demonstrated and there is no reason to believe that any actually worked. That said, some of the recent experiments carried out in laboratories around the world have hinted at just such a possibility.

In 1996, a Russian scientist called Eugene Podkletnov who was based at the Tampere University in Finland wrote a paper for the rather obscure academic publication, "British Journal of Physics-D." He claimed to have discovered a way to shield objects from the force of gravity. The story was then picked up by the "Sunday Telegraph's" science writer



Robert Matthews and it appeared in print on September 1 1996.

Apparently, Dr Podkletnov was working in his lab on a superconductor experiment in 1993, when someone entered who was smoking a pipe. It was noticed by chance, that the smoke rose in a column above the ceramic superconducting disc that was under test, so Podkletnov placed a tiny spherical magnet attached to a balance above the experiment and it started to behave oddly. He replaced the magnet with a silicon object which continued to move strangely and this led to the discovery that anything placed above the disc lost weight. Further investigation revealed that the effect could be increased by rotating the disc and there was a measurable reduction in air pressure above the experiment which was present on all the overhead floors. Eventually, the team determined that the weight loss was around 2 percent, which doesn't sound great, but is highly significant.

At about the same time, NASA's Marshall Space flight Center decided to fund a series of experiments based on papers written by physicists Ning Li and Douglas Torr at the University of Alabama. They had predicted that gravity might be affected by superconductors that acted like giant "quantum objects" and both scientists felt that Dr Podkletnov's work at Tampere seemed to confirm this. A flurry of interest followed the announcement that NASA was also undertaking anti-gravity research and students in Sheffield and Toronto were reported to have duplicated the work at Tampere. However, events took a strange turn when Dr Podkletnov withdrew his paper before publication and Tampere University asked him to leave. It seemed that the university wanted to distance themselves from the whole affair and feared that Podkletnov had brought them into discredit with his weird fringe science experiments. Dr Podkletnov then accepted a job with a Finnish company as a materials scientist, but in 1998, he was invited to discuss his work with NASA scientists and was flown to the Marshall Space flight Center.

At the present time, NASA officials are saying that their scientists have been unable to reproduce Podkletnov's experiment, despite building bigger and better superconducting discs. Of course, this does raise the question of whether NASA has been pressurised into backing off anti-gravity research. As for Dr Podkletnov, he has now returned to Tampere University and is continuing with his superconductor research.

Over the years, there have been hints from official sources that America has a number of mind boggling scientific technologies, which remain hidden from the public. The ability to fully shield objects from the effects of gravity may be one of them, albeit in a slightly different manner to the way H.G Wells envisaged a century ago.

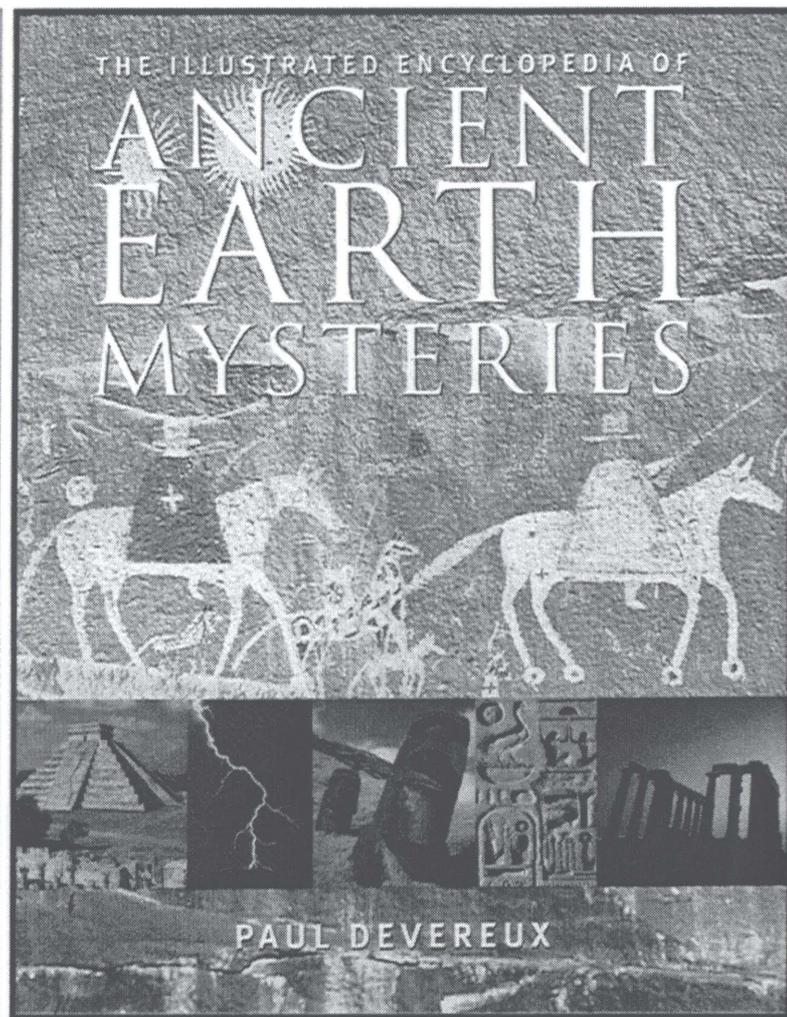


BILL ROSE

Is Associate Editor & consultant to *Strange Daze*.

He holds a B.A in Economics & contributes to many technical journals. Bill's long term interests lie in Astronomy, Space Flight, military aviation & the UFO phenomenon.

Despite all this, he still finds the time to be a remarkably decent chap.



THE ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ANCIENT EARTH MYSTERIES PAUL DEVEREUX

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UK: £18.99

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"The end of a millennium is a particularly good time to look back over the preceding millennia, to take stock of our understanding of the human adventure. Conceptual stock taking is no different from any other kind; it is a process that requires the discarding of what is no longer of use and the re-ordering of what is."

tales from

the Arabian Night



**REPORT ON AN ENCOUNTER WITH ANOMALOUS AERIAL
PHENOMENON— MUSCAT AND OMAN 1963**

Flight Lieutenant Mike Hall, RAF

**TRANSMIT....REPORT ON AN ENCOUNTER WITH ANOMALOUS AERIAL PHENOMENON
IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF MUSCAT AND OMAN (NOW THE SULTANATE OF OMAN)
1963.**

Initial Observer: Flight Lieutenant Mike Hall, RAF Pilot

Witnesses: Mr Arthur Read, Department of Defence & Another RAE Pilot of the Sultan's Air Force

Time of incident: Approximately 0130 hours (local time)

Place: The Coastal Plain of Qurayat, situated 50 miles South East of Muscat

Position (approx): Latitude 58 Deg. 30 Min. East; Longitude 22 Deg. 40 Min. North
(30 Miles south Tropic of Cancer)

Prevailing weather conditions: Clear skies and no haze....END TRANSMIT.

Enter

This report is compiled in the light of the fact that Flying Saucers were not generally front page news in 1963, certainly with regard to the remote areas of South East Arabia. Despite the fact that the Roswell, New Mexico incident had taken place in 1947, from a personal point of view, having been in the service since 1951. I was unaware of it.

Up to the time of this incident, I had never heard of any unusual aerial incidents being discussed in my sphere of air force service, which, immediately prior to this tour, had been in the main, the fighter world of the 2nd Tactical Air Force, Germany and administration on a Norfolk base connected with the introduction of the Lightning fighter into service in the early 60s.

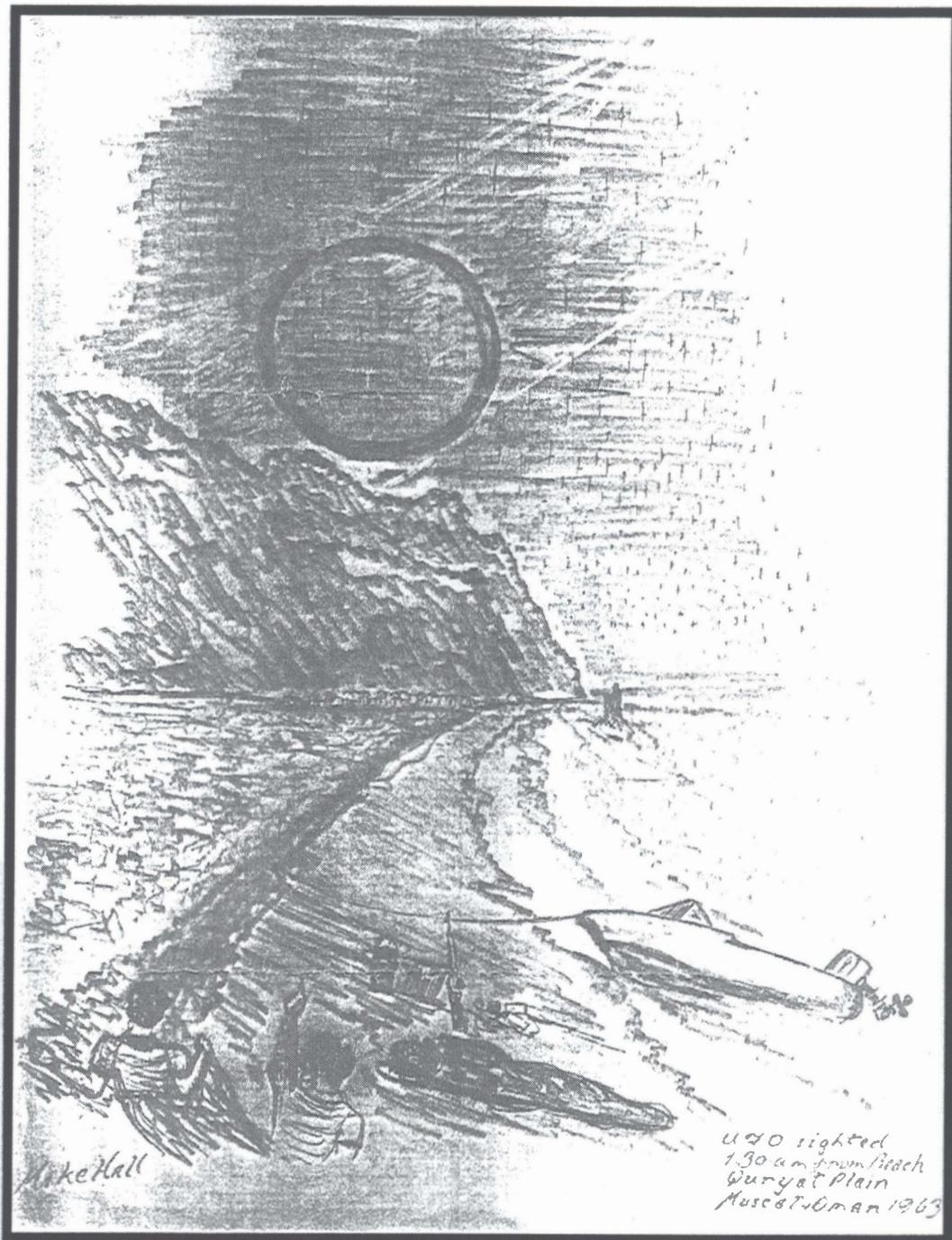
Subsequently, I was flying helicopters from a base connected to the Headquarters units in and around London at the time of the alleged Lightning incident over the North Sea, near Humberside that was subject of a report in Flying Saucer Review some years later. If indeed that incident ever took place and HQ were aware of it, no details came to light in general service circles at the time as far as I am aware (I have spoken, albeit briefly, with a representative of the MoD desk responsible for collation of information on the UFO enigma and have heard an "official" version of this incident. and I have my own opinions as to what may have occurred).

Several days prior to the night of the subject of this report, whilst taking part in a low level

fighter "recce". down the east coast of Arabia from the capitol of Muscat to Ras al Hadd, near the town of Sur at the southern extremity, the flight of four aircraft had spotted the wreck of a small cargo vessel aground on rocks north west of Sur. There were signs of a fire and no lifeboats and the davit lines were fully extended. Having satisfied ourselves that the hulk was abandoned we returned to base and reported the vessel to Lloyds. Spares for the armed forces yacht club were not easy to obtain so it was decided that a small party of off-duty members should run the ski boat down to the site and attempt to salvage suitable gear from the vessel. Myself, Arthur Read and one of my fellow officers volunteered for the trip. Unfortunately, the weight of additional fuel on board prevented the boat from reaching a practical speed for the distance we had to travel. We realised that not only would we not reach the vessel in daylight, but our point of no return was severely reduced by the extra fuel load. The sea was rising and it was perilously close to night, so we elected to beach the boat, bivouac for the night on the beach adjacent to the coastal plain and return to Muscat the following day. The landfall site was about five miles south of the small Arab city of Qurayat and since we were in potentially hostile territory in which we were required to have permission for entry euphemistically called a "blood chit", it was decided to set up a watch system throughout the night and maintain a low profile.

I had the first watch by the time we had settled for the night it was about 2100 hours local time. We had watched the sun set around 1800 hours and my two friends retired to their sleeping bags. Beyond the beach, several miles inland, lay the highest peaks (ca 4 to 6000 feet) of the crescent of mountains which

I watched the moon set behind the mountains until even its after glow disappeared. Then the night sky gleamed with all the beauty of a truly Arabian night: black velvet studded with glittering diamonds!



of the horizon I became aware of the fact that there was no sign of any other cloud formation the night was still crystal clear.

I looked back at the object that had attracted my attention and, as my eyes began to focus fully and encompass the background stars, I realised that I could still see them through the centre. I was in fact looking at an enormous circle hovering above the ridge. As my eyes became accustomed to viewing it, I realised that because of the effect of starshine I was looking at an object somewhat darker than the background. It was not showing lights (indeed it did not cross my mind at the time that perhaps it should!). It was also soundless and since I didn't really believe what I was seeing, I awoke my two friends separately and asked each in turn whether they could see anything above the horizon up the coast. Both made more or less the same observation, "Yes! There's a bloody great circle in the sky!"

Yes! There's a bloody great circle in the sky!"

enclosed the desert plain. At the extremities of the beach, some ten miles long these mountains descended like the horns of a bull right down to the water's edge. I watched the moon set behind the mountains until even its after glow disappeared. Then the night sky gleamed with all the beauty of a truly Arabian night black velvet studded with glittering diamonds! It was too spectacular a night to waste in sleep, so I sat and "surveyed the regions of space.

Some time after midnight (ca 0130 hours local), I became aware of a blemish lying over the ridge above the old Arab city up to the north west, at first I thought it to be cloud forming, but as I swept the rest

I estimated that it was hovering fifty to a hundred

feet above the ridge and its apparent diameter was several hundred feet!! It was a perfect amorphous ring in the night sky rather like an enormous smoke ring. The photo copy is much too definitive and too contrasty).

We stood, watching it for several minutes, conjecturing as to what might be the cause of the phenomenon.. The subject of mirages came up, but that possibility appeared to be ruled out by the lateness of the hour the sun had long since set. In any event this was completely ruled out when to our astonishment the object suddenly started to move and climbed swiftly and silently from left to right to the zenith before fading abruptly from sight. There was no

accompanying noise and the object did not appear to reduce in size (I now consider that the object faded, not at the zenith as at first I thought, but after climbing to a moderate altitude. Otherwise I am unable to account for the lack of reduction in the size of the circle). We settled down for the night and the incident was largely forgotten. Not until some time later did I give it any thought and I drew a sketch of the incident and filed it away.

Eventually, long after I returned to UK and became interested in the UFO phenomenon, I hauled it out and gave it some thought. I came to the conclusion that what we three had witnessed that night was a force field surrounding an object at the centre of the circle. Had we realised it at the time we might have observed it, but given the conditions and the fact that we were concentrating on watching the circle, it never occurred to us to "see" it. It is my belief that an abrupt change of temperature (an inversion), itself created by the field, caused it to condense out and become visible. There was no accompanying noise registered and no lights. There was no indication of acceleration the object simply started to move swiftly and I now believe that it probably "disappeared" when the force field temperature inversion (or possibly magnetic effect?) dissipated. This could have been caused by the height increase taking it out of the humidity layer generated by the surf on the shore or simply by a change of field strength. The speed was not excessive, but it was deliberate, i.e., It did not just appear to drift up. I can best clarify this by saying that it was not the sort of movement that might conceivably be generated by geometric shift of parameters connected with, for example, a mirage if indeed such a phenomenon can occur. As far as I am aware, having witnessed these in many places around the world, any perceived linear movement is generated only if the observer's position alters.

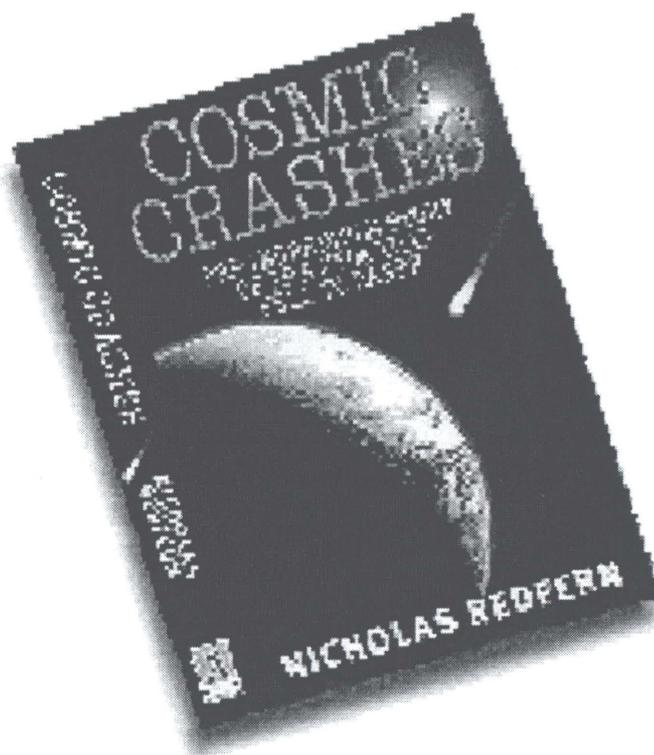
Since that time, I have seen three, possibly four, unexplained phenomena, one in Kent (Orange fireball cruising...[stopped car to verify] medium altitude), another in Afghanistan (Star change) and two in Thetford (high altitude stationery light not present following evening and twin moving lights), Norfolk. The last of these could have been Russian Mir, but it was being closely followed by another moving object, which could have been the repair capsule in the final stages of its rendezvous and docking sequence with the stricken Space-lab. Unfortunately there were no accompanying witnesses to any of these. They are documented in a separate report.

I emphasise all these sightings were seen from

ground level and the report is made from the standpoint of thirty years in aviation encompassing 6500 hours as a pilot of fighters and helicopters.

END

Flt Lt RAF (Retd) MIKE HALL



In **COSMIC CRASHES**, Nick Redfern breaks down the barriers of secrecy surrounding the ultimate UFO conspiracy..... In this in-depth and remarkable piece of detective work, Redfern shares his findings on key events in twentieth century UFO history: the crash of a UFO on British soil during the Second World War; alien autopsies undertaken by the British military in the 1960s; the recovery of a wrecked UFO by the British army in 1974; the dead alien creatures stored at a secret research facility; the deaths of a number of key figures in the worlds of politics and entertainment who got too close to the truth...

COSMIC CRASHES exposes the shocking truth about **UFO crash landings** in Britain, revealing the complex and often covert means by which this fascinating and frightening history has been suppressed.

AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK SEPT. 2000

See Issue 22 for full review

STRANGE DAZE is proud to present
our first poem, submitted by a teenage
reader.....

AN UNKNOWN WORLD

Motionless, no sound and lifeless.

Huge smooth shadowy plains dotted with
craters.

Only a handful of men have left their footprints
on this crusted surface.

The blackness encompasses and engulfs me,
What is hidden deep in the dark recesses of
this strange world?

Around me is a breathtaking horizon,

Swirling masses of light shimmering and
dancing to Holst's music of the Planets.

No water, no food and no life as we know it, only
this dusty grey rock, This world is so desolate
it seems as though death has walked through
here.

All around me planets of every colour, all vibrant
but still, lifeless.

My only ray of hope is that bright, dazzling,
beaming ball of light at the centre of everything.

The twirling colourful substances are like a
whirlpool in the vast oceans.

Stars are like tiny boats on a immense lake,

The universe is never ending always expanding.

Even though everything seems still, from out of
nowhere, comes some movement a comet falling
to its doom leaving a glowing trail of dust.

I want to reach out, touch and feel this
enormous unexplored territory.

Pluto, just a tiny dot in the garden of space.

Uranus encircled in an icy blue glow,
frozen in Space.

Neptune, mystical and eerie lies in a green mist.

Saturn, a gentle, fun-loving planet
reflecting its glittering yellows.

Jupiter, like a volcano, dormant for
millions of years now ready to
explode.

Mars, captures the image of
Orson Wells *War of the Worlds*.

Venus, a fiery beauty
glistening in the
blackness of Space.

And then out of nowhere.... my
attention is captivated by the
extraordinary beauty of
an array of lush colours

out there

in the remote regions

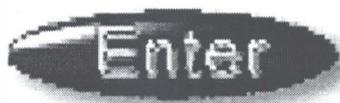
of this galaxy,

shining and glimmering, transfixing me and
pulling me, so near and yet so far.

My planet, Earth, the centre of all life.

...Dane Jon (aged thirteen)

TURNING UFOS



On Thursday 29th June The Guardian newspaper presented a feature on sun storm satellites. The European Space Agency is about to launch Cluster, a set of four satellites that are designed to orbit the sun in a tight formation. In 1996, the test flight launcher 'Ariane V', which carried the first Cluster payload, blew up. In that same year a Canadian newspaper reports that observers of the Perseid meteor shower were surprised to see a triangular formation of three lights above them in the sky. For the first time people were becoming aware that satellites travelling in formation were in existence.

