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- 0001 Richard Haines, Expanding ball of light phenomena from SVLT (Tijdschrift van de Studiegroep voor Vreemde Luchtverschijnselen) Vol 4 no 14 (Over 28, B-2000 Antwerp, Belgium) April 1985
- 0002 Paul Devereux, Paul McCartney & Don Robins, Bringing UFOs down to earth, from New Scientist, London, 1 September 1983.
- 0003 Dan Mattsson, UFOs in time and space, from AFU Newsletter, abridged from Swedish-language original in UFO-Sverige Aktuell, no 2, 1984.
- 0004 Jonathan Mullard, The Linley Lights, from The Ley Hunter no 97, Winter 1985.
- 0005 (Paul Devereux) New Jersey Light, from The Ley Hunter no 98, Spring 1985.
- 0006 David Clarke, Cotswolds Lights, from The Ley Hunter no 99, Summer-Autumn 1985.
- 0007 'Thinking ball lightning' excerpted from Albert de Rochas, Vies successives, Paris 1916.
- 0008 La foudre dans l'Aube hier et aujourd'hui from Folklore de Champagne no 65, avril 1979. (supplied by Claude Mauge.)
- 0009 Erling Strand (Project Leader, Project Hessdalen), Thoughts on the Hessdalen Phenomenon, original contribution, April 1986.
- 0010 Dennis Stacy, Editor MUFON Journal, Ghost lights remain as Marfa's top attraction, from Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 5 August 1984.
- 0011 Case excerpted from Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research vol x p124-5, 1894.
- 0012 Case of sighting at Warminster, October 1976. Original report supplied by Andy Collins.
- 0013 Marius Otto, L'éclair en boule, from La Nature, 1901.
- 0014 Strange light phenomenon observed at Saarijärvi (Finland), from Nordic UFO Newsletter, 1985 no 2.
- 0015 Catalogue of reports supplied by West Yorkshire UFO Research Group, Coordinator Martin Dayless, 1986.
- 0016 OVNI-Séismes, from Ouranos no 22, 1978
- 0017 Observation excerpted from Mary Kingsley, Travels in West Africa (ca. 1895), supplied by Robert Coltman via Dennis Stacy.

Contributions 0018 -

- 0018 Newsclippings related to the Warwickshire 'spook light' of 1923. Contributed by David Clarke.
- 0019 A A Mills, Will-o'-the-wisp, from Chemistry in Britain 16:69, Feb.1980. Contributed by David Clarke.
- 0020 Newsclippings related to 'luminous owls', dated 1907-1908. Contributed by David Clarke.

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EXPANDING BALL OF LIGHT PHENOMENON

by Richard F. HAINES, Ph. D.

An Aurora is defined as a short-lived optical phenomenon of the upper atmosphere occurring usually at high latitudes following solar flare activity. The dynamics are well known to astro-physicists and others. There have been unusual expanding balls of light reported which may or may not be aurorae and this report is intended to give a brief account of the phenomenon so that the readers can report any further occurrences directly to the author for further study.

Table 1 presents a list of sightings of this expanding ball-light (EBL) phenomenon for future reference. The long duration and very great size make this phenomenon of particular interest. Whether or not it is linked to UFO-related effects remains to be seen.

TABEL 1

DATE	TIME	LAT.	LONG.	DURATION	WITNESSES	COMMENTS
27 July 1984	1550Z	47.5°N	161.0°E	10 min.	B747 pilots	white transparent light shell, no E ₂
9 April 1984	?	200 mi NE tip Japan		?	3 airliners	no radioactivity
18 June 1982	2206L	50°N	153°E	?	2 airliners	covered 1/4 of sky
? Sept 1979	?	35-37°N	68-75°E	?	ground witnesses	huge EBL
21 Dec 1977	0200L	?	? New Jersey		" "	intense EBL
20 Dec 1977	evening	?	E.coast USA		" "	3 loud explosions
2 Dec 1977	1545L	?	N.E. coast New Jersey			loud explosions
2 Dec 1977	1006L	?	Off E. coast So.Carolina			" "
12 July 1980	1825Z	36°N	6°W	?	ground witnesses	4 mi. diam arc
24 Mar 1977	0855Z	25°N	17.3°W	7 min	Kinpurnie Castle	luminous EBL
22 Aug 1969	2015L	20°N	64.5°W	?	Nest Indies	EBL
20 Mar 1969	2315Z	?	? Carribean	10 min	ship crew	white EBL
17 June 1966	2142L	?	? Mehrabad airport (Iran)		2 pilots	EBL