The case that follows has, over recent months, brought to light a number of important points to my attention. Thanks to Strange Daze, I have been able to update this investigative article into artificial satellite systems which continues to be responsible for a large number of UFO sightings. Two things comes to light from this case; firstly, that many ufologists fail to identify reported UFO sightings probably due to deep cultural belief systems, and secondly, that the security of the United States is continuously being threatened by the technological development of other countries. I shall explain more about the latter point later on, but first of all I would like to start at the beginning and explain how I have come to the above conclusions.

During October of 1999, a UFO case had come to my attention from the Thingwall area of Wirral on Merseyside. A fifty five year old sales engineer called John was walking his dog in the fields on the Tuesday night of the 5th of October. John and his dog were located to the north of Prenton Brook, and to the east of far Lower Thingwall Lane. It was ten o'clock at night and the sky was slightly covered with cloud, it was not raining and there was no wind. In fact, John could see a clear night sky. A slow moving point of

light had caught his attention, and it appeared to pass through the constellation of Cassiopeia. The man believed that what he was looking at was a satellite. However, another detail had caught his eye, he noticed a second light and then a third appearing together to form a triangular formation, with one light being the lead light and the others forming a base line, an isosceles triangle formation. All three lights were moving together simultaneously. Satellites? Moving in formation? His initial thought was that he was observing three individual objects and not three lights that were fixed onto a single solid body. They appeared to move at the correct speed for a satellite and at the correct height. The lights disappeared from view "as they entered the Earth's shadow". Normally, most investigators, like myself, would probably connect the sighting of triangular lights with suspect prototype military aircraft. However, because the witness had submitted a number of important observational details on his sighting form, I was able to focus the investigation on astronomical phenomena.

My first point of call was my computer skymap and reference books of the Merseyside night skies, which are published by the Liverpool Astronomical Society. With this in hand I was able to locate Cassiopeia. From John's description of the lights the witness had observed them travelling from the west to the east. I had never heard of satellites travelling in formation before so my next move was to contact the British Astronomical Association - Artificial Satellite Section, and also to look on the Internet for a satellite tracking site called Heavens-Above.Com, which is based in Germany. From this website I was able to pinpoint a satellite called Cosmos 1943 rocket which was close to the estimated object altitude and location. It is a single object which passes at 22:03:05 at a magnitude of 3.9 and first appears in the south west. This object fails to account for the lights witnessed, firstly because it produces a singular light in the sky, secondly because it appears below Cassiopeia and not through it, and finally because it moves in the opposite direction, from the south west to the north east.

Not the right solution, I know, but I was certain I was on the

ANTHONY ECCLES

INTO IFOS - NOSS

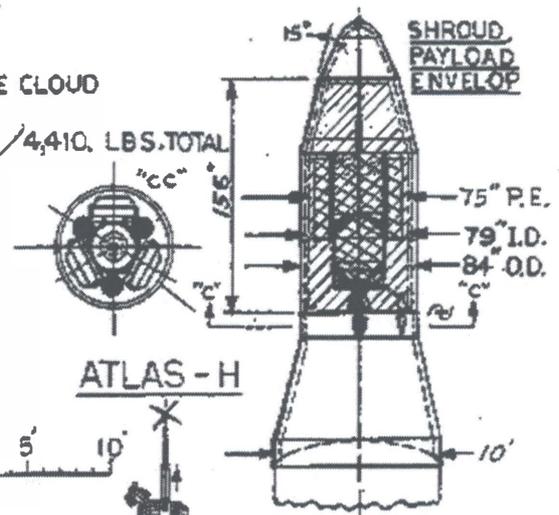
Two things come to light from this case; firstly, that many ufologists fail to identify reported UFO sightings probably due to deep cultural belief systems, and secondly, that the security of the United States is continuously being threatened by the technological development of other countries.

PARCAE

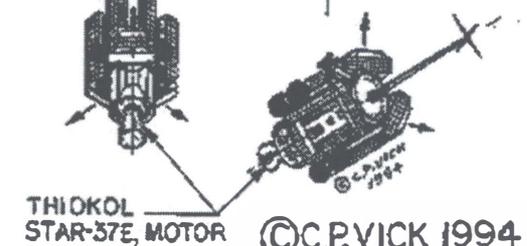
PROGRAM CODE NAME - PARCAE, WHITE CLOUD
 NUMERICAL DESIGNATION - MSD-180
 SPACECRAFT MASS, FUELED/DRY - 2999./4,410. LBS. TOTAL
 LENGTH -
 DIAMETER -
 MISSION - NOSS, EORSAT,
 LIFETIME - 3-5 YEARS
 INCLINATION - 63°
 PERIGEE - 655.82
 APOGEE - 723.78
 LAUNCH VEHICLE - THOR AGENA-D
 ATLAS-E,F,H.

NAVAL RESEARCH LABS.
 FIRST LAUNCH - 12-14-71
 LAST LAUNCH - 2-11-88
 A-9, F-1, S-8.

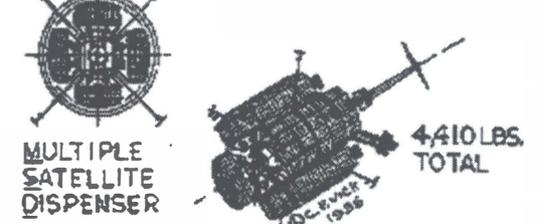
SCALE 0' 5' 10'



ATLAS - H



THIOKOL STAR-37E MOTOR © C.P. VICK 1994



MULTIPLE SATELLITE DISPENSER 4,410 LBS. TOTAL © C.P. VICK 1994

right track. Soon after, on the 25th October 1999, I received an email from the BAA with an explanation that it could well be NOSS. The email carried with it the following information.

"A couple of summers ago, meteor observers certainly became familiar with the 'NOSS Trio' of satellites, which were in an equilateral pattern. Onboard sensors apparently allowed researchers to measure precise distances between these, and how

they were affected by gravitational perturbations over time. The NOSS satellites were also comparatively faint - visual mag. +3 or thereabouts."

Searching carefully on the Internet I discovered a piece that had been written by CNI News, it was continuing a story that had appeared on the 1st September 1996 in the Toronto Star newspaper regarding the annual Perseid meteor shower. During the nights of the 8th, 9th and 10th of August of that year a set of three "unblinking" lights in triangular formation had "cruised across the star fields." These lights had never been seen before and were described as being fainter than the constellation of Ursa Major. The article goes on to say that Ted Molczan, a satellite orbit expert based in Toronto had figured out what the three lights were...they were NOSS, and

there was not just one set but there were actually three sets of satellites travelling in formation. They were code named Parcae, after the three daughters of Zeus, and were a part of the US Navy's spaceborne electronic intelligence system (ELINT). NOSS was the name given to these satellites by non military satellite specialists and stood for Naval Ocean Surveillance System. Until 1996, the US Government had denied all knowledge of these satellites ever existing.



Each group of satellites, apparently, fly at an altitude of 1100km and in formation approximately 100km across. The satellites are meant to track the position, speed, and direction of all military ships at sea. This is done by detecting communication, navigation and weapons control signals that are emitted almost continuously by naval ships. Three satellites can track these ships more accurately than a singular satellite could by measuring the time difference of signal receipt. According to this CNI News article three sets of satellites were launched in 1990, 1991 and 1996. Each satellite measures approximately three meters in length, larger than the earlier versions of this system.

This sounded fascinating to me because it indicated that any ship belonging to any nationality could be identified and located anywhere in the world. It has some interesting implications with the use of satellite technology. Furthermore I was surprised that I had not come across these in the UFO literature as an explanation for some UFO reports. I conducted a further search and found a number of question and answer pages from satellite enthusiasts. They enquire as to whether these satellites can remain in tight formation and ask how they can manoeuvre in orbit. These satellites move with a leading satellite first and the remaining two following behind, they are not capable of remaining in a tight formation but will appear in a triangular formation as well as a formation of lights travelling in a straight line. This actually ties in with a couple of other UFO cases that I have which fit just that description. One of the answers given by a satellite observer stated the following;

"The NOSS constellations consist of three visible satellites, each of which moves in a roughly geocentric orbit. The shape of the triangle formed cannot be maintained because the orbits must intersect one another when viewed from Earth's centre. Thus from time to time the satellites will even appear to be in a straight line from that point of view. All other times they form some sort of triangle, but its shape must vary continuously. I tried viewing them from above in simulation in Starry Night. It is possible to do so, but it is very difficult."

Out of curiosity I wanted to know a bit more and fortunately found a few pages from FAS, Space Policy Agency: Military Space Programs. From here were pages which described White Cloud (NOSS). Its opening sentence begins;

"The White Cloud Naval Ocean Surveillance System (NOSS) performed wide area ocean surveillance, primarily for the Navy White Cloud which is used to determine the location of radio and radars transmissions using triangulation. The identity of naval units can be deduced by analysis of the operating frequencies and transmission patterns of the emitters."

Each NOSS launch placed a cluster of one primary satellite and three smaller sub-satellites (that trail along at distances of several hundred kilometres) into low polar orbit. This satellite array can determine the location of radio and radars transmitters, using triangulation, and the identity of naval units, by analysis of the operating frequencies and transmission patterns."

NOSS used the ELINT (Electronic Intelligence) technique called "time difference of arrival", TDOA, rather than true interferometry. Conceptually, TDOA and interferometry are very similar, though distinct, techniques. They may also use the frequency-domain version of TDOA, FDOA, which exploits Doppler shifts somewhat in the way the COSPAS/SARSATs do."

The initial phase of Operation White Cloud was reported to be in operation from 1976 right through to 1987 when 9 satellites were sent into orbit. This phase used one main and three sub-satellites and

used Atlas F rockets to project them into orbit. It is not explained how these satellites remained in formation flight, it is suggested that extremely long wires held them together but that these would have had to have been several hundreds of kilometres long! From 1983 to 1987 a total of five groups of modernised SSU-1A satellites with upgraded stabilisation and data transmission systems were launched to replace failed satellites. By 1990, these satellites were launched using only three bodies. A number of infrared sensors were incorporated into these, and these had been manufactured by a company called Martin Marietta. By 1996 these satellites were using a stronger and more reliable Titan 4#17 rockets. (NOSS satellites are really known collectively as Space-Based Wide Area Surveillance System - a joint US Navy and Air Force program). There is a paper given by a Russian military

This rare photograph shows a cluster of classified American NOSS (Naval Oceanic Surveillance System) satellites passing over Britain. It was taken by Bill Rose during the early hours of April 26 1992 while he was testing a new camera lens. The orbital inclination of this formation has since been established as 63.4 degrees and their brightness was somewhere in the region of



ACTUAL PHOTOGRAPH

advisor called Major A. Andronov entitled "The U.S. Navy's 'White Cloud' Spaceborne ELINT System". This gives an excellent explanation as to why three satellites are used. The first has a wide observation swath, but by itself cannot determine the co-ordinates of radio emitters. The second satellite, with the first, gets a fix on the shipborne emitters, the position of the ship is obtained, but with some ambiguity. The third body gets the fix of the emitters' signals, enables their co-ordinates to be determined precisely and then transmits the information to Navy ships for weapons employment. You can therefore take out an enemy surface craft long before it appears on Radar. The targeted information is not only relayed to US Navy ships but also to land stations such as Blossom Point in Maryland, Winter Harbor in Maine, Edsel in Scotland, and smaller stations in the Pacific such as Guam and Adak, which were receiver

stations before they were closed down.

Major Andronov states that a satellite group is able to receive signals from a zone with a radius of about 3500km on the surface of the Earth, and under clear conditions can monitor the same object 108 minutes later. A system of four satellite groups enables any region at a latitude of 40 to 60 degrees to be monitored more than 30 times a day. This spaced based ELINT system is one of the basic means for over-the-horizon targeting for warships equipped with Tomahawk cruise missiles. Today, these information receiver systems are employed by nuclear submarines.

Recently, I came across a feature on page 34 of UFO Magazine regarding one man's observation of such satellites. At the close of his writing he asks "Do satellites orbit in symmetrical formation, perhaps?" This is followed by a very small entry at the bottom of the page which states that "James Oberg claims that three top secret DoD satellites are orbiting the Earth in triangular formation". There did not appear to be any research done by the magazine to support or correct this statement, in fact nothing further had been reported since then. A colleague of mine, Bill Bimson, had contacted UFO Magazine with the contents of the article you are reading now. Their reply was that NOSS satellites could not account for the witness's initial sighting back in 1975, and according to my own notes NOSS was first launched in 1976. Could this be right? I began to scour the Internet for more information.

What I then discovered answered my question.

Was it possible that formation satellites could have been launched, tried and tested at an earlier date. According to a reliable source the first launch of ELINT Naval reconnaissance satellites code named Parcae took place at Vandenberg Launch Site 14 December 1971 and were launched using an LT Thor Agena D rocket. What I realised was that there were different ELINT systems that were being used by the US Air Force and US Navy. Remember that NOSS is only a civilian term for the satellites, their name, type, and operational function will vary so there will be a number of dates for their initial launches. To further confuse interested parties rocket launches designated as NOSS were a cover for other military satellites.

Over the years through the 1980s and 90s the satellites were launched on powerful rockets from the Atlas F, Atlas H and the Titan 4. These were designed to carry a payload of several satellites which would be individually deployed in Low Earth Orbit (using Altitude Control Electronics or ACE), this would not only be cheaper but also a more effective way of deploying satellites. However, there do appear to be a number of discrepancies, normally the rocket being used as a launcher would determine the type of satellite being sent up. If we look at the weight being carried by the launchers today we know that they can carry a payload of 8 tonnes in orbit, but the SB-Wass (NOSS) satellites weigh a total of 1.5 tonnes, what we do not know is what other type of equipment is contained within the rocket payload. The extra mass appears to be consistent with the presence of advanced scanning infra-red sensor on the sub-satellites. Another example of existing misinformation involves the Titan 2 and Titan 4 booster rockets that were used in 1988, 1989 and 1992 which had a payload similar to NOSS but were in fact, as stated previously, singular spacecraft. These were deployed at a higher orbit around the Earth to function for Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) instead of Electronic Intelligence (ELINT).

+4 magnitude. The cluster was visible for approximately three minutes.

The photograph was taken with a Nikon 35mm SLR camera fitted with a 50mm f/1.2 Nikkor lens. Kodak T-Max ISO 3200 black and white film was used and the exposure lasted for 15 seconds at f/1.2.

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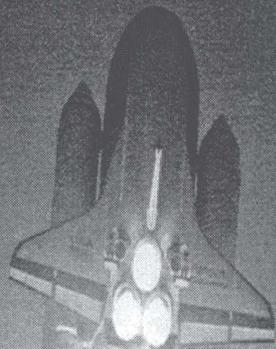
ENHANCEMENT

LINK CONTINUED ON PAGE 43

DESIGNING

THE NASA BREAKTHROUGH PRO

DAVID SIVIER



Current space science is at an impasse.

Although the space industry is growing by leaps and bounds, with fresh schemes for the commercial development, and eventual colonisation of space seemingly appearing almost every day, there are still severe scientific limits confining humanity's expansion into the great cosmic ocean. Chief of these is Einstein's famous theory of relativity limiting the maximum speed of any moving object to that of light, 186,000 miles per second, and requiring normal objects composed of particles heavier than photons to put on so much mass as they approach that speed that the energy requirement to shift all this extra weight becomes prohibitive. Indeed, for an ordinary material craft to attain lightspeed, nearly the only velocity which would allow a spaceship to reach even the nearest stars within their crew's lifetime, would require roughly the same amount of energy which presently exists in the entire cosmos. Even lower relativistic speeds, mere fractions of that of light, which reduce travelling times to these far suns, although not impossible, are also literally astronomically expensive in terms of the energy used. It may be that human space vehicles will be forever condemned to crawling about the universe at their current minuscule pace. In this case, humanity's attempts to colonise and explore the universe will be confined to the boundaries of our own solar system, and what we can passively perceive by using our telescopes and detectors. Ships like the "Enterprise" may never be built, and like "Kirk" and his crew we may never explore strange new worlds, and seek out new life and new civilisations. Using today's

You're not going to reach the stars on Lox (liquid oxygen) and hydrogen, that's for sure', he concluded.

THE FUTURE:

PULSION PHYSICS PROGRAMME

technology, we may never boldly go anywhere, except, perhaps, on hugely expensive missions to Pluto and the Oort Cloud. It's an intensely depressing prospect.

NEW FRONTIERS



however, has plans to change all that. Two years ago the agency began talks with the physics community about the development of a research programme to break this scientific deadlock, a programme which would explore strange, obscure physical phenomena which could point the way to a star-drive and allow humans to break free of their terrestrial prison and voyage across the great dark sea of space. This was the NASA Breakthrough Propulsion Physics programme, and on the 12th of April of this year, the British Interplanetary Society hosted a lecture on it at their premises in London.

The speaker was Captain Tim Lawrence of the European Office of Aerospace Research and Development, USAF, and he looked the exact caricature of an American military officer, all clean shave and crew-cut, though his austere military appearance was offset by tweed jacket, colourful shirt and tie, and a ready sense of humour, things which belied the stereotype of the dour military officer. He gave a brief outline of the history of the NASA Breakthrough Propulsion Physics programme, its budget, how many people it employs, its approach to science, and the five experiments now being tested which may give a clue as to how we may be able to flip humans to the furthest stars. Or even the nearest. *(What do you mean, mankind, you've never been to Alpha Centauri. For heaven's sake, it's only four light years away. I don't know, Apathetic bloody planet I've no sympathy at all. Energise the demolition beams!)*

NASA's view is that we've reached the end of the potential of existing technologies for going further into space. All we're doing now is tweaking existing technology so that it becomes more efficient. Altering chamber pressure and redesigning engines like the aerospike motors now being tested for the next generation of space shuttles may give extra thrust, but they are sadly inadequate for interstellar missions. Even nuclear motors, which have double the specific impulse of conventional rockets, and various forms of nuclear and electric propulsion which can produce a specific impulse of 150, 000 seconds - and that's a devil of a lot of thrust - are extremely inadequate for reaching the stars. The problem with the ion drive is that although it can generate the above horrendous amount of thrust, the mass of fuel required scales proportionately so that to get up to the above 150, 000 seconds SpI, you need an awful lot of fuel. He demonstrated this with a graph showing that to send a modern chemical rocket to Alpha Centauri within a reasonable length of time would require an amount of fuel equal to the mass of the Sun. Even the Orion vehicle, which threw nuclear bombs out the back, and rode the shockwave generated by the explosion, would require a massive amount of fuel equal to the number of supertankers in the several powers of tens. "You're not going to reach the stars on Lox (liquid oxygen) and hydrogen, that's for sure," he concluded.

Part of the research involved exploring ways to launch craft into space without using massive amounts of propellant, or even any propellant at all. He mentioned such propellant less craft as solar sails, of which he was sure many of ➤

those in the audience had heard, and the scheme to launch an interstellar mission propelled by a giant laser focused on a similar array of sails. There were, however, other radical new directions which needed exploring if humans were to be sent into interstellar space.

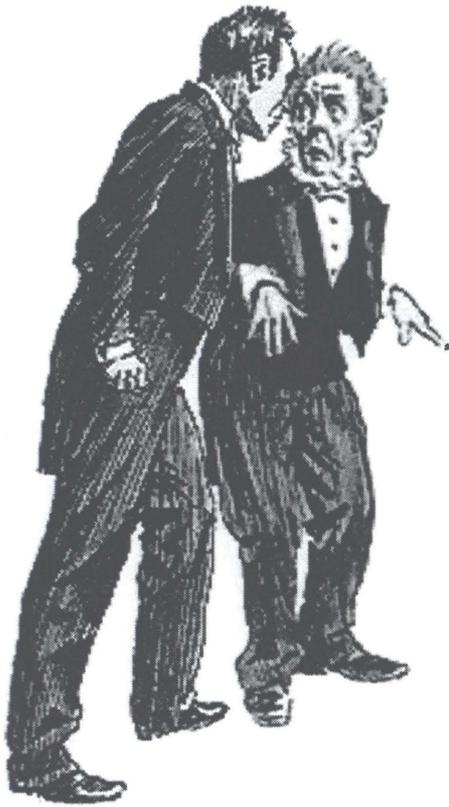
So, faced with these seemingly insuperable problems, NASA decided to go back to the physics community to seek their advice. This is because most of the physics community are, naturally enough, outside the propulsion community and they might be aware of scientific breakthroughs which could allow a starship to be flipped through the dark wastes of interstellar space. They were particularly looking for ways in which mass, especially propellant mass, could be reduced or discarded, and speed and energy increased. NASA has been criticised for leading the project and some individuals felt the initiative should come from the physicists themselves. But Lawrence didn't think that was possible, as 'if you stick a load of physicists in a room, they want to cut each others' throats'. Considering the intense rivalry between Murray Gell-Mann and Richard Feynman, which became so intense that when Feynman won the Nobel prize before Gell-Mann the atmosphere in the office, according to other members of the faculty staff, became so sombre you could have thought someone had died, I could well believe this. So, in 1998 NASA set up the programme to bring physicists and members of the propulsion community together with the object of producing several experimental projects which could provide clues on how interstellar travel may finally be achieved. This statement was accompanied by a lot of management consultancy type graphs and diagrams showing the position of the project above visionary designs, but within the box for experimentally verifiable but below those for 'ready for flight testing' and 'Technology available now'. There were also boxes stating that they had to be supportive of daring new concepts, and prepared to try them out on the one hand, while making sure that they were grounded in practical science on the other, which also meant an attitude of moderate scepticism. As an example of some of the projects they had suggested which were complete rubbish, and one which he mentioned again in the question and answer session at the end of the lecture as one of the more crackpot suggestions he received, he told the story of how someone had phoned him to suggest testing a new form of quantum gravitational effect he'd discovered. This fellow wanted governmental funding to put a plate on the roof of his car. He was then going to drive down the A4. When he stopped, he predicted the plate would have vanished. I

don't doubt this would happen for a moment, but I really don't think you need to invoke quantum gravity to explain it. Nor the almighty mess, and psychic energy expressed in heat and rage, when that plate flies through someone's windscreen!

SHOE-STRING FUNDING

As NASA's budget is under intense scrutiny, they had to be very careful when approaching the government for funding. Most space projects, Lawrence said, were oversold. If you look at the Space Shuttle, it's capability on paper bears no relationship to the actual vehicle. To get any money at all, they needed to produce cheap, verifiable experimental projects which would produce a definite result. The project was designed to last for three years. It terminates next year in 2001, though they are hoping to have the project renewed for another three years. This may prove extremely difficult, however, if none of the experiments so far being funded give positive results. Their budget is more or less a shoe-string: \$658, 000. It was four hundred odd thousand dollars, but they had a sudden increase in funding. God knows how. At the moment, the programme includes just 1.14 full time employees, this person being Mark Millis, who is Lawrence's boss. The budget figure above does not include Millis' salary. All other work in the programme is performed voluntarily by the scientists, technologists and managers themselves. They set up a series of conferences and meetings, the most important of which was the STAIF (Space Technology and Applications International Forum) conference in Colorado. Some of the help they received came from the expertise of the physicists NASA approached in the 1980s when they were preparing a manned mission to Mars. That has since gone by the wayside, along with Reagan, Bush and Thatcher, but the Mars mission is still on the cards, although at a vastly reduced level of funding. 60 papers were submitted to them, of which 1/3 were found acceptable and practical, based on recognised science and peer reviewed literature, and another 1/3 too adventurous and visionary. From these 60 papers came a total of 15 or so experiments which were practical, and from which the board of government reviewers had to select five experiments. These experiments, naturally, had to be cheap, and so a lot of potentially good experiments had to be discarded because they were too expensive. These seemed to involve the use of particle accelerators which would have taken hundreds of millions of dollars, rather than a few hundred thousand. Although these experiments are designed to be workable with an extremely limited budget, Lawrence was highly satisfied that not only were they of practical, demonstrable value, but they also fitted in with NASA's current philosophy of 'better, faster, cheaper'. Lawrence then gave a brief description of the five experiments that promised to get humanity off the Earth and across the galaxy, thus forging galactic

'if you stick a load of physicists in a room, they want to cut each others' throats'.



empires 'where men were real men, women were real women, and small furry creatures from Alpha Centauri were real small furry creatures from Alpha Centauri.' This was the most fascinating part of the lecture, and the one which had me really sitting up and taking notice. Management-speak is not usually one of the most exciting forms of human communication, though as this was space it aroused more than a flicker of interest. The experiments, however, were the real thing. This was weird, cutting

edge science done on a shoe-string, with results which could overturn conventional technology and our conception of the universe. NASA was intensely interested in propulsion concepts which would either generate vast amounts of thrust for a very small amount of energy, interact with space-time to produce things like wormholes and warp drives, and bizarre new physical laws which may permit superluminal travel. These experiments all took one or more of these approaches. Several used strange physical effects to generate apparently mass less thrust.

WEIRD SCIENCE

The first experiment was based on the transient inertia effect, first seen by Clyde Woodward, who noticed that if you gave an object motion, then changed the energy density within it, a force resulted. The experiment designed to test this idea consists of a capacitor placed in a box and spun. They then intend to send a charge through it to change its energy density, and then look at it to see if they can get some kind of drive out of it. If successful, although the effect is actually very small, it could pave the way to propulsion less drives. Since the proposal was put in, however, the team for this experiment have redesigned their apparatus so that it looks somewhat different from the original experiment, although the idea

remains the same.

The second experiment utilises a similar torsion effect, and involves imparting motion to another object and sending yet another charge through it in order to generate thrust. With the transient inertia effect, this represents a scientific phenomenon of which I wasn't previously aware. Whatever the results, I was heartened by one thing: Woodward himself, apart from being a physicist, is also a historian, and bases his science on the directions previous scientists in the past took when exploring new possibilities. I was very glad to see another person like myself who straddles the two cultures, interested in both science and history.

The third experiment involved using the Casimir effect to get energy out of space-time itself. This is where science gets weird, and we really do enter the realms of the free energy devices drooled over by a thousand visionary backyards physicists all over the Western hemisphere and beyond. Quantum physics predicts that at the subatomic scale, the universe is a raw seething mass of energy as particles and antiparticles appear and disappear in fractions of a second, borrowing energy from gravitation and the raw fabric of the cosmos to bring themselves into existence. The Casimir effect takes its name from the Dutch physicist, Hendrick Casimir, who first proposed an experiment to test for the effect. This consists of two thin metal plates placed extremely close together, close enough to squeeze out particles with wavelengths longer than the space between them. As these particles are excluded, the energy density outside the two plates grows, forcing them together, creating a zone of positive energy outside the plates, and a similar area of negative energy within.

Despite the effect being known in theory for over fifty, it was only in 1996 that scientists were finally able to measure it. There have been plans to exploit the Casimir effect to produce a stable wormhole which could act as a superluminal subway route through the cosmos to the stars, though at the moment the engineering techniques to produce such a wormhole are far beyond our capabilities. In order to form a wormhole a metre square, the two plates would have to be the size of the Jupiter. Clearly this is impossible, at least for us at the present time. As for the more modest experiments testing the

effect, at the moment the energy gained by them is small, an infinitesimal fraction of a watt, but there are infinities above and below the small devices used to gather quantum vacuum energy in the experiment. Interestingly, the geometry of the plate influences the resulting energy. A cube produces positive energy, and for some reason a sphere produces negative energy. I thought of the five Platonic forms from which the universe was supposed to be formed, and wondered if this was where science really was reaching towards mysticism and the paranormal. The same geometrical effects also operate in the second experiment.

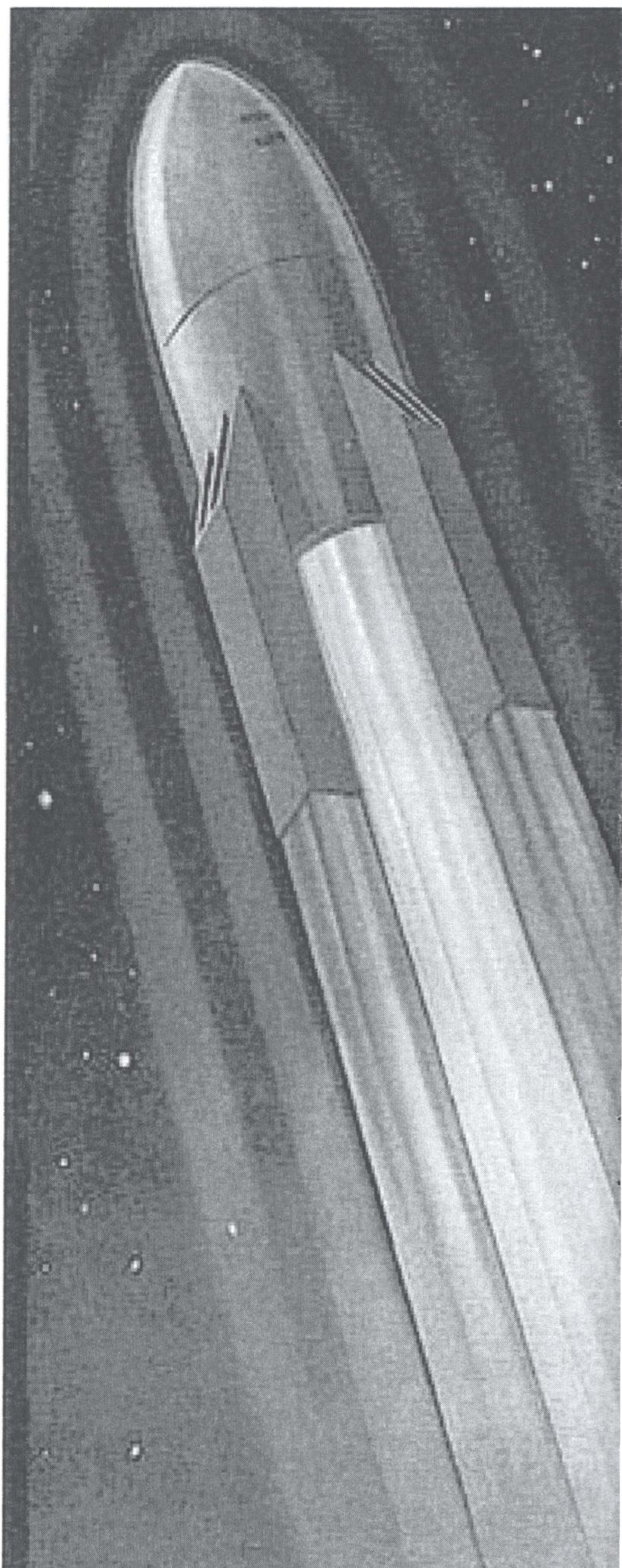
The fourth experiment involved testing for a force generated when a pendulum or other object swung between a superconductor and an electromagnet. This again was looking for a physical effect of which I hadn't been previously aware. It was the fifth experiment which really had me sitting up in my seat.

This seemed to involve using a laser to look for superluminary particles, the tachyons of SF fame. Lawrence stated that during matter-antimatter annihilation, 11 % of the energy released can't be accounted for. These are believed to be released in the form of tachyons, travelling faster than light, though there is an objection to the theory. It may be that this 11 % consists of conventional particles which are at the borders of the detectors' ability to pick them up. Lawrence stated it was a good objection, and may be the case, but if tachyons are around, detecting them could be interesting. To conserve their energy, they would actually speed up when they hit an object, like a detector's plate, rather than slow down.

In addition to these projects, there was a parallel project elsewhere in the scientific community. Essentially the same as third experiment, it differed only in that it placed the superconductor or magnet - I can't really remember which, but I believe it was the superconductor, circling underneath and to one side of the pendulum. There may well be other projects out there, Lawrence said, but deliberately kept secret so that they could get funding. The visionary nature of the research made it subject to intense scrutiny and criticism, and one way of avoiding this was simply to rename the projects. For example, when the Air Force couldn't get funding for research into nuclear propulsion, they changed the project's title to 'high-energy propulsion' and sat back and watched the tax dollars come in.

DEBATING THE FUTURE

There is also an international dimension to
25 this research. A chap at Liverpool University



has written a database programme for the project, while NASA has also been fortunate to acquire the services of Sergei Krasnikov of St. Petersburg University. Krasnikov has been working on wormholes, and was afraid to publish his research under the old regime in case he lost his job. Krasnikov was given the task of disproving their existence, and has instead produced evidence to suggest that they do exist. These wormholes aren't that much help, however. It takes 10^{36} watts to make one, which is more energy than there currently is in the universe, and they don't cross eight light years. In fact you'll be lucky if they cross four. At the moment their maximum length seems to be about just under one light year. If these things exist, they're probably produced just after supernova explosions, which makes detecting and using them extremely difficult, as if a supernova went off here, as Lawrence pointed out, we wouldn't exist.

Someone asked Lawrence what his favourite out of the various experiments was, and he said he liked all of them, including the wormhole. Other questions included the one about the most crackpot project he'd received. Apart from the plate on the car, the daftest suggestion put forward, involved sending nuclear superheated hydrogen plasma out the nozzle of a spaceship's exhaust, letting it hit a cooling plate, and be recycled back into the spacecraft for further use as fuel. The chap who invented that one reckoned you could then fly to the stars using only one atom of hydrogen. Sadly, Lawrence said, you couldn't use that one because it violated so many physical laws.

I could think of the conservation of energy and the third law of thermodynamics for a start. His boss had also been sent a perpetual motion machine which he now kept as a paperweight under his desk.

There are two principle websites devoted to the NASA breakthrough programme, one of which is devoted to the US military's involvement, which can be found at:

<http://www.ehis.navy.mil:80/eoardwebsite2/Default.asp>

NASA's main BPP site is at:

<http://www.lerc.nasa.gov/WWW/bpp/index.htm>

In addition to this, Millis and Lawrence both have their own websites and Email address. They will respond to e-mail in their own time, but do not welcome phone calls. Apparently, Lawrence no longer takes phone calls personally because when someone has phoned him up with a daft suggestion, it has been difficult for him to rebut it over the phone. However, Email allows him to answer in his own good time and cite the relevant literature disproving their theory. But he didn't like to be too dismissive, even if the plans were wildly inaccurate, especially if the fellow at the other end of the line was enthusiastic.

Enthusiasm, unfortunately, was in very short supply elsewhere. Lawrence said that that day there had been an extremely sceptical letter in the New York Times attacking the project as a waste of American's hard-

earned taxes. Lawrence said that the reply to that objection was "well, perhaps it's true, but the only way we're ever going to know is to go and look." Another member of the audience asked if there had been any experiments centred around the microscopic wormholes which were now believed to occupy much of the cosmic foam. "No," replied Lawrence, "I'm not aware of any research in that direction. We have not heard from that part of the scientific community." Someone then asked if they had gone through any of the patented literature. Lawrence replied that they hadn't, for the simple reason that if it was under patent they couldn't use it. "If someone rings me up, and says 'I've got an idea,' I say, 'go ahead.' But if they say, 'It's under patent,' I say, 'I'm sorry, I can't talk to you.' For us to be able to use an idea it has to be out in the open, published in the proper scientific literature. If it's any good, it'll survive that scrutiny."

To this the questioner replied that "Not all the good stuff does get out in the open. I worked on HOTOL," at which I wanted to salute him. HOTOL was the proposed British hybrid spaceplane, using both rockets and conventional jets. Fully re-usable, it would take off and land from ordinary airport runways. It was a good, feasible design and competed well with similar spaceplanes being developed by the Germans and French. Needless to say, it received only derisory levels of government support. But at last there was someone else who believed in the British space dream! I could have clapped. Another member of the audience asked what the Japanese were doing. At the moment they don't seem to be a part of the Breakthrough Programme, but there is considerable interest over there in laser propulsion, where they fire a laser under a mirrored object so that it explodes the air just under the vehicle generating thrust. They've had several successful test firings on one of the isolated peninsulas in Japan, but have also suffered serious objections from the authorities. The objection here is obviously what would happen if a bird flew between the laser and the vehicle. There were chuckles and murmurs of 'explosions and burnt feathers'. I thought of a new menu for Colonel Saunders - laser barbecued chicken, but kept my silence. Someone asked if anyone was planning to develop the maglev/ railgun propulsion system using a linear transduction motor to accelerate an object into space. Someone had worked out that such systems were capable of producing a specific impulse of 600 seconds. When the Americans had finally worked out that linear motors were MagLev, another classic example of two nations divided by a common language, ➤

Lawrence and his colleagues mentioned a plan to put just such a mass driver all the way up a mountain in Colorado. That was stopped, however, because a conservationist objected. This produced a number of derogatory comments about conservationists. As someone with still a few, lingering traces of environmentalist conscience, I disagreed. The planet's ecology has to be protected, even if it does stop us launching stuff into space from the mountain tops.

I asked if anyone had produced an experiment tying in with the warp drive equations formulated by Alcubierre at Cardiff University. These were supposed to violate the nuclear laws, but a paper in a previous issue of the JBIS by two Japanese physicists modified the theory so leaving those laws intact. Lawrence stated that he didn't know of any experiments testing these theories, and repeated what he said about the majority of those sixty experiments being rejected, not because they were bad experiments, but because they were too expensive.

Someone asked what the Russians were doing, if anything. Did they even have a space programme now? Lawrence replied that the Russians were now taking an interest in micro-satellites, like those produced by the university of Surrey and one of the other new British universities. These were building small, lightweight satellites which are to be launched in clusters, rather than single, big, heavy satellites. These small micro-satellites weigh as little as 50 kg and run on 40 Watts, which is less, Lawrence remarked, than the light bulb in the room. This simply told me how profligate, in terms of power, ordinary lighting is. I did wonder if there ought to be a research programme devoted to producing low-wattage bright light bulbs, but I digress.

Someone else also asked Lawrence if anyone had approached NASA with an experiment based on Laithwaite's research into gyroscopes. Shortly before he died, Laithwaite nearly sacrificed his entire professional career by claiming that there is an anti-gravitational force released when gyroscopes are set in motion. There are rumours of just such an anti-gravity device, made out of gyroscopes, squatting evilly in the basement of Edinburgh University. Every now and then they set it off, watch it rise into the air, then shake their heads in wonder and put it back in its wrapping. They can't explain it, and so it's joined the ranks of Fort's Damned. Someone else was also investigating this peculiar feature of gyroscopes. There was an article on a prototype model aircraft built by an Australian in one edition of the Daily Mail. There has also similarly been a book published by a Scottish

researcher about his experiments with gyroscopes. I thought it was coming a bit too close to pseudoscience myself, as this anti-gravity effect is highly debatable. It nearly ruined Laithwaite's professional reputation. When he delivered a lecture on this perceived effect to the Royal Society, there was outrage. He featured briefly on the BBC series *Heretics*, which profiled the controversies aroused by the great scientific heretics of today. Laithwaite himself was seriously intelligent, A grade, certified genius. He it was who invented the linear transduction motor, now named MagLev by the Americans, only to see his funding cut during the 1970s recession and his research taken over by Britain's competitors, Germany and Japan. Lawrence remarked that he wasn't aware of any proposal for an investigation of the gyroscopic effects, but that question did lead to the discussion about MagLev.

Actually, it did strike me very hard that the experiments involving sending a charge through a moving object to generate thrust explained a good number of peculiar episodes in recent scientific events. The father of a friend of mine has a very strong interest in anti-gravity and gyroscopes with a view to developing an anti-gravity device. His son considers this fascination eccentric, to say the least, and considers it to have the same chance of success as the eternal quest of a thousand other independent scientific thinkers to produce a perpetual motion machine. Doubt into the perceived impossibility of his father's personal scientific quest did creep in, however, when his father received a letter from a physicist at the Rutherford-Appleton laboratory at Oxbridge inviting his father to come and talk to them about his experiments. There's also the strange case of Dr. Evgeni Podkletnov, who worked at the University of Tampere in Finland. He noticed a bizarre gravity shielding effect produced when a high-temperature superconductor was rotated in a strong magnetic field, similar to the fourth experiment described above. After his departure from Tampere due to the scientific furore generated by his claims, he acted as a consultant to several groups interested in replicating his experiment, including Project Delta G led by Dr. Ning Li of the University of Alabama which has only added to the controversy surrounding this research.

I don't know whether anything will come of the ideas I've described and because of serious funding problems, these usual NASA experiments which only began last February will conclude next year. Still, the above effects, although bizarre, are noted and have been written up in peer-reviewed journals, like the *Foundations of Physics Letters* which is an extremely respected professional journal. Lawrence cited the literature for the above strange physical effects with the slides illustrating each experiment, although they were simple diagrams of the experiments rather than detailed photos or pictures. This marked the end of the evening's lecture, though not, one hopes, of the experiments and their promise to send humanity to the stars.

Further Reading

For a more detailed discussion of the experiment to measure and investigate the Casimir effect, designed by Dr. Jordan Maclay, see the article 'Energy Unlimited' by Henry Bortman, *New Scientist*, 22nd January 2000, pp. 32-34.

A brief overview of Dr. Podkletnov's current research into gravity modification may be found in

The Antigravity Machine, by Robert Chambers, *The Fortean Times*, June 2000, p. 66.

For a good, nontechnical discussion of the current state of research into warp drives, see *Negative Energy, Wormholes and Warp Drive* by Lawrence H. Ford and Thomas A. Roman, *Scientific American*, January 2000, pp. 30-37.

A detailed technical exposition of the theoretical development of a warp drive can be found in the paper 'Spacefaring to the Farthest Shores - Theory and Technology of a Space Drive Propulsion System, by Yoshinari Minami, in *JBIS: Journal of the British Interplanetary Society, Exobiology (Part VI)*, vol. 50, no. 7, July 1997, pp.263-276.

All bracketed quotations are, of course, taken from that indispensable repository of all knowledge and wisdom, which has supplanted the great *Encyclopaedia Galactica*, at least in this part of the unfashionable end of the Galaxy's western spiral arm, the Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy.

END

DAVID SIVIER

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LINK

Scientific advances in mapping the human genome may have serious implications for human species in the future, says a Princeton physicist. Freeman Dyson, of Princeton's Institute for Advanced study, fears that open market trafficking of human genes could lead to new breeds of human species, based on the haves and have-nots. "Wealthy parents will be able to buy what they consider superior genes for their babies, and this could cause a splitting of humanity into hereditary castes," he said last week.

Dyson made the comments during a ceremony at Washington National Cathedral, during his acceptance speech for the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. He says Science and biochemistry are approaching the ability to rapidly change the natural evolutionary cycle, which could "take humanity back to a time of masters and slaves. Within a few generations, the children of rich and poor could become separate species."

He fears that government, industry, and biochemical science will promote unrestricted exchange and sale of human gene technology. And, he believes that the debate over the ethics of gene research is due sooner, rather than later. The federally funded Human Genome Project, begun in 1990, expects to complete the mapping of the human DNA code by 2001. The government, said Dyson, is "already pouring its data onto the Internet," into the public domain for free. The private venture of Celera Genomics in Rockville, Md. is claiming to have nearly completed its human DNA mapping, and soon will be ready to market its data.