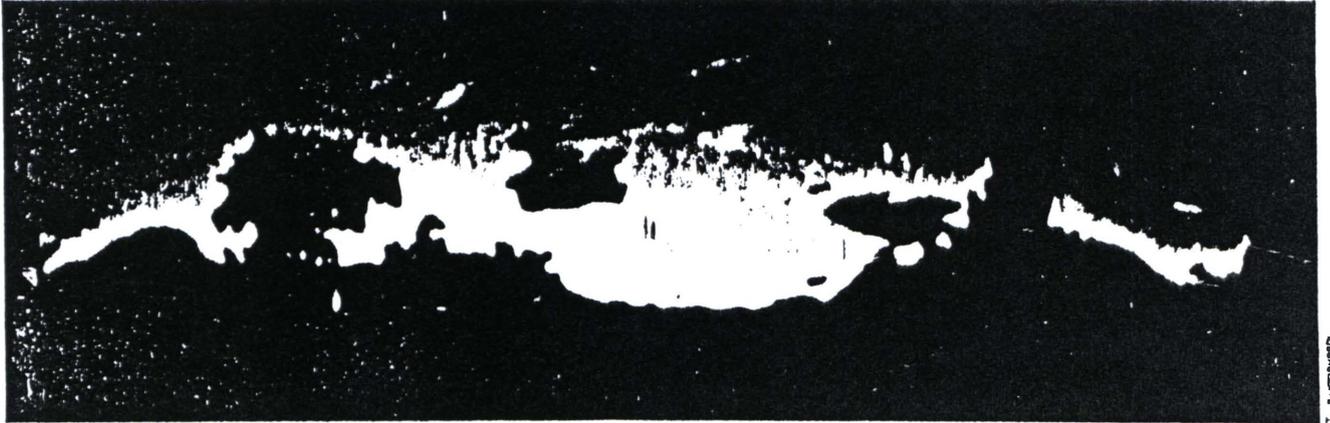
In general, the EBL phenomenon has been seen to begin as a small area of light which grows at an approximate equal rate over periods as long as 10 minutes. Some eye witnesses have described it to the author as appearing like the air shock wave of an atomic test. The EBL is often white and, as it expands, becomes transparent so that stars or background detail can be seen through it. While there has been no air pressure (shock) wave associated with it there is some evidence of a temperature gradient at or near the surface of the EBL. A check for possible radioactivity was made on several commercial aircraft which flew through the EBL of 9 April 1984 at an altitude of 33,000 feet enroute to Anchorage, Alaska. No evidence of ionizing radiation was reported. No electro-magnetic effects have been reported by aircrew who have flown near or through the EBL. The strange phenomenon simply dissipates into nothingness after a period of time, leaving no apparent trace.

There has been some speculation that EBL represents a natural (Earth) phenomenon linked to volcano eruptions or aurora. Others have felt that new weapons are being tested in space and high altitude. Whatever is the answer, more information is needed. Anyone knowing of such reports is urged to write to the author with full details: Address: 325 Langton Avenue
Los Altos
California 94022
USA

Bringing UFOs down to Earth

Many reports of UFO sightings come from areas close to geological faults. Far from being spaceships from other worlds, could the explanation of UFOs be much more earthbound?

Paul Devereux, Paul McCartney and Don Robins



UF**O** RESEARCHERS Jenny Randles and Peter Warrington recently appealed for science to view the more serious aspects of ufology with greater leniency, arguing that a potentially new science was being neglected (*New Scientist*, vol 97, p 380). But by its very nature, science as an institution will not view ufology with interest or even toleration until it has built a platform of evidence too solid to be easily demolished. Fortunately the study of UFOs is beginning to yield such evidence, but ufologists have been as slow as scientists to appreciate what is happening.