Scientists estimate there are 3 billion chemical codes contained in human DNA, which is composed of thousands of genes in the 46 human chromosomes. "The ultimate danger of green [biological] technology comes from its power to change the nature of human beings by the application of genetic engineering to human embryos," Dyson said. "No matter how strongly we believe in the virtues of a free market economy, the free market must not extend to human genes."

In the ethical debate "which takes place while there is no government regulation on genome information and some patent rights for researchers" the question is whether gene knowledge will be used to heal people or to "enhance" people by genetic manipulation of looks, intelligence or strength, says Dyson. He argues that government regulation of genetic research and sales is imperative.

END LINK

THE QUEST FOR EARTH MYSTERIES

Lionel Beer

How do we define this amorphous area of beguiling study?

As this is a fairly recent term, you will get no help from the average dictionary nor encyclopaedia. Probably, the term dates from the ecologically aware hippy era of the sixties. In 1962 The Ley Hunters Club was founded by Jimmy Goddard and Philip Heselton and the first Ley Hunter newsletter appeared in 1965. The term Earth Mysteries was used in a national newspaper in 1974.

Many Earth Mystery questers trace their roots to Alfred Watkins, who was born in Hereford in 1855. Locally he was something of an intellectual giant and free thinker, and that is not intended to

sound derogatory! Following in the family business he became a merchant, and was well respected. This led to his becoming a magistrate and a county councillor. But it was his outside interests that are important to us. These included archaeology, natural history, and photography, making his own equipment and inventing an exposure meter.

Watkins revelatory moment came on 30 June 1921. Looking at a map he noticed that a number of ancient sites in Hereford lay on a straight line. To keep the story short, his ideas appeared in a book in 1925 - *The OLD STRAIGHT TRACK* which proposed a system of LEYS based on ancient trackways, or early trading routes. In some quarters his proposals met with savage criticism. With hindsight, this was something of an inverted compliment,

since is it not dispiriting to be largely ignored?

The Straight Track Club was formed in 1926 and lasted until 1948.

Tony Wedd, inspired by Watkins, formed the Star Fellowship in 1960, and rashly or boldly, depending on your viewpoint, suggested that flying saucers flew along straight lines, denoted by clumps of Scotch pine—trees on hill—tops! Fanciful perhaps, but he directly inspired the founders of the Ley Hunters Club already mentioned. Jimmy Goddard still publishes AMKA YA, a newsletter celebrating the work of Tony Wedd of Chiddingstone, Kent. More recently he produced a CD—ROM on Wedd. Gerald Hawkins' bestseller, *STONEHENGE DECODED*, published in 1966 also inspired a lot of people. Other modern pioneers include John Michell, Tom Graves, Paul Devereux, Tom Lethbridge, Nigel Pennick, Paul Screeton and Janet and Colin Bord, who have all authored influential books.

In the seventies the subject matured and broadened. Alignments and Earth Energies were often detected by the use of Dowsing. To a large extent the topics centre on the landscape: ancient sites, healing wells, hill figures, sacred geometry, early religious or pagan ritual sites, and the folklore associated with these places. This leads on to phenomena such as earth lights, ghosts, possibly even UFOs. Colleagues have studied the energy and/or the symbology of dragon myths, earth spirits or fairies, turf mazes, and terrestrial zodiacs. The latter were pioneered by Katherine Maltwood back in 1924, and her work is continued by Mary Caine of Kingston, Surrey. Our *TEMS group has been tracking two remarkable alignments which go through the Kingston Coronation Stone.

A little scepticism can sometimes be a healthy

thing. You may feel that what I have listed so far is a very mixed bag! In fact I myself have been described as a bit of an old cynic (or worse) despite the fact that I co-ordinate an earth mysteries group! But many people interested in this loose association of subjects, intuitively feel that there are links! An example of this is the introduction of Feng Shui to the West as a practical tool for improving one's life and environment. 1998 saw the introduction of a widely available Feng Shui magazine in the UK. My feeling about Earth Mysteries is that their study links us with the wisdom and knowledge of the past so that we can reflect and improve the quality of our lives in the future. And let's be honest, it can be a lot of fun unravelling mysteries from the past!

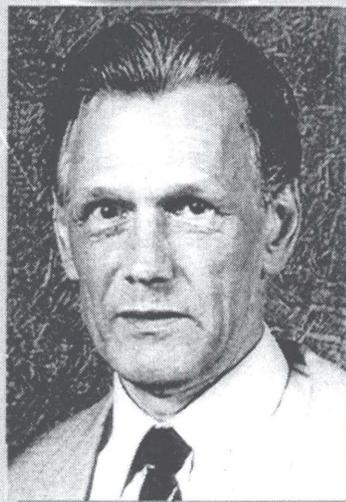
Lionel Beer

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*Lionel is co-ordinator of TEMS,

The Travel & Earth Mysteries Society, founded in 1992. Besides holding regular monthly meetings, it also arranges field trips to sites of earth mystery, folklore and historical importance.

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END



LIONEL BEER

SEE PAGE 38
FOR
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Jenny Randles acted as a Consultant to all four *Strange But True* series until 1998, when the show was cancelled. However, the production crew at LWT submitted an idea to the ITV Network for a one-off documentary about the camcorder footage, which was flooding in from Mexico at the time and Jenny was asked to work on the show under contract to LWT.

She created the following article *The Mexican Wave*, originally as a briefing document for *Strange But True*. However, when asked to get involved in early 1999 she was unhappy with the direction being taken and after some thought turned down the request as she did not feel the programme would aid the credibility of the UFO movement so opted out.

The documentary was filmed in 1999 and initially set for ITV networking in autumn of that year. However interviewees have told Jenny that they have been advised on two occasions that it has been delayed or shelved completely. If this documentary ever makes it to the screen, Jenny feels it will be rather interesting to see whether any of these ideas got onto camera.....



poorly understood scientific phenomena such as atmospheric electrical effects, plasmas, earthlights and rotating electrified vortices. Geological, atmospheric and other factors cause them to occur and if we can unravel the whys and wherefores we may be potentially able to harness a powerful new energy force. Or indeed to control potentially destructive earthquakes. This is almost certainly a key reason for government interest in UFOs. Not because of any feared alien invasion, but because novel energy sources could be of huge commercial and military advantage to any nation that understands them before the rest of the world can do.

Waves, on the other hand, are very complex things. There do seem to be real cycles of UFO activity. In Britain the biggest occurred in the autumn of 1967 and changed government policy on the subject. Smaller waves occurred in winter 1980, April 1984 and March 1993 amongst others. However, there are important sociological forces at work in these times. We know from opinion poll surveys that between only 1 in 50 and 1 in 100 people who have a UFO sighting make this public. The main reason they chose not to do so is fear of ridicule. Another important reason is lack of awareness about how to report any sighting.

In situations such as Bonnybridge in Scotland artificial waves and windows may even occur

UFO ACTIVITY is happening somewhere on earth at any point in time.

However, it is not consistent. Instead it focuses through what we call 'waves' - a period of several weeks that are filled with localised encounters at a level far beyond the normal amount to be reported in any one area during such a time.

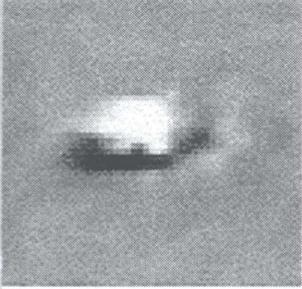
There are also what are termed 'window areas' - where UFO sightings remain at a higher level than elsewhere but remain so all of the time. When a window experiences a wave then it usually becomes global news, because the level of activity is incredible.

UFOlogists have long tried to understand the mechanics of both windows and waves. It is now clear that much of the evidence suggests that windows often centre on locations where there have been sightings reported for thousands of years. These are often thought to result from natural forces within the earth creating as yet



ICANWAVE

JENNY RANGLES



as a result. We know there is little historical track record for high levels of UFO activity here - a prerequisite in my view for a natural window. We

also know that there are clearly identified factors that triggered the first splurge of sightings in the autumn of 1992. These involved massive local publicity, a book identifying Scotland as a hot spot for UFO activity (I know because I wrote it!) and a consequent flood of public interest in this topic. When reports of sightings were made in the Bonnybridge area they were followed up by a local councillor. He was well aware of how the nearby town of Livingston had gained

advantage after putting up a plaque to commemorate a local sighting that had gained world attention. The councillor did not create the sightings in Bonnybridge, but he allowed them to foster simply by setting himself up as a sympathetic ear to which local folk could tell their story. When the media promoted this and local UFOlogists joined in by setting up phone hotlines the snowball was rolling downhill.

It surely was no coincidence that the two major UFO groups in Scotland were both based in this same part of the country. The result was that so much attention was placed on the UFO



activity here and both of the major drawbacks that normally restrain levels of UFO reporting elsewhere simply disappeared. Not only was it now acceptable to report a UFO because the council had legitimised the topic, but it was easy to find places to which to report. The local media, the crusading councillor and two prominent local groups with easy access ensured that a much larger percentage than normal reported UFOs.

Basic maths shows that if there are 100 sightings a year in Muchals (a real window area in Scotland) and also 100 in Bonnybridge, only 1 or 2 will report the Muchals encounters because of the reasons explained earlier limiting such descriptions. But now perhaps as many as 20 or 30 will do so from the same 100 people in Bonnybridge because the climate here is now far more favourable. The result is that Bonnybridge appears to be undergoing a wave or looks like a window area, when neither may be true.

We saw exactly the same effect in Britain. Until we understood what was happening and compensated statistically it looked as if Milton Keynes had suddenly become a window area in the late 1970's and early 1980's. The truth was this rural area went through massive population growth thanks to overspill moving out from London when it was planned as a new town. This included one of the most active UFO investigators in the UK who had become a local celebrity. His position as someone to talk to coupled with the real increase in local population appeared to create a new window and wave.

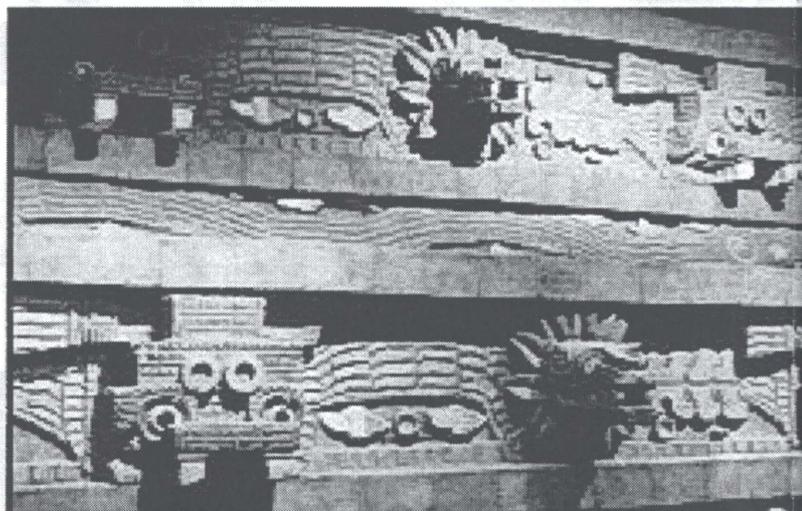
None of which is to belittle what is happening in Bonnybridge. It is not in any way special in my opinion - except that it shows the true level of UFO activity probably existing everywhere. If the ITV network had let us run that nationwide survey I designed for the live 'Strange But True?' show in June 1997 - with maps plotting incoming UFO activity as I suggested - then I believe we would have been able to show this effect clearly. Of course, because of the UFO awareness in Bonnybridge it would have still seemed highly active but probably less different from many other places.

Like everywhere else most sightings in any window such as Bonnybridge (95% of them) are misidentifications. This is just as true of the video film. Most UFOs are really IFOs. There are, of course, some good cases that shine through. The real advantage of an artificial window like Bonnybridge is that we discover a few good cases that would almost certainly have
33 been otherwise never reported. So I do not

say what is happening is unimportant - just that it is not what it seems to be.

We can see the difference between natural window areas and waves and Bonnybridge by studying the Hessdalen valley in Norway. Here there is a historic record of high levels of activity. Being so remote and inhospitable (winter temperatures far below zero due to its location near the Arctic Circle) it does not have the mass communications that facilitate any hype of the activity. It took huge effort to study this location by gathering together scientists and UFOlogists, bringing in equipment from spectrometers to lasers and radar to automatic cameras. Great persistence and endurance was needed to 'stake out' the location for several winters and secure hard data of impressive calibre. We have film, spectrographs of UFOs, radar trackings - etc - all tied together. We know a great deal about what kind of phenomenon occasionally erupts into waves in this location.

Sadly the hype behind Bonnybridge has brought no similar research - largely because no UFO group in the UK can afford it and with the tabloid TV publicity no university or defence institute will get involved. This is needed to loan expensive equipment, hire out students to operate watches or make military jets available on standby as they do in pursuit of the Hessdalen affair. What has Bonnybridge provoked instead? Endless (and in my view pointless) waffle about aliens. Much hyping of video film of what in some cases is just out of focus stars and aircraft. The councillor now even seems to be making a pop record to promote the town and a massive local campaign - riding the back of 'Strange but True?' - is trying to create a UFO theme park in the town. By accident or design - it does not matter which - the council have skilfully used the media to outdo local rivals Livingston. Its little plaque looks pathetic against the millions this Scottish town may one day make from what in my view is an unjustified claim to be a UFO capital. But, of course, to the media what counts is that the claim is a darned good story. And it is not a deception or a cheat by the council. They are truly reflecting an increase in sightings here and one



Another complication - as we have long known about South American UFO stories - is that long before we had tabloid wars over here the press there were notorious for inventing bogus UFO tales.

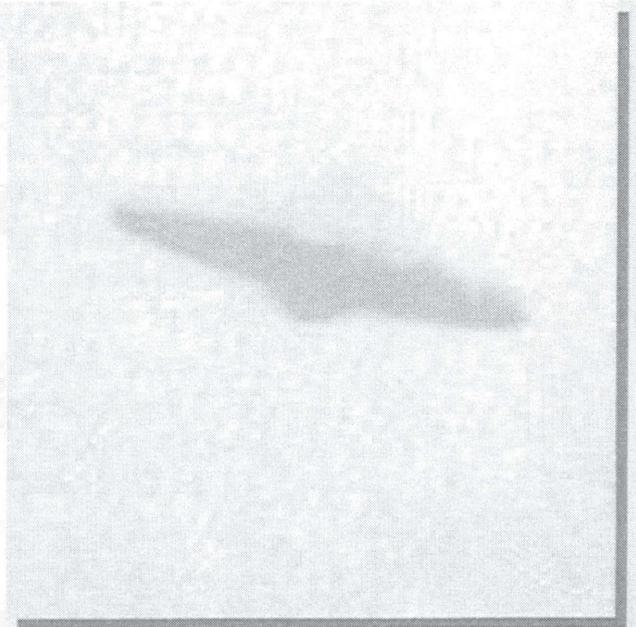
cannot blame an economically deprived area for using this to good effect. Indeed one might argue the council are doing a first rate job for their people.

Such is the struggle we UFOlogists face in light of media interest. Unfortunately, the truth about UFOs is more sober than the version that so often gets paraded. That is why the live show we did in 1997 was in no sense a programme about UFOs. Much of the reality about this subject was never even mentioned. But that is so often the way of it - as I well understand - because there are two UFOlogies. The truth, which may seem too boring to hype, and the version the public seem to want, which is anything but boring, but also anything but true. Any TV show has to decide whether to give the public what it wants to hear or to try to educate them about the realities. Nearly always the former wins out. But it simply adds to the misconceptions that continue to build up. Tell people a non truth often enough and it becomes a truth.

This has been - you may think - one heck of a diversion from your request for information about Mexico! But it was necessary to explain some of the problems with waves and windows, because the Mexican Wave is far from immune. In many ways it is a bigger version of the Bonnybridge factor. You need to bear all of what I have just said in mind and

**S o m e o n e
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appreciate that - yes - there are masses of evidence. But often that has resulted from the hype, both as a consequence of greater public confidence to report data in Mexico and in direct response to the media attention by hoaxing. Yes - there are thousands of sightings - but the vast majority of them are misperceptions. Yes - there are a few very



interesting cases. But that is not to say that anything is going on in Mexico that is not happening anywhere else but is simply not being publicised or hyped.

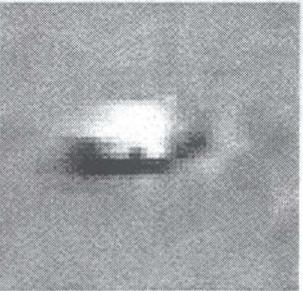
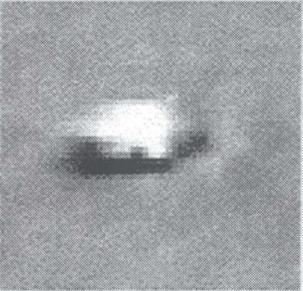
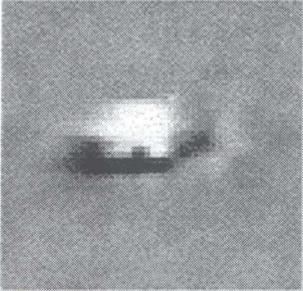
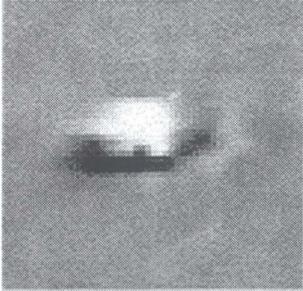
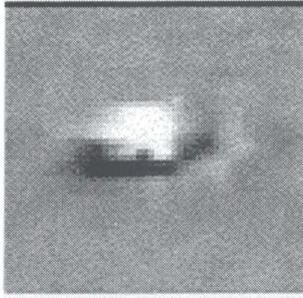
What I am really saying is that often the hyped 'waves' and 'window areas' are the least reliable because they have an inbuilt tendency towards high levels of trickery. The unsung events - such as at Hessdalen - usually produce the best evidence for UFOs. So - certainly - the Mexican story is an interesting one, but it is not going to produce the kind of evidence that will change the world.

Another complication - as we have long known about South American UFO stories - is that long before we had tabloid wars over here the press there were notorious for inventing bogus UFO tales. It has almost become a competition to see who can outdo the last great tale in some rag or other. Sometimes it is easy to spot (eg when one story claimed that an alien beam turned the witnesses son into a green lump that was mistaken for an olive and eaten with his drink by the investigating police officer!) But UFOlogy is so absurd these days that a tale may often be far less easy to pick out as - shall we say - 'exaggerated'!

MEXICO:

As with all waves there was a starting point that captured public attention and lead to constant interest in later events. Forces aware of the opportunity - eg the media - ensured that opportunity was not wasted.

On 11 July 1991 there was a major eclipse and thousands were out in the streets of Mexico City to watch. Many cameras were pointing skyward to film the moon blocking out the sun. It was one of the first



such events available to the new mass home camcorder market. At 1.22 pm the sky dimmed and there - to the left of the sun - was a silver/white object. No fewer than 17 camcorder sequences of it were sent in when the news reports first played the footage. There are doubtless others.

The film shows a white fuzzy mass that appears to be reflective metal. It seems to be spinning or fluttering. At first it is dim, then when the sun darkens it becomes more obvious. After the full eclipse is over it is less easy to see but still there. In all it was visible for half an hour - barely moving. Then - according to different witnesses - it either 'shot off' or 'vanished'.

Immediately the event was viewed as a UFO - thus an alien visitation. Someone pointed out that in Ancient Aztec and Mayan prophecies 'Messengers of Destiny' would return during an eclipse and provoke major earth changes. Soon the truth about this case was becoming ever more religiously rooted and it has become a big industry. Books, videos, TV specials have been made. All assumed that this was a UFO. Few try to find out what it might have really been - on the basis that any Ufologist should proceed.

In my view this case is not unexplained. The object on the film is in my opinion a high altitude weather balloon. These are enormous foil

balloons that travel miles above the earth to test high altitude wind speeds and directions. They have been known to circle the entire planet and stay intact for months. Because of the trade winds they commonly pass over Mexico and Brazil, cross the Atlantic then pass over South Africa. We have had quite a few mass witness

UFO reports resulting from them. The origin of any individual balloon would be impossible to trace.

I think that in this case the balloon was drifting overhead at the coincidental time that the eclipse occurred. Being so high it would take a long time to cross the sky and to all intents and purposes appear almost stationary. Against strong sunlight it would be almost invisible. When the sun light became dimmed by the eclipse it was still catching the rays because the shadow had yet to reach it at some distance away. Against the darker sky it was thus suddenly far more visible, As the sunlight dimmed, it would dim as well but because people had now seen it and their eyes became dark adapted it would still be easy to spot. Then, when sunlight returned it would be again dim against the bright sky but still seen because people now knew where to look. Gradually it would move away, become smaller and be lost to view. However, the poor focus of camcorders - especially in those early days - would have made the object seem rather fuzzy. After all the camera was attempting to focus on what was relatively speaking a tiny object amidst a sea of empty sky. The primitive focus mechanisms simply could not cope. We see exactly the same problem with many camcorder films of UFOs today - from Bonnybridge and elsewhere. A point source or tiny disc of a star or planet like Venus is too much for the camera to properly focus and the result is a fuzzy mass that looks like a shape changing UFO.