From their recent work, Randles and Warrington have come to realise, as have a few others including the present writers, that UFOs are not spaceships from other worlds but are propagated by processes occurring on this one. This realisation leads inevitably to a theory that—after hoax, misperception, and psycho-sociological factors have been allowed for—there is a real core of unexplained atmospheric phenomena which are at the root of UFO reports, and that such phenomena are produced by geological processes—that UFOs are, in fact, “earth lights”.

The American collector of anomalous material, Charles Fort, was perhaps the first person to draw attention to the correlation between reports of unexplained atmospheric phenomena and regions prone to earthquakes and tremor activity. But the first serious research was carried out by French UFO investigators in the 1960s. One of them, F. Lagarde, found a distinct link between reported UFO sightings recorded in the 1954 French UFO “wave” and geological faults. Lagarde stated that “UFOs occur by preference on geological faults” and suggested piezoelectricity among other mechanisms as a possible factor in their manifestation.

During a wide-ranging study of Leicestershire between 1972 and 1976, Andrew York and Paul Devereux were able to confirm a similar apparent connection to that noted in France: UFO events reported over 25 years had their highest incidence over local faulting in the county. Population distribution confused but did not destroy the connection. York and Devereux also noted that abnormal meteorological events, collected from more than three centuries of archives, displayed similar distribution patterns to UFOs within the county. Geology and certain types of atmospheric phenomena seemed somehow interlinked.

In 1977 M. Persinger and G. Lafreniere wrote the first book

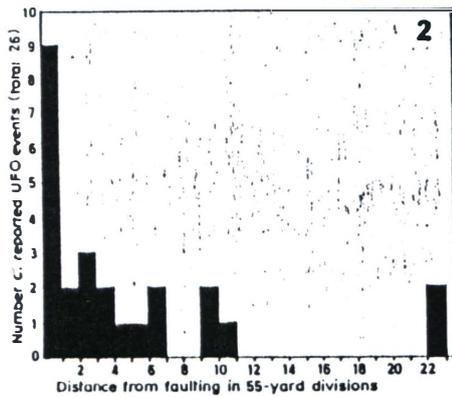
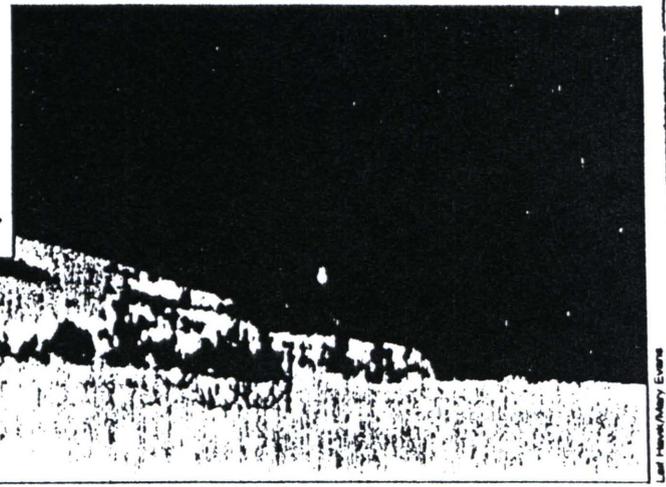
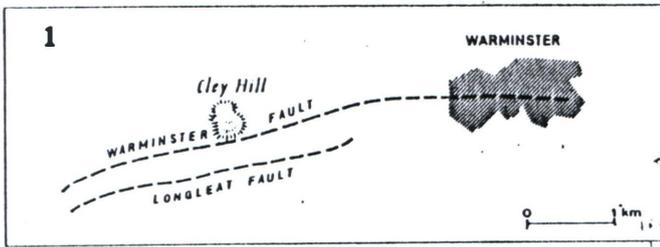
Earthquake light produced during the 1965-67 Matsushiro earthquake swarm, Japan