I cannot prove that this explains the July 1991 film but it fits cases I have investigated that were high altitude balloons. There is nothing extraterrestrial in the evidence that I have seen. In any event - as a rule of thumb applied by UFOlogists - UFOs simply do not hang about for half an hour. They are very transient phenomena. That right away suggests this case must

THERE IS NOTHING EXTRATERRESTRIAL IN THE EVIDENCE THAT I HAVE SEEN. IN ANY EVENT - AS A RULE OF THUMB APPLIED BY UFOLOGISTS - UFOs SIMPLY DO NOT HANG ABOUT FOR HALF AN HOUR. THEY ARE VERY TRANSIENT PHENOMENA.

have an explanation.

I am pretty convinced the genesis of the Mexican Wave was a simple misidentification. But once the hype and all the talk about Gods and prophecies took over there was never any chance of confirming that.

The case had become bigger than its evidence - as so often happens in UFOlogy.

Of course, the publicity ensured that millions were now fully converted skywatchers. Because the story was treated seriously it gave an incentive for people to speak out when they saw things - as some inevitably did. The temptation to use camcorders to seek out new footage was obvious. Mexico City really just channelled what has been a world wide wave of camcorder UFO footage. But this is no sudden change in the phenomenon. Draw a graph of camcorder ownership year by year from 1991 to 1997 alongside the number of camcorder films of UFOs and they will follow a pretty steady course. What appears to be a massive rise in the number of films of UFOs is simply a direct consequence of the huge rise in camcorder ownership. Another factor during the same time period has been the escalation of new TV channels - exemplified by Sky in the UK - who have seen the advantage of highly popular programming on subjects such as UFOs and the resulting need for collecting video footage to illustrate them. The end product has been the explosion of film footage of UFOs everywhere - but more notable in Mexico City and Bonnybridge because in both places the phenomenon has been adopted as a localised cottage industry. Mexico City is far bigger than Bonnybridge - so there are more potential witnesses and more film.

The TV show '60 Minutes' legitimised the sightings after the initial footage - helping to spread it around the world. Unprepared for the huge interest or the flood of sightings from viewers it said that Mexico was experiencing 'UFO Fever'. The promotion of that ensured that it continued to do so. This is a

circle forged by media hype, do not forget. It is a self fulfilling prophecy. The fact that famed TV reporter Jaime Maussan made a nationwide TV appeal on 19 July 1991 for viewers to look out for UFOs and try to film them surely was not irrelevant. If Trevor MacDonald did the same here on News at Ten I suspect something similar would follow.

Over the next five or six years Maussan has become a Mexican version of Billy Buchanan - the Bonnybridge councillor fighting for the special nature of his town. He has received 5000 videos, he claims. There have been at least one tenth that number taken in the UK during the same period and there has been no concerted effort to gather them here. So I am not unduly amazed. If we were to do a TV show that appealed to UK viewers to send in camcorder film of UFOs I think we would be swamped. It might be worth considering this because the next year could be spent analysing the results for a follow up programme. Although we would get maybe 950 out of 1000 videos that show stars, planets, aircraft and a smattering of hoaxes, I would expect as many as 50 interesting cases - many never reported before because people have not had the incentive to do so or know how to go about reporting.

It would be a sort of 'UFO've been framed' I guess!

This needs careful thought, but not only might it pay off as it has for the TV companies marketing video footage around the world from Mexico - but it would help set that country's wave in context. If the planned programme here is to seriously probe the Mexican wave this is a legitimate research we should carry out. But on air we would need to show the public that (1) we are taking them seriously, (2) we are geared up to act upon their evidence by researching its causes and not just screen it on TV for effect. If we did this the evidence would come in.



JENNY RANGLES

is an internationally respected researcher and author, writing on all areas of extraordinary phenomena including UFOs and the field of paranormal research over the last twenty-five years. She has lectured around the world and contributed to numerous television and radio documentaries.

Jenny served as Director of Investigations for BUFORA for twelve years.

Jenny's numerous books include: *'The Pennine UFO Mystery'*, *'Something In the Air'*, *'The Complete book of Aliens & Abductions'* & *'The Afterlife'* co-authored with Peter Hough. & *'The Paranormal Sourcebook'* Jenny is also a Consultant to *Strange Daze*.

Once the huge hype for the Mexico City affair took off then the phenomenon became more legitimised there than anywhere else (certainly than in the UK). Even serious newspapers carried major stories. This ensured that more and more were encouraged

to come forward. The result was that years of constant publicity brought so many videos to light. They did not come through one TV show. After three or four years people even became rather blasé. UFOs were so common that interest needed more rekindling than it had in the past. This meant that stories had to be bigger and videos better to get as much attention. This soon attracted tricksters, of course, who suspected that vetting standards might slip and a sensational video would be accepted because it looked amazing regardless of its validity.

Most of the video footage is - like elsewhere - just images of lights in the sky. But there are a few that look intriguing. Then - around 1995 - there was a sudden realisation that the same lights were homing in on aircraft. There were countless reports by pilots and by radar controllers who tracked the objects tailing commercial flights.

Possibly the most interesting case was on 28 July 1996 when a flight landing at Mexico City was apparently 'hit' by a UFO that radar tracked on a collision course. Pilot Ray Ruana landed the DC 9 with 109 passengers safely after ducking out of the way of this bright light. On landing it was found that the impact had ripped off a shock absorber.

It has been assumed in Mexico that this is further proof of the country's special attraction for UFOs. It is not. Exactly the same trend for rising mid air encounters between UFOs and aircraft has been recorded world wide. Since 1991 in the UK - for example - there have been over 50 such cases. In several aircraft have been vectored out of the way after radar tracks. It is clear that Mexico is far from unusual. There have even been collisions and one or two possible disasters as a result. One plane in the UK had a hole punched right through its fuselage after a mid air collision. It lost engines but landed safely.

Alongside the interesting hard evidence in Mexico there has - of course - been quite a bit of bizarre tale telling. Crop circles have appeared. Contactees have claimed meetings with aliens who pass on religious messages. The tabloid market sees all this as fair game and I suspect that the danger is that the soberness of the Mexican wave will fade as people begin to lump all of these things together in the quest for an ever bigger story. In essence Mexico is seeing what happened in other parts of the world years ago when UFOs were first discovered in a big way.

the footage anonymously submitted and taken on 6 August 1997. By far the most visually stunning - if true it proves that UFOs are alien craft. This shows no lights in the sky like the other film, or fuzzy metallic glows in the distance. This is a classic domed disc floating over the Mexico City skyline seen to move behind a building in broad daylight.



Maussan of 'Sixty Minutes' got the tape and was really excited. Last I heard it was being analysed by Village Labs in Phoenix, USA. I have seen the film and it is well done but - in my view - it is a hoax. (Later tests seem to have confirmed this). The link with a video company whose building is in shot needs to be explored. But for me the real giveaway is this. The UFO is so blatant in its flight over the city teeming with people in the middle of the day that there is just no way that thousands would not have seen it and at least as many camcorders filmed it as during the 1991 eclipse. That only one group of witnesses did so and there is just the one film - not even any still shots from other angles - leaves me totally unconvinced.

The problem is that these days with computer morphing anyone with reasonable patience and expertise can create a stunning hoax video. A case like this was almost inevitable and - given recent events in Mexico City - few would have betted against this being the location.

I will keep an open mind until I see the full report but I would be amazed if this case turns out to proffer any solid proof of anything non terrestrial.

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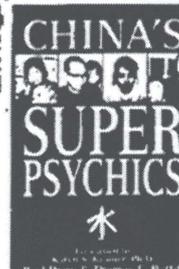
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"STRANGE EVENTS DISTURB SAUCHIE HOUSEHOLD"

A REVIEW AND PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE OF SCOTLAND'S MOST FAMOUS POLTERGEIST EVENT.

The biggest poltergeist case in the annals of Scottish strange phenomena, occurred in the village of Sauchie. Since it was indeed a momentous case, I often wondered what happened to the, little girl involved. Did the classmates of the girl still remember the events?

In 1987 I undertook to find out, and I spoke with a few of Virginia Campbell's classmates who informed me that they had witnessed strange phenomena in the classroom. However, when I tried to interview the aunt of the girl involved, the door was slammed firmly in my face. Somewhat disheartened, I foolishly abandoned all plans to keep searching for further people involved. However, in 1994 I felt compelled to rise to the challenge again and with added vigour, I set off in pursuit of classmates of Virginia Campbell.

But first let me take the readers on a trip down 'Paranormal Lane' to November 1960.

Virginia Campbell aged 11, has left Donegal in Ireland to come to Sauchie in Scotland in order to live for a short time with her aunt and uncle. Leaving behind her friends and a pet dog who had recently died, she finds herself in a new environment, a village called Sauchie near the town of Alloa in Central Scotland.

Education plays a big part in anyone's life, and Virginia found herself in a new school, (Craigbank Primary School). She soon made friends and quickly

settled down to a new life far removed from the Irish culture where she had spent her childhood.

Before I present my updates on this story, let me give the events as they were recorded by a local newspaper, The Alloa Journal. In order to access these events I delved into the microfilm archives at the Alloa Library, which was like going back in time; well in a sense it was. A full afternoon was spent in the library going through page after page of microfilm.

The following, are extracts from the Alloa Journal of December 2, 1960.....

"Just over a week ago strange things began to happen to Virginia. Heavy pieces of furniture were seen to move when she entered a room, doors opened when she approached them, and then were found difficult to shut. Worried and anxious, Virginia's brother asked the Rev. T.W. Lund to try and help, and Dr. H.W. Nisbet of Tillicoultry who attends the family, was called in. Both men have been greatly impressed with what they have been told, and with what they themselves have seen.

Their concern for the well being of Virginia and her family has increased during the past week because of the effect which gossip and publicity are having upon them. Before she came to Scotland, Virginia lost a pet dog of which she was very fond, and a little girlfriend died. Both of these occurrences upset her very much. One night when sitting on the edge of Virginia's bed, Mrs. Campbell was roughly pushed off, and as she stood watching, she saw the blankets and sheets rising and falling above Virginia, while the child made little moaning sounds like someone in pain"...

The Alloa Journal in this very large article goes on at length to state that Rev. Lund and Dr. Nisbet refused to make any public statements or comments regarding this case.

As the days wore on, further and more worrying strange events occurred within the Campbell household. The National Press got wind of the story, and soon the village of Sauchie was awash with reporters. The Alloa Journal article of 2nd December 1960 article goes on to say "Mr. James Henderson, Secretary of the Alloa Spiritualist Church said, 'In my opinion, this little girl has certain unusual psychic qualities, and I am

Malcolm Robinson

convinced that some person who has passed on, is trying to communicate through her. I believe that a responsible medium should be taken to see the little girl, for such a person could certainly help her. The medium might be able to take over from Virginia, the pressure that is being put upon her from the other side, and so bring relief to her. I am convinced that this little girl, if properly looked after spiritually, might be able to help many hundreds of people as the late Helen Duncan did (a famous Scottish psychic medium)."

The Alloa Advertiser writes "Dr. Nisbet said, "Virginia is not responsible for what has happened. The child is innocent. What has taken place was not conjured by the child herself, an outside agent is responsible. Believe me, something unfortunate has been going on in that house. The girl was hysterical all the time the phenomenon were appearing. We decided then to try sedation.

Virginia was given mild tranquillisers to quiet her. If the phenomena were being conjured by her own imagination, they would no longer appear if her brain was dulled. But even though the brain was not working normally, the phenomena still appeared."

The Advertiser story goes on to inform its readers that Virginia was moved to another house in the town of Dollar but sadly, the strange events followed her, and soon afterwards she returned to Sauchie. Not only were these strange events occurring in Virginia's home in Sauchie, but also followed her to school, and these particular events will be covered shortly. This case was becoming bigger and bigger every day. The press constantly hounded the Campbell family friends, neighbours and anyone who knew young Virginia. The strain on the Campbell family was beginning to tell and the protection of young Virginia was a priority.

Meantime, the events intensified. In extracts from *The Alloa Journal* of 16th December 1960, they write "Two Tillicoultry doctors used a tape recording of sound phenomena which had been heard during the recent psychic illness of little Virginia Campbell, in the BBC Scottish Home Service program *Scope* on Tuesday. The sounds in themselves were not terrifying, but a child's voice started screaming 'Mummy, mummy', which occurred when Virginia saw the lid of the linen basket starting to open. The doctors explained that it was then that listeners realized that something unusual was happening.

Mr. MacDonald, Reverend of St. George's West Church in Edinburgh, described the sounds and movements witnessed, and he considered that there were two explanations and he favoured the explanation that the phenomena were caused by some 'lower forms of intelligence'.... SPI (Strange Phenomena Investigations) are currently trying to obtain not only the audio recordings made at that time, but also the piece of cine footage which allegedly shows some phenomena occurring within the home.



So there we have it, a very interesting case, which to this day is still discussed in the towns and villages in Clackmannanshire. As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, I had always wanted to find out more about this case and to speak with those concerned and to inform the readers of *Enigmas* about this monumental case. At this point in time on behalf of Strange Phenomena Investigations (SPI), Helen Walters and I, were working together on a haunting in the town of Kirkcaldy. Our local paper, *The Alloa Advertiser*, interviewed both Helen and I regarding the Kirkcaldy case and it was whilst being interviewed by the paper, that I made the plea for any person or persons who knew Virginia Campbell, or were in the same class as her, to get in touch with me.

The story made front page headlines and soon after I received a telephone call from a local lady who although wasn't in Virginia's class, was very friendly with the teacher. This lady gave me the telephone number of the teacher who took Virginia's class, and I now present some notes taken from my telephone call to the teacher, a Mrs. Margaret Davidson, formally known as Miss Margaret Stewart.

The Recollections of Virginia's School Teacher.

"Virginia was a shy withdrawn girl, but very pleasant. 40

She wasn't really forthcoming but was normal in every other way and she was good at her lessons. I had never really heard the word 'Poltergeist' before; indeed I thought it was a name for some form of medicine! That's how naive I was to the word. The first time I became aware of something strange was when I had given the class an essay to do. The class was quiet, and all the children had their heads down bent over their jotters busily writing away. In 1960 we still had the old school desk which had a lid top. Anyway, I looked over at Virginia, and noticed that she was sitting with both hands pressed firmly down on the top of her desk lid. I rose from my chair and walked over to Virginia. I was then surprised to see the desk lid rise and fall with Virginia trying her best to keep the lid shut with her hands. "At this point a child in front of Virginia rose to take her jotter over to my desk. No sooner had she left her seat, then her desk rose a few inches off the floor on its four legs! I then explained to the class that I would be back in a few minutes, and during this time I went to see the school Headmaster, a Mr. Peter Hill. I said to him that there was something funny going on in my classroom, and explained to him about the incident. Mr. Hill said that he had 'heard talk' of strange things going on in the Campbell household. He then asked to see Virginia and said to me to explain to Virginia's classmates that Virginia may be going home for a few days as she is feeling unwell, and that there might be talk from others of ghosts centred around her. They were not to believe this, they were just rumours. This is what he more or less told me to say.

Anyway I went back to the classroom, summoned Virginia over, and told her that the headmaster wanted to talk to her. As Virginia left the room, I found that I could not shut the door behind her, I had to summon help from three of the school children to help me push the door shut. I remember saying to the class, 'It must be very windy today!' Virginia was not distressed at this time. I then mentioned to the class what the headmaster had told me to say, and I found that the class was very responsive and quite supportive.

The Vibrating Table!

Margaret goes on to explain "The most unnerving thing that I experienced in the classroom, was when on one occasion I was sitting behind my large oak table. Virginia was standing at the other side of the table with her hands clasped firmly behind her back. Suddenly, the large blackboard pointer cane, which was lying flat on my table, started to vibrate. At first it was vibrating slowly, then increased as the seconds wore on. I sat transfixed looking at this. Then the table, which was quite a heavy one, started to rise up very slowly into the air and also vibrate. I put my hands on the table and tried to push it back down but with no success. I was quite horrified. But it didn't stop there. The table continued to vibrate as it hovered a few inches off the floor. Then the table 'rotated ninety degrees', so that where I had moments before sat behind the long edge of the table, the table had rotated so that its narrow edge was now directly in front of my stomach. I looked up at Virginia, and saw that she was quite distressed, and I remember

her saying.... 'Please Miss, I'm not doing that, honest I'm not.' I calmed her down. Just then, a bowl of bulbs shot straight across the table."

Margaret went on to discuss with me, other aspects of strange events within the classroom and informed me that objects, including school jotters, would rise up into the air and move away from the direction of where Virginia was at the time. These objects never seemed to move towards Virginia, they always moved in a direction away from her! Margaret also informed me that she had noticed that strange things seemed to occur on a twenty-eight day cycle!

Supportive classmates.

When events really got underway, the press hounded poor Virginia at school, but thankfully Virginia's classmates were very supportive to her. As the press gathered at the school gates, a female classmate of Virginia, who looked somewhat similar, put on Virginia's coat and rushed from the school going in a different direction from where Virginia lived. Hot in pursuit, were a merry band of pressmen. Margaret also mentioned to me, that she too was hounded by the press, who continually pushed her for details. One humorous story, Margaret recollects, was when on one occasion, a certain lady came up to her and said, "Can I touch you?" The lady then proceeded to inform Margaret that she was one of God's chosen ones! Margaret even had a letter from a Witch Doctor from Africa who told her to, 'pound down some bones and dance over them'. This, she was told, might get rid of Virginia's ghosts!!

The Church of Scotland arrived at Criagbank Primary School and held a service in the classroom, not an exorcism, Margaret explained. This however, failed to work, and the events continued in their absurdity. Margaret concluded our discussion on the phone by saying... "These events really did happen Mr. Robinson, I remember them as though it was yesterday. I'll never ever forget them."

A major witness recollects.

Through further research, I uncovered another major witness to the events in the Campbell home, a Mr. James Carruthers, (pseudonym) who at the time of the poltergeist event, was highly involved with the situation surrounding young Virginia, and was a regular attendee at the Campbell's home. He has asked that I do not divulge his name even though his name was regularly used in the press at the time. SPI respected this wish.

During a telephone conversation with Mr. Carruthers, he said. "On one occasion, I was in Virginia's bedroom with a number of other individuals. I was standing close to the bed, in which Virginia was lying in, she had the covers up to her chin. Suddenly I observed the covers making a 'rippling movement', from the bottom of the bed up to Virginia's chin. I am of the opinion that Virginia did not produce this effect, there was no movement below the covers, i.e. from her legs, just this peculiar 'rippling' effect running up and down the top bed-cover."

James continues.... "Seconds later, I then observed the pillow next to Virginia which had been plumped up, suddenly take what appeared to be, the shape of a person's head. A clear indentation of the pillow was seen by myself and others in the room. Now during this time, strange knockings, banging's, scratching and what sounded like sawing noises, were coming from all over the room. You couldn't really pinpoint

the exact sources of the noise. It was coming from everywhere! Most unusual, was the sound of what appeared to be like, a ping-pong ball constantly being bounced. Virginia was quite distressed by all this.

"On another occasion when the Church Of Scotland were in attendance at the home, the noises, these banging's and rapping's, intensified during the exorcism ceremony. They were really loud I remember, when church members started singing 'The Lord's My Shepherd'.

James went on to say... "Someone mentioned at this time that animals, are to some degree psychic. So I decided to test this theory and took my pet dog along to the Campbell house and even though the same knockings and rapping's could be heard in Virginia's bedroom, my dog was at no time disturbed by it all. My feelings on the matter are that these events have nothing to do with ghosts or spirits. I believe that the shift in environment from a rural farming community life in Ireland, leaving behind friends and such, and coming over to Scotland, was in a sense, a bit of a trauma, and that somehow this suppressed emotion externalised to objects and items close to Virginia."

Mr. Carruthers also stated to me during this phone call, that he remembers seeing a diary kept by the uncle of Virginia at that time, in which was an entry which stated that marks appeared and disappeared on Virginia's hands. Mr. Carruthers stated that at no time did he ever witness this.

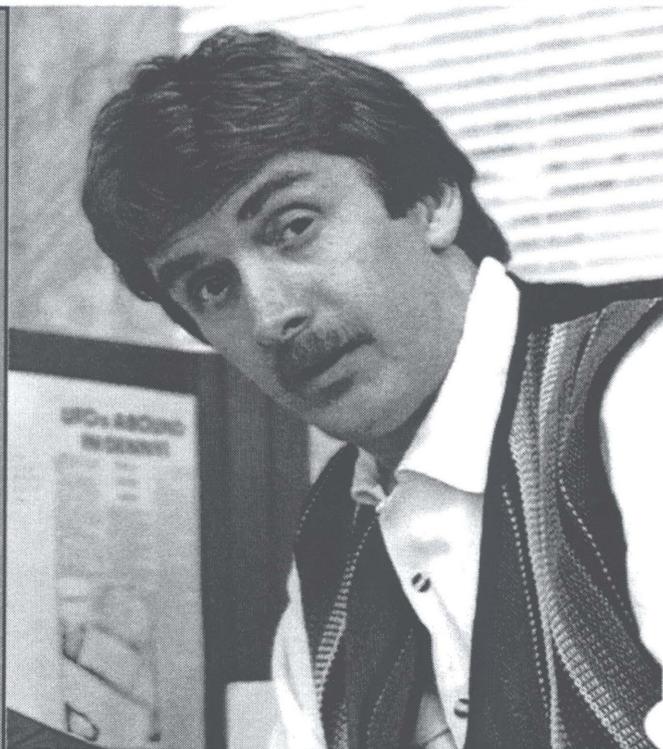
I must admit that I had hoped for a better response to my request for people to contact me with information on this case from the readers of the Alloa Advertiser. But of course the fact could be that many people associated with the case, may have moved on, and any that are left, may be reluctant to talk! Back in 1987 when I first took on looking at this case again, I interviewed two former classmates of Virginia who more or less confirmed the events that their teacher had experienced.