on this geological theory (*Space-Time Transients*, Nelson-Hall) in which they opted strongly for a piezoelectrical explanation (see Randles and Warrington already cited). In 1981, at the request of Persinger, Dr Brian Brady of the US Bureau of Mines carried out an experiment in Denver in which a granite core was crushed in darkened conditions and filmed in slow motion. Afterwards, the experimenters observed lights on the film, flitting out from the decaying core and moving around the rock-crusher's chamber. It was suggested that this was reproducing on small scale the sort of effects that could occur in the landscape. Devereux, McCartney, Merron *et al* have now successfully repeated this experiment in Britain. The lights are easily visible to naked eye observation in darkened conditions and on one occasion a large light was clearly seen in full daylight. The present writers, however, are extremely doubtful as to whether these light effects are produced as a result of specifically piezoelectrical processes, and we shall be proposing an alternative mechanism.

The Warminster sightings

Research continues on the earth lights theory both in North America and in Britain. Britain, possessing rocks from throughout geological time, and with good UFO report collection systems, is an ideal location in which to test the theory. An obvious first trial is to see whether or not the famous UFO centre of Warminster, Wiltshire, can offer anything of interest. From the mid-1960s the Warminster area generated an enormous number of UFO reports. Media interest ensured that the whole Warminster phenomenon became something of a “hype”, creating a mass of reports almost certainly resulting from over-eager UFO-spotters misperceiving mundane aerial features or simply fantasising. Nevertheless, behind all this spurious smoke something odd did occur around the small market town. On the face of it, the geology of the area is not promising from an earth lights point of view: it is essentially tectonically passive chalk country. However, study reveals that two isolated faults do run through the town and its environs, including Cley Hill, location of several reported UFO sightings (Figure 1). But the evidence for a link between anomalous aerial lights and

Credit: Paul Devereux



These fault lines (above left) are at the centre of many UFO events reported around Warmminster in the mid 1960s. The correlation between surface faulting and UFO sightings near Dyfed in 1977 (left). One of the many pictures taken of unexplained lights (above) seen at Hessdalen, southeast of Trondheim, Norway. These lights have been appearing at intervals since 1981

geology is much stronger than this. In *Earth Lights* (Turnstone Press, 1982) one of us, Paul Devereux, put forward a number of regional studies, and we here review two which have recently been updated with additional information and which represent the best UFO-geology correlations yet published.

By the time a UFO has been formed and is flying high and wide, it is usually too late to make any exact geological correlations. Ufologists therefore have to collect more detailed accounts of surface or low-level phenomena, which means looking at "window areas"—localised regions where the incidence of reported UFO activity is higher than in general, or where an outbreak of UFO activity is reported over a limited period of time. The first area we look at here

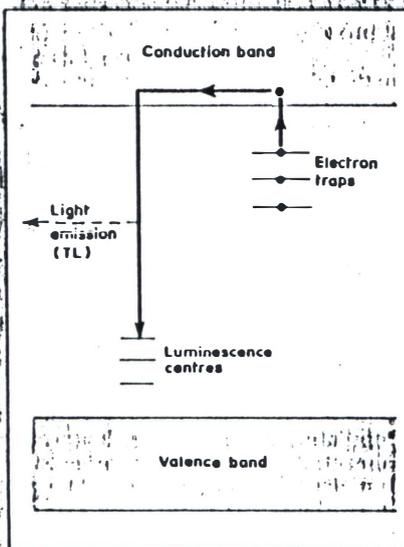
is that around St Brides Bay, Dyfed, Wales, where, in 1977, many people from all walks of life reported seeing strange aerial phenomena, including "UFO landings". This part of Dyfed is geologically famous—different rock types of different ages cluster there because the landscape has experienced significant faulting and folding during both the Caledonian and Armorican mountain-building periods. As usual, the situation became overblown as the media picked up interest, and pulp-paperback writers made inane suggestions about "UFO bases" and the like. But some sort of odd aerial phenomena did certainly occur in the region over the period, and the scientist has to look beyond the razzmatazz. Figure 2 demonstrates that this is worth doing. A new, detailed study by McCartney, relating reported UFO

WE CAN visualise many inorganic solids as 3-dimensional lattices which invariably contain structural or compositional defects. In the former, the gross structure is maintained at the expense of short-range lattice dislocations (colour centres in alkali metal halides) whereas in the latter, strict proportionality forms a limiting or ideal composition (stoichiometry). Many mineral oxides and silicates fit within this variable composition scenario—most spectacularly the series of iron oxides.

If a lattice containing defects is irradiated then, among other things, detached electrons are produced. Since they are so reactive, these free electrons have a short lifetime unless they become trapped in a potential energy "well" at a defect. The depth of the trap defines the energy required to release the electron and is often simply measured in terms of thermal draining—the temperature required to free the electron from its trap.

Natural radioactivity and cosmic rays continually knock electrons out of their atomic orbits into these traps which fill up over long periods of time. Eventually a state of dynamic equilibrium is reached: some electrons continually drain away, even

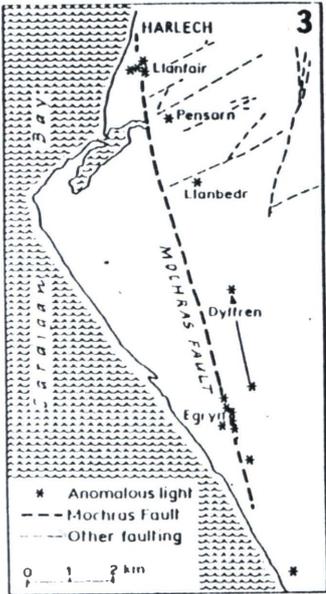
Light from lattice defects



How thermoluminescence works

below the threshold energy needed for their release, and freshly generated electrons replace them as the equilibrium is upset. Every mineral with defects in this lattice can therefore be a source of self-replenishing electrons.

Electron Spin Resonance (ESR) spectroscopy is one of the most useful techniques for detecting these electrons. Although the majority of free electron species are very reactive and unstable and must be observed under special conditions, the deeply trapped mineral electrons are stable over periods of geologic time. This technique has recently shown that deep sea chert of Permian age has nearly its full complement of trapped electrons. ESR studies have also demonstrated that gentle friction is sufficient to affect the electron populations, destroying equilibrium by draining off saturation populations; other electrons then repopulated the vacancies. This phenomenon may be central to the electronic events underlying triboluminescence. A simple example of such electron generation is the frictional charging of amber; ESR observation shows that the charged amber exhibits a free electron line. These electrons manifest themselves as the familiar static discharge. □



Llanfair Chapel, scene of many unexplained lights

The Egryn Lights, December 1904–March 1905

Anomalous lights reported with sufficient geographical detail between Harlech and Barmouth

Strange lights "coming together with a loud clap" at Pensarn	150-250 m from nearest fault 500-600 m from Mochras Fault
Light "on hillside illuminated the heath" above Egryn.	400-500 m from Mochras Fault
Light "on hillside moved north"	400-500 m from Mochras Fault
"Three brilliant rays" on road near Egryn	0-150 m from Mochras Fault
Blood-red light "above road near Egryn chapel"	0-400 m from Mochras Fault
A kernel of light "above road near north entrance to Barmouth"	400-500 m from nearest fault
A ball of fire "intense yellow brilliance" at Egryn chapel	70-100 m from Mochras Fault
"Two lights" "both began to flicker" at Egryn chapel	0-100 m from Mochras Fault
"Deep yellow light" "six inches in diameter" near Egryn	150-250 m from Mochras Fault
Barmouth road	150-250 m from Mochras Fault
A bright light "on road in front of Egryn chapel"	0-20 m from Mochras Fault
Light "radiating a brilliant luminosity" over road at east entrance to Barmouth	400-500 m from nearest fault
Travelling, protean lightforms at and near Llanbedr, passed crossroads	100-200-300 m from nearest fault
Four events, each involving multiple lights, "lines" or "over several hours" in field and roadway "around Llanfair chapel" "284 lights emerged from field"	

events to faulting for that area of Dyfed for which detailed geology is available, shows convincingly that the reported UFOs did tend towards local surface faulting. Figure 2 shows that 34.6 per cent of reported UFOs in the region in 1977 occurred within 50 m of a fault, or, if one prefers a more generalised limit, 84.4 per cent within 550 m.