Closing summary.

So in conclusion, I have enjoyed my reappraisal of Scotland's most famous poltergeist event. My telephone call to Virginia's former teacher was very illuminating. How I wished that I had been in Virginia's class at that time! Whether you subscribe to the belief that spirits were involved here, or, as Mr. Carruthers mentioned, that Virginia herself through suppressed emotion somehow caused these events to occur, is a matter of some debate.

What is abundantly clear, is the fact that these events did occur and were witnessed by sound and very reliable people in the community. The village of Sauchie was, as the Alloa Advertiser so aptly described, descended upon by swarms of the press like one of the plagues of Egypt.

And me, what do I believe? Well the state that the world is in right now, there must be countless millions suffering from suppressed emotion, and I don't think that strange events are occurring to them. Dr. Nisbet who attended Virginia, saw a heavy linen chest rise up from the floor, now it would take some suppressed emotion to cause that! Suppressed emotion or Poltergeist? We could argue about it all day. Whether it is one or the other, or a combination of both, one thing's for sure, these things are so fascinating that they demand extensive attention and investigation.



Malcolm Robinson has been interested in the strange world of UFOs and paranormal phenomena for a majority of his life and in 1979 he formed his own research society, **Strange Phenomena Investigations, (SPI)**.

In recent years he moved to London from Scotland where he created the sister counterpart to SPI, of the same name, **Strange Phenomena Investigations England**. SPI Scotland is now run by a fellow researcher

The aims of SPI, are to collect, research, and publish accounts relating to most aspects of strange phenomena, and to endeavour to find explanations as to the nature of these curious reports and experiences.

Malcolm has written articles for many UFO and paranormal magazines world-wide and has assisted the national media in many reported incidents of anomalous phenomena relating to ghosts, poltergeists and UFOs.

He has travelled extensively throughout Britain on research projects, and has lectured to various clubs and societies throughout Scotland and England, in addition to representing his country at International UFO Conferences. He has appeared in many television programmes in Scotland, as well as contributing to an American 'Sightings' documentary and world-wide television programmes. He has also appeared on **Strange But True**, GMTV and contributed to documentary programmes for BBC Scotland.

Malcolm's goal remains firmly with his lifetime desire to continue researching cases pertaining to the strange world of UFOs and the paranormal, and to search for the elusive answers to these remarkable and puzzling mysteries.

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<http://www.FSRReview.net/spi/spihome.htm>

END

MALCOLM ROBINSON

TURNING UFOS INTO IFOS - NOSS

For the Twenty First century satellites will be of a smaller construction, produced economically and will encompass tasks such as space based radar that the present Discoverer II program (joint US Air Force, DARPA and NRO technology) is tasked to do will cost an estimated \$60 million. Discoverer II's goal will be to launch two research and development satellites which will be capable of detecting and tracking targets on the Earth's surface! (Did you know that the NAVSPASUR surveillance system - surveillance of space - uses a Doppler shift to detect objects as small as 10cm in diameter at orbital heights of up to 15,000 nautical miles and accurately keep track of them?) They will produce high-resolution and imagery and collect high-resolution, digital terrain mapping data. It will be able to do this day or night and in all weather. But why the development of multiple formation satellite systems?

Since the end of the Cold War the United States has had to refocus its military planning and strategy. Second and Third World countries have quickly increased their technological development. The conflict in the Gulf War had demonstrated the superior reconnaissance ability of surveillance satellites and the US military has depended upon it. The US Air Force believed that space based programs will make ground based and air based radars redundant. To do this there has to be found a cheaper way of producing a new security. In the Draft Roles and Missions Report of the Joints Chief of Staff it notes that;

"The newest national space satellite system will consolidate the missions, facilities and infrastructure of two existing satellites. This will facilitate the closure of six ground stations and consolidate operations at one site, eliminating significant facility expenses."

An important threat is the vulnerability of Low Earth Orbit satellites to anti satellite attack.(or ATAS) Satellites can be seen during clear nights but also on rare occasions affordable telescopes can detect faint objects in the daytime sky! (Accompanied by rare atmospheric effects e.g. mirages, we might even have satellites creating daylight UFOs). It is also relatively easy to track satellites, amateur astronomers have demonstrated this already. Second and Third World countries hoping to develop techniques of countering satellite surveillance only have to find a means of being able to identify, track and either mask ground

based targets (such as mobile missile launchers) or disable the satellite itself. It is a misconception that satellites can operate today in a totally covert manner. The technology needed to track and counter/disable is available and inexpensive. There is easy access to a worldwide network of amateur satellite observers, complete with a skymap and a PC anyone can plot and predict the movement of satellites. To detect and track means that the hardware has to be available, for a technology that is being constantly produced it is easily available if a nation can afford the cost. Most Third World nations can e.g.India.

A wonderful example of is this of a Lacrosse I surveillance satellite over Tehran being targeted for the 16 March 1992 and again on the 22 March 1992. With the knowledge of the satellite's trajectory, elevation, and height it would have been possible for Iran to fire a missile to knock out the satellite. Such anti satellite measures are a growing security threat to the US and there is a need for projects to involve formations of satellites so as to prevent any attack on the satellites from rendering their work useless. Another added problem here is that there is a need for a rapid satellite replacement, so that surveillance and intelligence gathering can continue, of which the US has none employed.

My interest in the field of UFOs entails the possible identification of satellites as an origin of the sighting. With this case, I feel that I have done so. I am now aware that certain satellites do travel in formation and they also create different shapes of lights. We have NOSS travelling in threes and also the Lacrosse satellites travelling in twos. For me in Merseyside it also means solving a number of other cases which have been previously labelled as insufficient data (IFO-ID). However, what I became bothered by was the fact that these satellites had been observed by amateur astronomers in 1996 yet no one in UFOlogy had picked this up! I was unable to locate any of this from the available UFO literature! This was very unusual as it clearly provides a solution for a number of sightings. I realised that few so called 'ufologists' actually like to hear of solutions, in fact, I know that there are some who enjoy the mere mystery of the subject but refuse to pay attention to the fact that unsolved cases only represent approximately 1 in 10 of reported sightings. We know that from the equipment on board these surveillance satellites, and their appearance, that they will emit a bright white colour with a blue tinge, and may be accompanied with smaller lights about their body, the light may also appear to flicker possibly due to the reflector radar antenna as they turn in orbit. The formation of lights will also vary from triangular, to a straight line to even appear to intercept one another and then disappear. This description is not at all definitive but reflects

I REALISED THAT FEW SO CALLED 'UFOLOGISTS' ACTUALLY LIKE TO HEAR OF SOLUTIONS, IN FACT, I KNOW THAT THERE ARE SOME WHO ENJOY THE MERE MYSTERY OF THE SUBJECT BUT REFUSE TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT UNSOLVED CASES ONLY REPRESENT APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 10 OF REPORTED SIGHTINGS.

what satellite observers have reported seeing.

The first time I had produced this article I actually thought I was going to receive mail from readers telling me that this was nothing new, how wrong I was! I received confirmation of this from someone who contacted the British UFO Research Association who actually told me that the NOSS satellites actually describe what he had seen in the night sky a few years ago. I wonder how many reported observations from the British public have been interpreted by ufologists as the famed Flying Triangle? I also wonder about NASA film footage, such as STS-80 and STS-48, of objects that appear to be intelligently controlled orbiting the Earth and is interpreted by some to be footage of extra-terrestrial craft rather than, say for argument's sake, a military project to see if it is possible to shoot down satellites with ground based missiles. Remember that a number of UFO stories put around in the 1960s were cover stories for the CIA when top secret high altitude aircraft were being flown, such as the U2 spyplane. Space footage of apparently unusual and intelligently controlled craft could also be a cover for necessary security satellite operations.

ANTHONY ECCLES

END



Tony is a museum curator at Liverpool Museum's Dept. of Archaeology & Ethnology.

He has a degree in Archaeology from the Institute of Archaeology, University College, London.

Tony has investigated UFOs and paranormal phenomena for seven years. His interests are in close encounter experiences, time anomalies & Para physical UFOs. He is a council member for the British Ufo research association and co-founder and coordinator for the Merseyside Anomalies research Association

LINK

<http://www.newscientist.com/news/news.jsp?id=ns224635>

*Mind Phantoms

THERE'S nothing supernatural about ghosts, doppelgängers and out-of-body experiences, says a Swiss neuroscientist. They are simply phantom sensations like a phantom limb, he says, but spread to the whole body.

People experience phantom limbs--the sense that an amputated limb is still present--when the part of the brain that normally senses the limb loses those signals (New Scientist, 17 June, p 27).

Peter Brugger of the University Hospital in Zurich says that doppelgängers, in which people are aware of phantom "doubles" of themselves, have a similar origin.

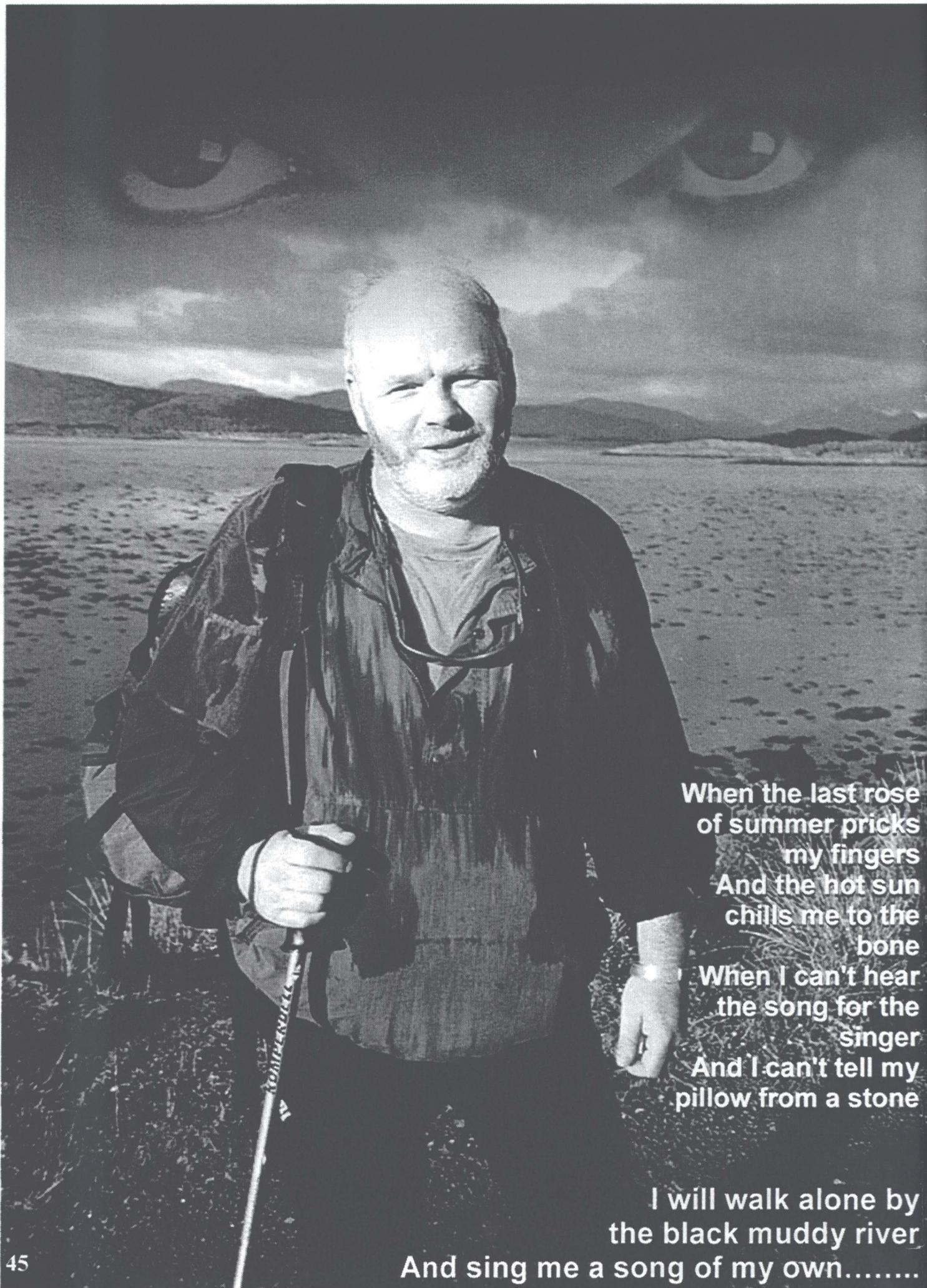
Some people actually see their double, often as a mirror image. This may be the result of damage to visual areas of the brain that affect the way we sense our body, says Brugger. Others merely feel the presence of a double without actually seeing one. He believes that these doubles are generated when the parietal lobes, the regions responsible for the distinction between body and surrounding space, are damaged.

Out-of-body experiences, where a person "sees" their body from the outside, may be caused by temporary over activity of certain brain regions. "Excitability of the temporal lobes seems to be a plausible explanation," says Brugger. These regions are connected to the parietal lobes and are sensitive to visual signals, low levels of oxygen and emotional arousal.

Brugger believes the brain could account for other paranormal experiences: "Ghosts are probably nothing more but also nothing less than phantoms of the body."

END LINK

Helen Phillips
Courtesy: New Scientist magazine.



When the last rose
of summer pricks
my fingers
And the hot sun
chills me to the
bone
When I can't hear
the song for the
singer
And I can't tell my
pillow from a stone

I will walk alone by
the black muddy river
And sing me a song of my own.....

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

IN THE COMPANY OF

ANDY ROBERTS

**STALKING THE WILD PLACES OF UFOLOGY AND
CHALLENGING THE LAST FIFTY YEARS OF RESEARCH**

Around 1967 Andy Roberts discovered Dennis Wheatley's novels with stories of the supernatural. This, combined with the 1967 UFO wave triggered his initial interest in unexplained phenomena and the occult, and has held him spellbound for the last thirty-three years, although probably for rather different reasons than many researchers and writers in the field of anomalous phenomena.

Up front and very personal indeed at times, Andy has written books (most recently *The UFOs That Never Were* with Jenny Randles and David Clarke) and many articles for magazines including *Fortean Times* on the subject of UFOs and all Fortean phenomena for over twenty years, in addition to editing two of his own magazines, *UFO Brigantia* and *The Armchair Ufologist*. In the *Armchair Ufologist* Andy captures the very essence of Ufology's luminaries and goes for the jugular of UFO researchers with scathing attacks of a very personal nature at times, when he challenges their research, theories and beliefs. This is often combined with his irreverent humour to soften the extreme blows that can be felt by many who are targeted by him. This is his intention, to create controversy, feedback and sometimes answers...answers, which can then debate the crucial issues involved, in order to achieve some real and objective truth about the world of unexplained phenomena.

In his professional life, Andy Roberts works as a Housing Support worker at a hostel for young, single, homeless, ex-offenders, which involves wide parameters of duties, particularly in advising and confronting the problems within their personal lives and their responsibilities of learning to cope with life in general. This has, in many ways, allowed Andy to examine the darker side of human nature and has given him a deeper understanding and insight within the field of UFOlogy, specifically the personalities and minefield of the UFO researchers at large. Few have escaped his vociferous criticism often aimed with sharp accuracy at his victim.

Black Muddy River
Lyrics: Robert Hunter
Music: Jerry Garcia

His highly tuned wit and merciless humour at the expense of others has become legendary within the circle of UFO researchers as is evident from his magazine *The Armchair Ufologist*, guaranteed to upset some, particularly those without a sense of humour. He has clashed with many in the field of UFO research, dissecting some of the classic UFO cases piece by piece, tearing apart the original investigations and the investigators.

He takes to task witness testimonies and their perceptions and inaccuracies, proving how subjective and contaminated witness testimony can be therefore directly affecting our understanding of the true UFO mystery

His reputation in the UFO world is emotive for those whose paths he has crossed. He is unyielding in his criticism of both researchers and witnesses. He cares not about winning any popularity contest and even less about what most people think of him. He wants the evidence and the truth, not as seen through eyes of the beholder and the investigator, but as seen and proven through scientific, objective and thorough research.

Who am I to disagree with this? I caught up with Andy recently and asked him some questions about his motivations and beliefs within his long association into the world of mysterious and extraordinary phenomena and its inhabitants.

What follows is the totally unabridged interview with Andy, and will give those who don't know him an insight into his provocative thoughts on many issues involved in our limited understanding of those curious other worlds that many of us experience from time to time.

Why do you feel Dennis Wheatley's novels captivated you and triggered your extensive interest in unexplained phenomena?



Well, both my parents were satanic child abusers so when my mother bought me Dennis Wheatley's book *To The Devil A Daughter* on a holiday in Cornwall I thought I might be able to get some insight into their behaviour. Old Dennis turned me on to the occult in a big

I did manage to meet the Devil (or more correctly the ultimate force of evil),

way. I loved the ritual trappings and the possibility the world was far stranger than I thought it was then. The idea of absolute good vs. absolute evil was powerful too, even though now I know that only humans are capable of either. But that was only the half of it. It was 1967 and that same year I later read a book called *Ritual*, which is claimed to be the inspiration for the *Wicker Man* film. During a holiday in Scarborough later that year (hey, two holidays in 1967 - we were middle class, ok?) I picked up a newsstand publication on UFOs - complete nonsense of course but it niggled my pre-pubescent mind. It got worse. In around November '67 I came across Keel's Jadoo in the local library, and I'm afraid after that I was one warped child. The final nail in the coffin of my mental development that year was reading Hunter S Thompson's classic biker book, *Hell's Angels at Christmas* (*great* book, even today, and Thompson has been a massive influence on my writing style). My parents were so horrified by all this that they



Everyone's got to have a hobby, as my old grandmother never used to say. Having read about it since I was eleven I got seriously into it in 1983 when I was a full time house husband and realised I'd go mad if I didn't find something to occupy my brain. So I got Jenny Randles' *UFOs: A British Viewpoint* out of the library and went to a WYUFORG meeting on the very day that the *News of the World* ran the Rendlesham story. I met Nigel Mortimer and Paul Bennett and things just went from there. I soon realised that most UFOlogy was a heap of rubbish and that few people do any real research. I think I saw in UFOlogy an arena in which it was possible to actually do something useful as an amateur, to prove whether certain things and beliefs were in fact objectively 'true' or 'false'. And like many other people there is something about the whole saucer mythology, which appeals to and gnaws at our post-religious, post-war, post-industrial psyches; a symbol of 'otherness' on which to test oneself and the world perhaps? Whatever, I instantly knew the saucer game was for me. Once I was involved in it, I soon realised it was a complex

and that was one of the tamer forces I chanced across

renounced Satanism and joined the Church of Jesus immediately; so even at that tender age I was able to affect people's beliefs. 1967 was a big year for me as I think all my interests have their genesis then. I was a hog for any book dealing with strange phenomena and devoured all and any with little discrimination - hell, for a while I was virtually a student of Lobsang Rampa! Later, between 1972-77 I thoroughly investigated psychedelic drugs, mainly though not exclusively LSD, which gave me tremendous insight into well, everything really. The stories I could tell! I did manage to meet the Devil (or more correctly the ultimate force of evil), and that was one of the tamer forces I chanced across. 'God' never showed up.

I learned lots about strange phenomena during that period and even more about the human body/mind thing. I was an unashamed acid evangelist, even though it almost cost me my sanity, and I firmly believe everyone should have at least one good psychedelic experience in their lifetime. After going through what we called 'The British Standard Tripping Mill' I'd seen and believed in most things several times, and believe me if you take that sort of thing seriously, extraterrestrials are the least of our worries!



What is your primary reason for being involved in UFOlogy and related phenomena?

field, which would teach me much about how the human mind works and how belief is created.

But as it was one of Jenny's books which triggered me off I'd blame it all on Jenny. Everyone else blames her for something. She might as well be blamed for me being a ufologist as well!

You once said in an email to me that there are times in your professional life where you have to confront delusional behaviour, is this why you choose to be an observer of the UFO community in addition to your research?



A lot of the time at work I am dealing with 'difficult' people. People, who, for whatever reasons, choose to lie, cheat and misrepresent themselves and the world around them. Some people think that the best way to deal with this type of dysfunction is by counselling and other girly ways of doing things. I don't, and much prefer the straight forward approach. Everyone knows where you stand then. This work has helped me design the world's best bullshit detector and has helped no end in my ufological work because I don't mess about. Believe me, when you've dealt with hundreds of people suffering borderline malnutrition, drug psychosis and societal alienation and various mental health problems - all at once, ufologists are just a bunch of pussycats. I've often had to listen to several people separately describing the same event, such as a burglary or break-in to a hostel room. Doing this quickly clues you in to the fact that even when people are genuinely trying to recall details and sequences of events which only happened a few hours

'God' never showed up.

ago, they get hopelessly muddled about everything. So what does that say about other forms of witnesses?

As for being an observer it's a way of keeping some detachment otherwise I'd just be swimming round in the bowl with all the other goldfish! Also I'm interested in the history and development of UFOlogy, so a certain amount of detachment and an ability to observe is useful. I am natural watcher by nature and I just like watching for its own sake (ooer, missus). Of course this has led to difficulties in the past, such as that regrettable incident with the telescope and the nurses home. I did try to tell them everyone needs a hobby but the magistrate just didn't seem to understand.