The second example involves a wave of sightings further north, along the Welsh coast between Barmouth and Harlech. Rocks in this area are heavily scarred with severe faulting, most of which occurred during the Caledonian mountain-building period, some 400 million years ago. Recent research has produced evidence that secondary faulting most likely took place in the region of the nearby Bala Fault during the Alpine mountain-building period of the Tertiary period, merely some 10-20 million years ago. The area has yet to reach an equilibrium state: earthquake activity there in 1903 is proof of this. The Barmouth outbreak of sightings took place in 1904-1905 and was rescued from obscurity by the excellent archival research of Kevin and Sue McClure (*Stars and Rumours of Stars*, private, 1980). This puts it out of the reach of extra-terrestrial associations in the contemporary media while also precluding sceptical explanations involving aircraft lights and satellites. At the time, the lights were considered to be divine manifestations accompanying the Welsh Revival and the local ministry of Mary Jones. (Earth lights have never been witnessed without being interpreted in the light of whatever the prevailing cultural prejudice happens to be.) It is true that many sightings were reported around the chapels of Egryn and Llanfair, but there is one vital piece of information that has hitherto been missing from the "Egryn Lights" saga, as it is known in the UFO literature: a major, deep-rooted fault (with some 610m downthrow) virtually links Harlech and Barmouth, with the reported sightings strung out along it like beads on a thread. This is the Mochras Fault and is by far the most significant local geological feature. The table and Figure 3 show just how remarkable this correlation is. All the reliably positioned events occurred between 0 and 500 metres of a fault, usually the Mochras Fault. Even the less certainly located events, where valid, probably occurred within such a margin, though we cannot be conclusive about these. Egryn chapel is less than 100m from the Mochras Fault, while Llanfair chapel sits on it. A wide range of people, from local farmers and chapel-goers to visiting journalists from London witnessed these

lights at close quarters; many were multiple-witness events, and all the ones described in the first part of the table appeared initially close to the ground or were seen actually to emerge from the ground. Ground-emerging lights were also reported 65 km inland around Llangollen in April 1905, after the wave around Barmouth seems to have subsided. Three local vicars positioned themselves on the aqueduct over the Dee between Llangollen and Cefn Mawr one night to see if they could witness what was giving rise to such excitement amongst their parishioners. They did, in fact, see some lights. They came out of the ground and "burst luridly" or flew off. From the vicars' descriptions we know the lights emerged within 0-400 m from local faulting. During the period of the Egryn Lights witnesses reported other events at Brynchrug and Towyn, some miles to the south. Both these places are virtually on the Bala Fault. One hundred and twenty kilometres to the southeast more lights were reported around Pontypridd: we have only just begun to study these, but initial data strongly suggest close correlations with faulting there too.

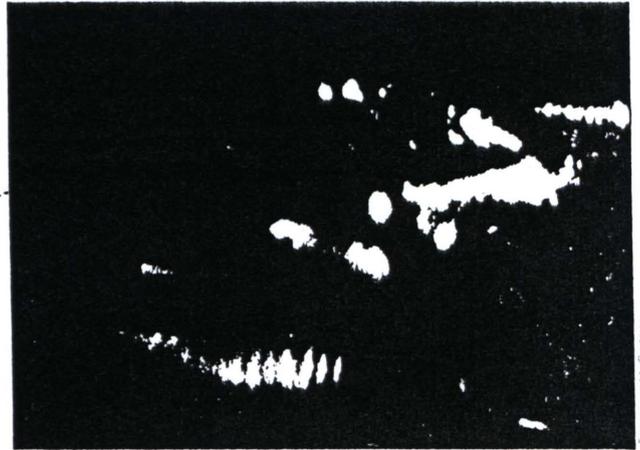
The very first "flying saucers" (but not the first UFOs!) were probably earth lights. In 1947, while flying over the Cascade Mountains in Washington State, US, searching for a crashed aircraft, Kenneth Arnold saw nine lights which skimmed and undulated through the air "like saucers" – the phrase that provided the popular term for the phenomenon. They were flying from the direction of Mount Baker south towards Mount Ranier. We now know what a tectonically volatile area this Cascade range is, after the earthquakes and eruptions at Mount St Helens. Geologists believe that the Cascade peaks are linked by fault lines. If so, Arnold's saucers were almost certainly flying along one, "hugging the contours" as he put it. The Cascade range, of course, occurs at the boundary of the North American and Pacific tectonic plates – an appropriate scene for the first flying saucers.

At one point the lights resembled "tadpoles" in shape, Arnold stated, which draws to mind the description of lights seen just before the 1957 Leicestershire earthquake (many people saw lines of "tadpole-shaped" lights in the sky). These sort of aerial effects are known as "earthquake lights" and can take many forms, from balls of light to streamer or auroric displays. They appear in association with some earthquakes but not with all. Although widely accepted scientifically, their nature is not understood. The US geologist John S. Derr has provided a useful summary of the photographs, information

P. Devereux



Light which appeared a fraction of a second before a granite core was crushed in one of a series of experiments carried out by Devereux, McCartney, Merron et al in London, 1983



Triboluminescence in rock crystal: lights appearing on the surface of a rock fraction of a second after it has been subjected to friction

and theories relating to earthquake lights (*Bull. Seismological Soc. of America*, vol 63, No 6, 1973). He points out that such lights have been reported up to 80 km from an epicentre and have been seen over water. Explanations range from piezoelectrical effects to violent oscillation of low-level air. (More recently, other US geologists have suggested friction-based instead of piezoelectrical mechanisms.) Earthquake lights and UFOs may have a lot in common, and an explanation of the one type of phenomenon is bound to affect the understanding of the other. If future UFO research continues to provide such strong correlations as in the Dyfed and Egryn examples, then UFOs will have been shown to relate to geology just as surely as have earthquake lights. Neither scientists nor ufologists can credibly ignore this development and its implications.

Light from the rocks

But what can the connection between geology and UFOs be? And why do earthquake lights seem to require the stimulus of an earthquake while UFOs do not (though UFOs may very well be simply an unrecognised form of such lights requiring subtler geological instigation)? Any discussion of fault shearing or compression as the source of energy generation usually invokes the transduction of this stress into electricity. The most obvious candidate for this conversion is the well-known piezoelectric effect, and is a well-worn explanation used for both earthquake lights and UFOs. However, the generation of visible light requires more than this simple transduction; piezoelectricity is thus an unlikely mechanism for earth light propagation. The present writers suggest the phenomenon of *triboluminescence* (TLS) as a more likely candidate for the generation of UFO phenomena than piezoelectricity. TLS is the emission of visible radiation due to frictional forces; it is in effect a cold light emission – a visible radiation that is due primarily to some cause other than temperature. TLS produces light by causing electrons to “jump” from higher to lower energy levels by frictional forces. It is probably this mechanism which Brady’s core-crushing experiment demonstrated, and which Devereux and McCartney observed in recent research on rocks. And *New Scientist’s* own *Ariadne* has given numerous other examples in recent months (vol 98, p 56)!

Our own experiments have shown that high pressures are quite unnecessary for the generation of a relatively intense light. Devereux and McCartney have also noted that friction-produced light in samples of rock-crystal and granite is undiminished under water and enhanced in an atmosphere enriched with negative ions – to such a degree, in fact, that the

merest touching of a crystal will produce a subtle glow. These investigations are continuing.

Why do such effects occur? One starting point is that most minerals are themselves reservoirs of free electrons, a factor upon which two related dating techniques – thermoluminescence and electron spin resonance (ESR) spectroscopy – depend. Where do the electrons come from and how do they remain in the rock? If a mineralogically simple rock such as chert or limestone is selected (both of which are essentially monominerallic) ESR will show a spectrum of energies characteristic of electrons trapped at sites within the mineral lattice.