You are known by some as a provocateur within the UFO field. Do you feel this is a fair assessment, at least in part and just how much do you enjoy this aspect of the drama?



Yes. Besides the actual UFO research and investigation I do, I thoroughly enjoy being a 'provocateur'. If people make what I consider to be stupid claims they should be challenged and hounded mercilessly until they prove their point or shut up. As the Talking Heads so rightly said 'this ain't no disco, this ain't no party, this ain't no fooling around'. When some goon tries to tell me a spaceship crashed or that little grey guys with no todgers are 'abducting' my fellow citizens, yet cannot display one single shred of evidence for this idea then I flick the safety catch on my revolver and unleash the dogs of having a laugh at their expense. These people are sad hucksters making money out of other people's gullibility and they should be pistol whipped 'til they squeal. Worse still these people are literally evil because they try to persuade - with no evidence - people that they have something to be scared of. Listen up pilgrims, there is nothing to fear except the evil that men do! So yeah, I enjoy winding people up and I am prepared to, and do, put enormous amounts of time and money into keeping an eye on these idiots and challenging them where and when I can.

I also thoroughly enjoy having a go at the useless UFO organisations - like BUFORA -, which purport to study the UFO subject, but in reality are just glorified clubs for believers. I think the idea of taking money from individuals to be in an organisation is childish in the extreme. The only good UFO research is done by individuals or small groups of highly motivated people. But what bugs me the most - hence my relentless criticism of it - is the corporatisation of UFOlogy. When you have little groups - unfortunately BUFORA again springs to mind - which have 'councils', 'chairpersons', and so on with petty little rules and regulations, well, it's just sad. They need to realise that UFOlogy is not ICI. To anyone out there listening - you have no need of any of that. If you are a member of any such group I suggest you resign immediately. This is not idle speculation either. I spent a year on BUFORA Council and it was the most vacuous waste of time.

(Editor's note. As I am a long term member and council member of BUFORA, I take issue here with all of Andy's comments with regard to BUFORA. Although there is no

doubt that good research is always carried out by individuals or small groups of highly motivated people within or outside of groups, BUFORA certainly is not a glorified club for believers, but encompasses a broad range of views and opinions within its membership about the UFO mystery. There are as many sceptics as believers. Furthermore BUFORA, is a national UFO organisation with a history spanning forty years. They publish a magazine (BUFORA Bulletin) and have an active research and investigations team. They also administer a postal training course, which is mandatory for potential investigators in addition to holding monthly London lectures on all aspects of the UFO mystery)

Do you think you have made a difference?



Yes. Simply because I know I've changed people's minds about various aspects of UFOlogy and made some people more sceptical than they were. Of course I also invented a cure for all known diseases but forgot the formula during a particularly boring BUFORA Council meeting in 1991.

By various degrees you are accused of constructive and destructive criticism, what would you like to construct?



I'd like to construct a UFOlogy, which actually worked! And it could be done. Imagine that a 'big' case happened. Instead of everyone fighting to get information to either publish in book



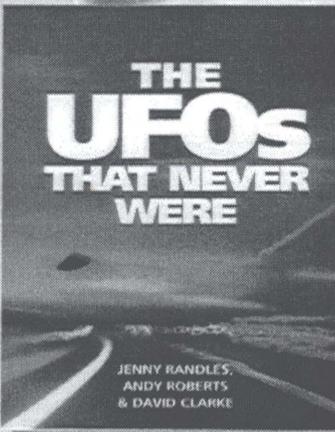
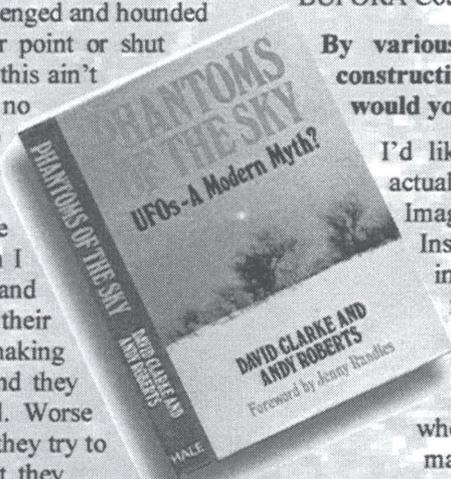
form or for self aggrandisement or whatever, meetings should be arranged between all interested parties, whatever their belief, to share evidence and work towards an answer, whether that be IFO or UFO. Unfortunately many ufologists get too personal with 'their' cases and won't share information with anyone and think that criticism of a case equals criticism of them. I suspect this is because they would be embarrassed if they had to show the quality of their 'research' to others. Ufologists often bang on about how they wish 'science' would look at the subject. Well people, 'science' would just laugh at UFOlogy as it is now. If you want professionals to take an interest in you then you have to produce work of a professional standard, backed up by real evidence. And that isn't happening to any great degree.

Some people consider you to be quite a brilliant writer and researcher, but you appear to have launched a one-man crusade against false beliefs. Which gives you the most enjoyment.. the writing or the crusade?



I hate writing! It doesn't come easily. Each word has to be squeezed out, each paragraph edited a million times. I never write anything until I have to.

Whereas that young whippersnapper 'Dr' Dave Clarke (you do realise it's a fake doctorate from the University of Wolamaloo, don't you?) can churn out words in the right order by the thousand whilst entertaining his harem and strumming his lute. Galling, isn't it? So it's got to be the crusade and the research, for the reasons given earlier. I didn't want to do it and I'd far rather be living by the sea and mountains in northwest Scotland with



my books, CDs, an endless supply of appropriate herbs and a girl with long black hair. I'm open to sponsors and volunteers for this experiment.



You have stated on several occasions that without UFO researchers there would be no UFO subject to study. You also seem to have a fascination with the characters involved almost like a script for your very own soap opera hence *The Armchair Ufologist*. You seem amused by much of the subject and the researchers Do you agree with this statement ?



Well I don't think there would be. Recently I've been reading a lot of books and newspaper articles from the 1940s and 50s and the early days of UFOlogy. I recommend this to anyone because we all think we know about the 'early days' of the subject but we don't. Whilst, yes, people were seeing things in the sky they couldn't explain it's plain to see that 'UFOlogy' was created by the press and a small number of writers. There was no ufological interest in the UK to speak of before Keyhoe's first book. It took several years before there were any UFO investigation groups in the UK, and writers and the media have kept the subject going since, feeding from ufologists who then feed it back and so on. So yes, I believe that ufologists, in all their forms, including me, are largely responsible for the subject and its twists and turns over the years. And yes, I'm fascinated by the characters - you couldn't write a soap opera with some of these people in it. What are they like, eh? There are some really nice, genuine (although 'nice' and 'genuine' don't always go together!) people in the subject, but there are also many who want to use the subject for their own barely hidden agendas. This is invariably money and fame, although recently it's just been naked ego and the desire to manipulate other people. I think the only way to judge a ufologist is by the amount, relevance and quality of the work they produce.

It is apparent that you have an affinity with nature, as you walk the Yorkshire Moors and surrounding areas very frequently. Is walking and your kinship with nature a creative force for you, particularly with regard to your research and illuminating article *The Big Grey Man of Ben Macdhui* (See SD Issues 17/18)?



Just call me nature boy eh? It may sound trite, but like Fotherington-Tomas in the Molesworth books I love only nature! You can relate to it on any level you want from the pragmatic to the mystic, and I'm just an old hippy nature mystic at heart. I enjoy watching natural processes and cycles, looking at landscapes, all forms of weather, everything really. I also enjoy the aspect of having to be totally self reliant, not dependent on anything but your mind and body. It's a totally creative experience, and there are few problems of any kind, which can't be solved by a stiff walk! Most of my writing and research has been gestated whilst toiling up some godforsaken, dreich hillside. Being outdoors, preferably in wild areas is good for the soul and I feel almost benevolent towards my fellow ufologists by the time I get home. 'Course, that soon wears off!

You have commented that you believe the human mind and its interaction with the environment are the only things worthy



of any real study and that you have a great deal of time for the study of beliefs, whatever context these beliefs take. Tell me something about your interest into people's beliefs and fears.



They must be, because the mind is what we use to interpret what we encounter and what we encounter is the environment. Therefore the interaction is worthy of study as it's the interaction which produces all our experiences. And it's the interpretation of experience as inexplicable or anomalous that fascinates me. As that old prankster *John Keel* once said, 'belief is the enemy'. And so it is. The world is and has always been full of people trapped into lots of little and big beliefs, which rule their lives and lead to them wanting to rule others' lives. All organised religion and politics is of this nature as in fact is any imposed system. All wars have been because someone thinks their religion or politics is better than someone else's. Weird isn't it? Rage against the machine kids!



In part of the concluding paragraphs of your article on the *Big Grey Man of Ben Macdhui* you wrote

'But based on the evidence I have reviewed both new and old, I think this is a very real psychological or psychic phenomenon and one, which may lie at the core of many so called 'paranormal' experiences. Its triggers may be many but they all stem from the human instrument's perception of and relationship with the reality we live in. As one commentator wrote to Affleck Gray, 'the most mysterious thing to be found among mountains was the human brain.'

Do you believe that the human brain/consciousness is responsible for all the extraordinary experiences reported by people and that there are in fact no other external sources or a non-human intelligence operating with us on any level, including visitors from other planets?



It has to be, simply because the brain is the organ we use for interpreting the 'world', and obviously there are puzzling events in the external, natural, world which are interpreted as out of the ordinary. Of course the deep fathoms of the human mind will always throw up an 'explanation' for these events, one which is always based on the current culture, folklore or mythology, and off you go. Before you know it you've got priests ripping hearts out, men in black dresses telling you contraception is against God's will and little grey men impregnating our womenfolk. And no, I don't believe there are any external sources or non-human intelligences, although I'm fascinated by the possibility, especially Jung's idea of some form of 'collective unconscious'. In my wildest moments I've been known to believe in some form of telepathy, but of course you knew I was going to say that.

I think absolute belief in anything is bad, as it makes us able to defer or abnegate responsibility for our actions. Belief in any form of deus ex machina from the Christian God to extraterrestrials is a limiting thing. Belief in the afterlife or reincarnation mean people may think things are going to improve, and belief that extraterrestrials exist and are either a) good or b) bad means we can mess the planet up and wait for them to save us or not bother about anything, because they have always been in control and we are their property.

Yeah. As if.

Look at it another way. Throughout history people have been positing the existence and intervention of fairies, djinns, aliens, dead souls, gods, goddesses etc. etc. Not once have any of them been proven real outside the minds of those imagining or experiencing them. Seems to me that whenever humans discover new things - space discoveries such as meteorites, 'new' creatures such as the Coelacanth etc. etc. they all follow the natural laws of physics, biology etc. Maybe, just maybe, there may be aspects of what are

Being outdoors, preferably in wild areas is good for the soul and I feel almost benevolent towards my fellow ufologists by the time I get home. 'Course, that soon wears off!

artefacts or properties of quantum physics, which cause anomalous phenomena, but by and large we are dealing with everyday phenomena misperceived on many levels. There is also the problem that we have to study the mind with the mind, but that's a far longer philosophical discussion.

Of course my beliefs here won't affect any external reality there may be. So believe what you choose, or choose what you believe. But don't take it seriously.



To backtrack a little to your book *Phantoms of the Sky - UFOs, A Modern Myth*, written with David Clarke and published in 1990 you write,

Man does not stand at the crossroads of anything. He stands where he has always stood, apparently alone in a huge universe he is desperately trying to understand but which is becoming continually stranger. The human race is always in a precipitous position, both from its own actions on the external world and from its beliefs about what the purpose of life is. Strange experiences, stranger beliefs and warning of impending doom or salvation have been with us since the dawn of time but, despite thousands of years of philosophical thought and scientific method, we are only just beginning to make any sense of the universe which surrounds us and have only just realised that there is an equally large universe within us.

After ten years what would you add to these conclusions?



Besides the fact that it's pompous nonsense, short answer - nothing at all. All ufologists should get on their hands and knees and repeat that paragraph at bedtime. I'll waive the royalties. The universe is weird and so are human beings. We are part of an

unfathomable mystery. Live with it.

Outside of your methodology and your quest for answers to these human mysteries what do you consider to be at the heart of your exploration into UFO and Fortean phenomena for over thirty years, particularly after several sabbaticals from the subject?



I'm just curious about what people believe in, why they believe, and how the whole perception business works. When UFOlogy is 'hot', when a 'big' case is being discussed or is unfolding, wow, just sit back and watch the show. It's like a human circus in there!

It's the only game in town. God knows, I've tried to get away but the guards always find me and bring me back.

If you were a teacher within the UFO community what comments would you make in your mid-term report?



See me after Class!



(For those puzzled by this response, Philip Klass is an American aviation writer and the ultimate sceptic of the UFO subject)

Can you give me an example of what you would consider to be a well-researched case reaching reasonable and rational conclusions? There is one that comes to mind here?



I could rant endlessly about the Berwyn Mountains case. But I think that's done and dusted now unless some little upstart thinks he/she has some 'new' evidence for the crashed spaceship theory, and has to be slapped down with the facts.

At the moment I'm particularly impressed with James Easton's masterful and elegant deconstruction of the Kenneth Arnold sighting. Most people think they know about the Arnold case but have only read 'sanitised' (by ufologists) accounts of Arnold's sighting and forget/ignore/aren't aware of all the facts. Easton has gone over Arnold's many accounts with a fine toothcomb and reasoned logically that he saw a flight of pelicans. No, don't laugh - check out the article in Fortean Times or Easton's web site. Easton has not just wildly speculated either but has combined Arnold's accounts with mountaineers and ornithologists in the area. All agree that pelicans are the likely culprits. And, using Occam's razor on the evidence, it seems a very plausible solution. Unsurprisingly many of our American friends and a great many mad ufologists in the UK will squawk (like Pelicans) at this argument, and it's true there is no absolute proof. But I think this is a case where the sheer weight of surrounding evidence wins out. The most bizarre thing about this theory is that some ufologists appear not to want the case to be solved unless it is flying saucers, which, I think says volumes about the tenacity with which they cling to old beliefs. The bottom line here is that few cases prior to the 1990s were properly investigated anywhere. Now there's a new wind of scepticism blowing through UK UFOlogy with the formation of UFOIN and other channels and once classic cases are being trashed right left and centre. Rendlesham, Berwyn, the Farlow car stop from 1967, the whole 1967 wave in fact and many more have fallen by the wayside. And there's many more to go. A word of warning to ufologists who think that shoddy research will be tolerated - it won't, we're watching

you carefully. If your facts are in doubt we will find out and expose you mercilessly. Slowly but surely the support timbers of UFOlogy are being kicked away. Picking through the debris of human belief is far more exciting and interesting than any notion of extraterrestrials visiting earth.



In your recent book *The UFOs That Never Were* co-authored with David Clarke and Jenny Randles you discuss what came to be known as 'The Cracoe UFO Photograph'.

This photograph, taken in 1981, contributed to reinforcing the reality of many UFO legends in the Yorkshire Dales and for several years appeared to add convincing evidence for these legends. It was to be six years before it was explained indisputably by your own research and a replication of the original photograph taken by you, which proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that this was an optical illusion caused by the reflection of the sunrays on the surface of the rocks. In the concluding chapters devoted to this photograph you make the following observations.

The subject of misperception is central to any understanding of the UFO enigma. But it is widely misunderstood. Most people cannot comprehend how even the most highly trained observers can misinterpret mundane objects as UFOs. But they do. Each year thousands of people see birds, planes and meteorological and astronomical phenomena as 'UFOs', whilst the media automatically associates the acronym with 'aliens' or extraterrestrials.

You go further and write,

It does not matter if the witness is from a background of trained observation, such as a policeman or pilot. There is no such individual as the totally credible witness. Everyone is equally susceptible to misperception in that magic moment when they see something unknown. The transition from 'ordinary consciousness' to 'UFO consciousness' is at the very core of the UFO mystery.

All of this of course is very important, Andy, and in many ways lies at the heart of everything you believe is wrong with this subject. Do you feel there are any photographs or video footage that remain unexplained, or is it the case that with enough funding, research and scientific resources even those classic 'UFO images' could have been identified eventually as in the case of the Cracoe photograph?



Well obviously there are films and photographs, which are unexplained at this moment in time. But they are not inexplicable. And there are no 'good' ones. Ask your common or garden ETH believer to come up with ten good photos or videos of 'craft' and they can't. All they will do is trot out the McMinnville photo, which is itself riven with problems and contradictions. Every time a 'good' photo or video comes along - like the Gulf Breeze nonsense for instance - it is only a matter of time before it is proven to be a hoax or of mundane, misperceived, origin. Furthermore, there are literally millions of good cameras and video cameras being

used every day on Earth. The fact that not one 'good' UFO photo has been captured, let alone by more than one witness at once, speaks volumes for the lack of anything solid in the UFO enigma. Of course the believers will writhe and wriggle and conjure up all kinds of excuses for this paucity of photographs. All drivel of course, but it makes them feel superior. Misperception, in all its forms, is the central mystery of UFOlogy and of most Fortean subjects. And I don't mean just visual misperception - it works on many levels from the textual to the cultural. Yet people dismiss it, despite seeing the proof time and time again. There is a human stupidity at work here of biblical proportions. Ufologists are either lying to themselves or just dim. I can't decide which. The worst possible misperception scenario is when a previously lauded case - say Cracoe, for example - is solved and then the ufologists involved 'forget' about it as though it had never existed. They fail to realise that the subject should learn from the UFOs, which become IFOs. And as all current UFOs exhibit characteristics of UFOs which have been proven to be IFOs people should bear that in mind before making pronouncements about extraterrestrials and so on.

(In your biography for SD, you stated that you live by the lyrics of the Grateful Dead.



How have their songs influenced you?

'THE FACT THAT NOT ONE 'GOOD' UFO PHOTO HAS BEEN CAPTURED, LET ALONE BY MORE THAN ONE WITNESS AT ONCE, SPEAKS VOLUMES FOR THE LACK OF ANYTHING SOLID IN THE UFO ENIGMA.'

Don't get me started on the Grateful Dead! I don't think people realise (or care!) just how serious I am about them. Musically there is nothing on this planet like them. They transcend all known musical barriers to create their own. When those guys are jamming hard it is pure, unadulterated sonic sorcery. I've been listening to them for twenty-eight years now and am still amazed on a daily basis by their depth, skill and passion. For anyone out there who fails to understand this, I suggest their live albums, and in particular *Dicks Picks vol. 14*. But beware; they aren't particularly easy to get into. I thought I understood the *Dead* but in 1994, suddenly, really



understood them - and that process has continued since. They always, without fail, make me feel ecstatically happy and glad to be alive. Most of my writing has been done under the influence of the *Dead* and in fact several lyric quotations have crept into books, most notably the chapter *Fire On The Mountain* in *The UFOs That Never Were*, which is a song title. Mind you, Dave Clarke thinks they sound like 'jazz'!



You have said on many occasions that your consistent criticism of many UFO researchers is not personal, would you feel that it is fair to say that at times it has indeed been received in a very personal way and you have made enemies? Are you sensitive to this fact and how do you feel about the way some perceive you?



Of course it's not personal! I don't know most of these people and probably wouldn't want to. I just satirise their behaviour, methods and style and throw it right back at them to making them cartoon-like figures and exposing their pomposity and stupidity. If they don't like how they appear to the rest of us they should change! Few have ever complained and most people seem to agree with, and are amused by what I say. Some people even beg to be lampooned in the *Armchair Ufologist!* For those who feel genuinely upset by anything I've said about them - tough, either get a life or get wittier. If I have 'made enemies' then again that shows a lot about those individuals'

inability to deal with the world. If it wasn't for the fact that their was a certain amount of 'friction' in UFOlogy there would be no discussion and no progress - everyone would be sat round agreeing with each other, too chickenshit to point out that x was a loony, or y couldn't research her way out of the hairdressers. God knows how people perceive me, and frankly I don't care. A fat, balding, belligerent northerner I suppose. More fool them. Those people who know me in the subject know me, and I have made some long and lasting friendships.

The UFO pot is now overflowing with a variety of anomalous phenomena that appears to bear no relation to unidentified aerial phenomena at all and yet people are re-interpreting and re-defining many extraordinary human experiences and sightings as being linked to UFOs and aliens. The reports and claims of abduction by aliens has been a deeply controversial issue for many years now with a never ending flow of sensational approaches to these reports by the media and press, notwithstanding all the articles, books and investigations into abduction claims. What are your thoughts on all of this?



Abductions are a tricky business for many reasons. Do they happen at all? Well, people report a series of physical and mental symptoms which some have determined constitutes alien abduction syndrome. I could rabbit on for pages about the problems inherent

with abductions but I'll keep it to a few salient points. Firstly, where's the physical evidence? Despite the reported experiences and the rabid twittering of pro-ETH ufologists there is no physical evidence. Secondly where are the photographs of aliens? There are none. These are the two main objections to any 'reality' claimed of abduction reports. This is not in any way to undermine the actual experience of the witness. But experience needs to be put in context. Throughout history, in all cultures, people have reported encounters with non-human intelligences, often manifesting as humanoids of one form or another. They come in all shapes and sizes, give all kinds of messages and travel in all kinds of craft. Fairies spring to mind immediately. Yet there was no physical evidence for these phenomena either. Of course ufologists such as Jerry Clarke, bright as they are, cannot get the detachment necessary to realise that 'our' aliens are just this particular age and culture's fairies. And just as reports of fairies, their appearance, abilities, aims and so on changed over the years, so it is with aliens. Look at a collection of drawings of aliens and you'll immediately see that the *Strieber* alien, for instance, is a more polished version of the aliens described by Betty and Barney Hill. Once upon a time abduction experiences would have been accepted as part of the framework of visionary experiences and accepted either as religious imagery or as people treated fairies, gnomes, elves etc. Now people think they are physically real. I feel sorry for people who have these experiences and have to undergo investigation by the ufologists who try to fit them into their belief system. To cut a long story short abductions are too complex an issue for lay people to get involved with. We are dealing with areas of human experience, which are best left to mental health professionals. However abductions are glamorous, sell books, newspapers and magazines and make good TV. Sadly there will always be evil ufologists with no qualms about manipulating peoples' experiences for their own selfish ends. I have never investigated an abduction and never would do.



In your many years involved with the subject of UFO and Fortean phenomena, what do you consider to be your biggest achievement and why?

Being part of the team who initiated and organised the big IUN UFO conferences in Sheffield between 1989 and 1993. We brought huge, multi-day UFO conferences to the UK long before the Birdsalls' thought of the idea. Being able to have such an eclectic mix of speakers and to get so many people to listen to them was a fantastic thing. If it hadn't have been for the IUN, John Keel, Jacques Vallee, Budd Hopkins and many others probably would not have come to the UK. Dave Clarke, Phil Mantle, Rod Haworth, Stuart Smith (bless his dead Lancastrian soul), and myself really made a difference to the public's perception of UFOlogy in the UK. We even made some money!

Another of my biggest achievements has been the setting up of, or taking part in, various 'experiments' within UFOlogy. The first of these dates from 1990 and the most recent 1999. They were set up to test both witness and, more specifically, ufologist responses to certain situations. Most of them are long term 'experiments' which have an unfolding history. Perhaps one day I'll be able to be more forthcoming about them.

What is underneath that cynical suit of armour you wear? Is there a human face to Andy Roberts and if so what do you hold dear and consider being of real value and significance in your lifetime?



Cynical flesh and bone actually! No, really, I love kittens, small children and sunsets. In fact my idea of heaven is sitting watching a groovy sunset whilst eating a kittenburger and taking toys from a small child.

I hold my book and CD collection very dear indeed, they were dear enough to obtain. Real value and significance eh? Sappy stuff like my family and a few other people I suppose. Marzipan too. I'm also incredibly happy that I've (so far) managed to avoid being involved in any wars and that my son (if he's lucky) will also manage that. But I don't think life is meant to be easy, and as the ancient Chinese curse runs '*may you live in interesting times*'.

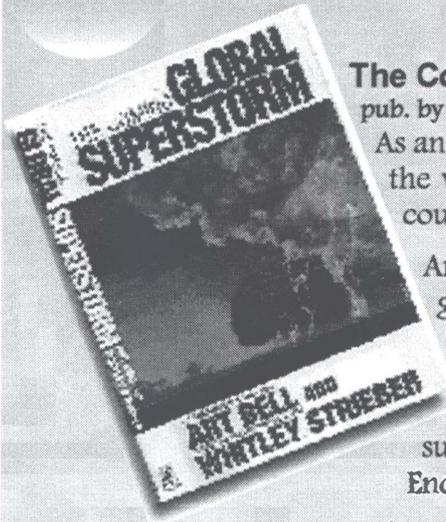
On behalf of *Strange Daze*, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to Andy for this provocative and personal interview. His candour and ever-irreverent humour about the human drama unfolding in our mysterious universe will no doubt evoke much thought, and hopefully feedback from our readers!! We look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks also to Paul for his contribution to this interview.



REVIEWS-

By John McDonald



The Coming Global Superstorm- Art Bell and Whitley Strieber

pub. by Pocket Books, 2000 hb. £15 - 99, pp 255. index

As an English person I naturally consider myself an expert on the vagaries of the weather, but this book scared the living daylights out of me, which is, of course, exactly the intention of the authors.

Art Bell is known in the US for his radio talk-show on the paranormal in general and UFOs in particular which he considers to be extra-terrestrial in origin. Whitley Strieber is the world's most well known alien abductee having written the hugely influential "Communion". Prior to writing of his contact with what he calls "the visitors" he was a fairly successful author of novels such as "Wolfen", "The Hunger" and "Nature's End" all of which have a paranormal theme.

The authors' basic thesis is that Global Warming will cause the North Atlantic Current, (also known as the N. Atlantic conveyor) which pumps warm water into the Arctic, to change to a more southerly route. This will cause an explosive change in the climate, creating a massive storm as freezing Arctic air pours south clashing with overheated air in the temperate zones.

The storm will be unlike anything humanity has ever known, although the fossil record indicates that a Superstorm similar to the one predicted in this book may well have happened before. There will be horrific blizzards with winds in excess of 100 m.p.h. gusting up to 150 m.p.h. Snowfall will be immense and the death rate could be 100% beneath the storm. If the storm happens in spring or summer massive flooding will follow, if in winter it will mean the start of a new Ice Age.

The authors seem to have done their research well, covering topics as diverse as archaeology, meteorology, mythology, astronomy and ecology. I say, "seem to have" because there are no notes detailing the sources of their research, a major flaw in a work such as this, which is by its very nature speculative.

The book is written in a readable and accessible style aimed at the layman and I must say is quite gripping.

So is there no hope of escaping this meteorological horror story? Well the authors seem to think there is and it boils down to this, mankind is an inventive clever creature and once we realise what is happening to our planet we will come up with something, something totally unforeseen and brilliant.

I can only hope their optimism is justified because in my experience mankind has proved itself to be really adept at burying its collective head in the sand and pretending everything is just fine.

So keep your eye on the 6.30 pm weather forecast and stock up on warm clothes, candles and tinned food! Just in case!

Four stars, out of a possible five.

Everything Is Under Control.- Robert Anton Wilson Pan Books London £12.99. 435 p/p (p/back)

Although released in the U.S. in hardback in 1998, this book was released in paperback in the U.K at the end of 1999. Readers of Fortean Times (and if you're not, why not?!) will be aware of Robert Anton Wilson (RAW) as he has been a frequent contributor for many years and is FT's Californian correspondent. He is also the author or co/author of some excellent Science Fiction novels — although it must be said it is hard to pigeon hole his work this way. Nevertheless the truth is if you want to buy one of his books you must head for the SF shelves in the bookshop. His most well known book is the 'Illuminatus' trilogy (with Michael Shea). If you've read any of his books on the illuminatus- a secret society founded in Heidelberg in the the late 18 Century- then you'll know that RAW is fascinated to the point of obsession with Conspiracies, Secret Societies, Cover Ups etc, etc. other areas he is concerned with are coincidences, synchronicities and Fortean anomalies in general. This present book is a fairly well

researched, alphabetically listed rogues gallery of many of the best known-and some less well known-Conspiracy Theories taken from a multitude of sources. All the classics are here — JFK assassination-also RFK and Martin Luther King; CIA mind control research (MK ULTRA); Priory of Sion/ Rennes le Chateau, Protocols Of The Elders Of Zion — a notorious forgery made by the Czarist Secret Police; AIDS virus theories; P2, Roberto Calvi and the whole Vatican bank scam; some far out Princess Diana / Royal family stuff, etc. Even though many of these are well known to the general public, he often puts a new slant on some old material, he also manages to give the reader a good laugh at the stupidity of the people who have made many glaring mistakes whilst hatching their dastardly plots! To paraphrase an old saying- the words Intelligence and Agency just don't seem to go together.

Laughter aside one must never forget that in the case of the CIA/NSA etc, -these organisations are financed to the tune of billions of dollars yearly and have access to some of the most brilliant minds and state of the art equipment. They are also protected by layer after layer of laws to stop the public getting accurate accounts of their operations.

Mixed in with the real theories are obvious hoaxes such as Project Dumbo; this project's aim was to mix certain animal's DNA together-it was first called Project DNA. This programme was controlled by scientist's working for (who else?) the CIA. In 1981 they allegedly managed to add the DNA of a bird to that of a lizard (a blizard perhaps ?) but by 1983 they had successfully 'crossed' DNA from a bat with that of an elephant and had created a flying elephant (!), hence the project name... unfortunately one of the poor creatures got a little mixed up coming in to land, and crashed destroying several research buildings at the test site (Area 51 perhaps ?) Another had to be shot down as it had strayed outside off the test area and made the risk of being seen by a member of the public a distinct possibility! RAW says 'an obvious hoax, but....'

So, for anyone with a taste for Conspiracies, both real and imagined, then this is the book for you. My only gripe is that there is no index , but at 435 pages this is a hefty read for your money ! 4 stars out of a possible 5

John Mc Donald

thanks to Alan Taylor

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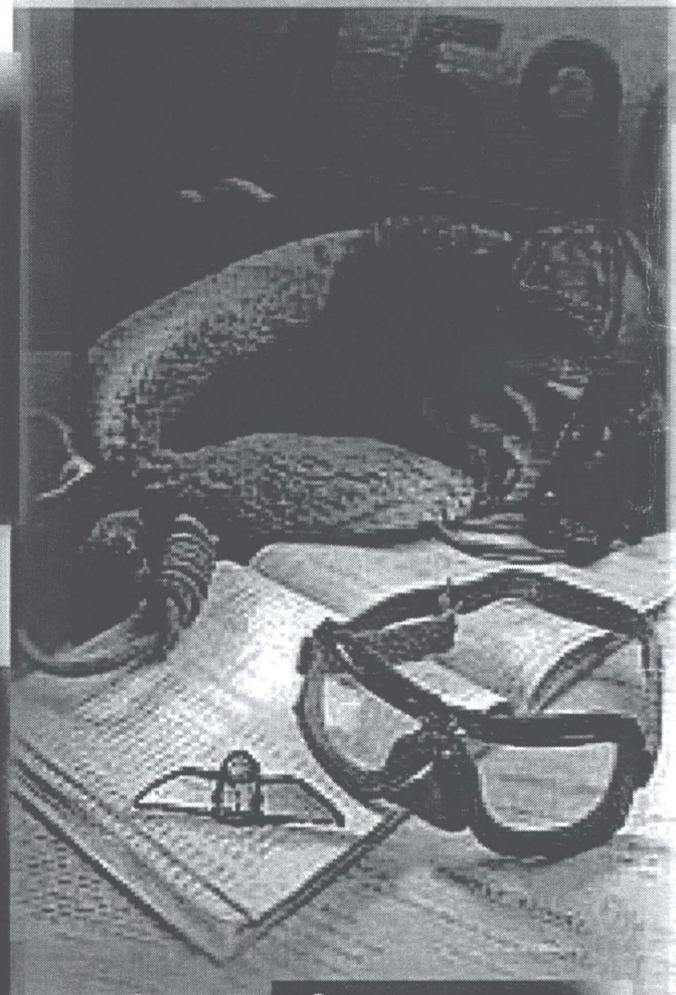
EDITORIAL — CONTINUED from PAGE ONE

again we return to consciousness and our perception and interpretation of events and experiences, as we each explore our own subjective world and relate it to being part of the bigger picture of the physical world surrounding us. Of course this is not the case at all and as the brain interprets the world around us, we can hold only our own subjective view of what that reality is, which may be far removed from another person's sense of reality. Of course we have consensus view of the physical world....to a degree. Otherwise nothing would have much meaning at all. Does this matter? Well possibly to a point, which is why a consensus view of reality helps at times in order to solve problems and make some meaning of the images around us. Does the existence of the external world depend on our awareness of it in the first place? If we were not here, would it make a difference to anything? Do we matter and if so what role to we play in any of this? Nature can be destructive and paradoxically beautiful all at the same time, but in reality nature just is and can be no other way. The human species views nature in many ways and turns the world into a place that we can comprehend.

To move on from these thoughts now, I would like to look at the general picture with regard to reports of UFO sightings and encounters, video footage and photographs of alleged 'UFOs' and the role the media have played in creating and reinforcing some of the modern UFO mythology, which is now entrenched in the phenomenon

In my role as national investigations co-ordinator for the British UFO Research Association, it has become extremely evident over the last few years that there is a mixture of many exceptional experiences that have been deposited into the UFO subject at large, which cover a wide range of experiences. These include visions, ghosts, alien encounters, near-death experiences and a variety of paranormal phenomena that have been re-defined as UFO encounters. It is very important to note also that claims of alien encounters and contact have gradually increased to UFO organisations across the world. There certainly appears to be a direct link to this increase from the media and press related sensationalism that has entered the public's awareness of the UFO subject and all the issues surrounding it, culminating in UFO extravaganzas aired by some TV networks. These programmes often bear no relation to the real and fundamental issues about what actually constitutes a UFO sighting as an unidentified flying object rather than an alien spacecraft. Obviously, the media is here to entertain us, and what better way to do this than to report that our planet could possibly be being

55 visited by alien craft and their crew and that



Lest we forget.....

the evidence is mounting to support this. This evidence, however, seems to be ever elusive, as are the many photographs and video footage used to support and uphold these claims on national television without some comprehensive research and analysis being conducted before they are shown.

Also riding the waves of the media are the incredible and speculative claims that people are being abducted by aliens and that these experiences are leaving them with disturbing and fragmented memories of frightening and unusual events that have occurred. This imagery has become very powerful, as some members of the public report an increasing number of extraordinary human experiences to UFO organisations, perceiving them to be some sort of alien encounter. There is no definitive proof that this is occurring, but the range of coverage from the media, Internet, books and magazines on the idea of alien visitation has reached saturation coverage over the last few years and as it has been soaked into our consciousness, so claims of alien abduction have increased.

Mystical experiences have never increased, they have

always been experienced and reported, but the interpretation of these compelling connections to those other worlds have certainly changed to fit contemporary and current thinking of our exploration of Space travel and all of its ramifications. This combined with our ever-advancing technology and our anxieties about what this could ultimately mean may also influence our reaching out to those other worlds for some answers in this one. These curious, mysterious and inexplicable phenomena have been with us always and will nurture the human imagination forever.

Theories are abundant to explain what these experiences are, whether they are perceived as UFO encounters or more complex phenomena. These theories range in their explanations from being psychological in origin to being caused by some form of external source such as powerful electromagnetic fields, which can interact with the brain causing hallucinatory effects. In addition the idea is postulated that a non-human intelligence could be responsible for some of these experiences and this non-human connection takes many forms for each and every one of us, who have undergone unknown and inexplicable events at some period in our lives. There are many controversial issues at stake here when we examine some of our perceptions of extraordinary experiences and the effects of our recall of these curious events. In doing this a great deal more understanding of the human condition is needed. What does consciousness really mean and is

Nature can be destructive and paradoxically beautiful all at the same time, but in reality nature just is and can be no other way. The human species views nature in many ways and turns the world into a place that we can comprehend.

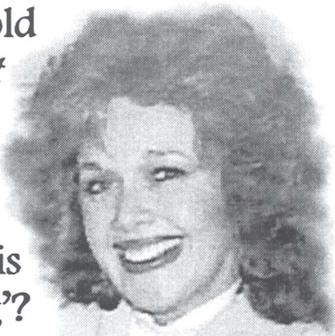
it merely electrochemical activity within the brain and nothing more. There is certainly a great deal of disagreement even from the scientific disciplines of psychology, philosophy and physics studying consciousness and what is meant by being aware. And whether consciousness operates independently of a

caused by something that could be explained if examined thoroughly, in order to rule out more mundane possibilities. Beliefs, ranging from deeply held religious views to the idea that alien spacecraft are visiting our planet are difficult to change even with scientific evidence that may disprove some of these beliefs. For some of us, our belief that God, angels, demons or aliens exist is inherently a part of our lives that we do not question too closely, as religions are based on faith alone and many of us need to have a belief in a creator or universal being to give some meaning to the fact we exist at all. However, with the advent of the internet and more and more information and a host of answers to our questions, it appears that for some of us there are ever more questions that we need to ask. This is possibly why beliefs in orthodox religion have changed so dramatically and why people are reaching out towards new age religions in order to create something much more meaningful to them in terms of understanding why and who we are.

These are indeed strange times in which we live and as human contact diminishes with the use of the internet and as research into artificial intelligence progresses, we will live in very strange worlds indeed and these will not be created by those other worlds, but by electronic images that we continue to download on to our screens and into our consciousness.

Remember that old song 'Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing' well I ask you this; ...what is the 'real thing'?

.....



Gloria Heather Dixon

physical body

Beliefs can also reinforce a person's interpretation of an odd experience even if that experience is actually



EVENTS & INFORMATION



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Monday 2nd October 2000. JERRY ANDERSON.

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CYNTHIA HIND REMEMBERED



Philip Mantle shares his memories of a dear friend.

My dear friend and colleague, Cynthia Hind, died on 21st August 2000 after a very short illness.

To me Cynthia was like the archetypal favourite aunt, always with a smile on her face and a story to tell. She was by far the best and most amusing storyteller I have ever come across. As part of her UFO studies she travelled far and wide, especially across Africa as she lived in Zimbabwe. I clearly remember Cynthia telling an assembled audience at one of the BUFORA conferences how she had once interviewed members of a tribe in Africa who not long ago had still been cannibals. Cynthia being a rather large lady stated that if they had attempted to eat her it would have taken them a month. As ever, she had the audience in her hand.

As a ufologist she remained open-minded but was definitely from the nuts-and-bolts side of the fence. She had an enquiring mind and a determination to try and help solve the UFO puzzle.

As a human being she was warm hearted, full of life, and larger than life in many ways.

The human race will be all the worse without her as will serious Ufo research.

May she rest in peace and my deepest sympathy goes to her family and friends.

Philip Mantle.

Strange Daze sends their deepest sympathy to her family at this sad time. Cynthia will be very much missed and remembered as an eloquent and fascinating speaker on the subject of UFOs, always injecting her wonderful sense of humour during her lectures in the United Kingdom. .

R.I.P

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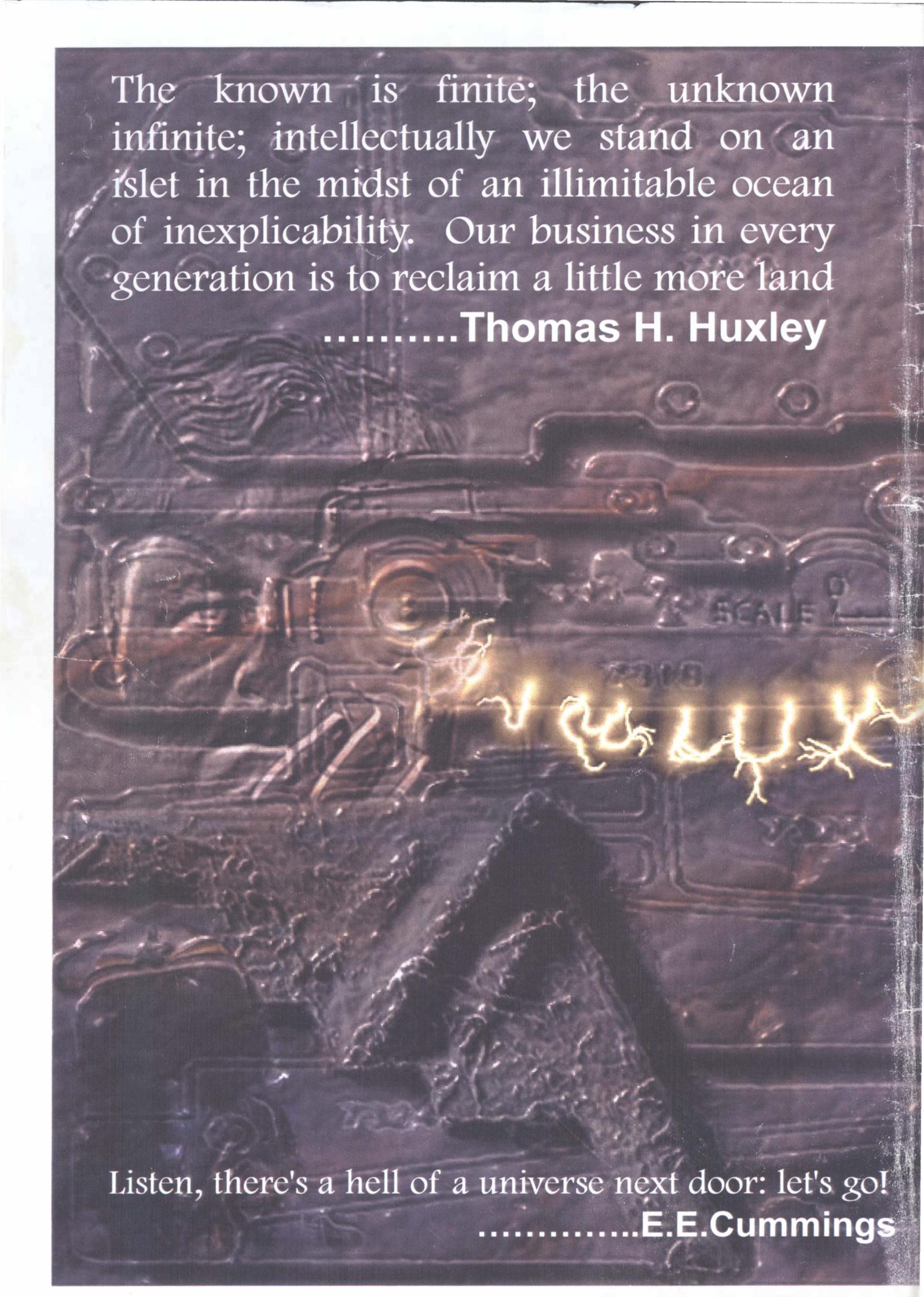
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of inexplicability. Our business in every
generation is to reclaim a little more land

.....**Thomas H. Huxley**

Listen, there's a hell of a universe next door: let's go!

.....**E.E. Cummings**