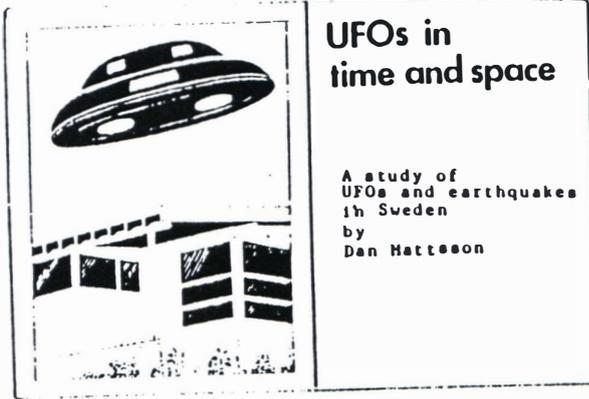
Over a geological period of time the electrons, which are knocked out of their atomic orbits by natural radiation, will completely fill the available “traps”, in the mineral’s lattice. A variety of draining mechanisms can discharge this electron population, and one of the ways electrons may manifest themselves on draining is as visible light. It is the contention of the present writers that triboluminescence may well underlie any fruitful discussion of UFOs and earth lights.

This description of triboluminescence implies sporadic and diffuse events which seem unlikely to account for detached and concentrated luminescent phenomena. After all, only something like 10^{20} electron traps exist per gram of substance. However, it may be that shearing and compression triggers a “cooperative” or “cascade” release phenomenon. Enough energy probably exists in the rocks themselves to favour such a process. Cooperative or cascade events are well documented in conventional areas of luminescent chemistry and could account energetically for a wide range of luminescent phenomena.

This earth lights thesis currently exists between science and ufology: as such it is well placed to perform a bridge-building role and is now acquiring substance at a rapid pace. The challenge to science in this area is not to allow prejudice to prevent it from fulfilling its main function – to observe and understand nature. The challenge to ufology is to take much greater notice than hitherto of an approach to UFOs that holds far more promise than dimensional shifts or little green men. □

Paul Devereux has researched and written on UFOs and related phenomena for 15 years. Paul McCartney is a geochemist who has been making a special study of UFOs and geology. Don Robins is at the Institute of Archaeology, University of London, and has a special research interest in the applications of ESR spectroscopy.

Scientists interested in helping the research outlined in this article are invited to contact the authors at TLH, PO Box 13, Welshpool, Powys.



UFOs in time and space

A study of UFOs and earthquakes in Sweden
by Dan Mattsson

This is an abridged version of an article, "UFO i tid och rum", originally published in UFO-Sverige Aktuell, nr 2, 1984.

I have studied 153 registered Swedish earthquakes and 494 published UFO observations, all from the years 1963-1978. The UFO sightings are from the Swedish Catalogue (SueCat) compiled by Anders Liljegren (1) and earthquake reports are from the seismological statistics published by the University of Uppsala (2).

Dr. Michael Persinger (3) has developed a theory that anomalous luminosities (UFOs) could originate from tectonic stress. According to Persinger an increase in the number of UFO reports could, in certain areas, be followed by an increase in earthquakes. The period between these events could be as long as two years if larger earthquakes are involved, but is normally about six months or less. The seismic areas involved could be several hundred kilometres wide.

Of great interest is the uneven distribution of UFO sightings in time and space. A period with an increase of sightings in a geographically limited area I will call flap. Worldwide flaps I will call UFO waves and areas which display a constantly higher number of observations than expected I will call UFO-windows.

There have been suggestions (J.B.Delaire, 4) that we have UFO waves about once in ten years and that this should coincide with higher numbers of sunspots. Fig. 1 shows the sunspot cycle (curve) and UFO waves (dark fields). The wave of 1947 began in Sweden the previous year (ghost rockets). The wave of 1957 was not noticed much of in Sweden. The wave of 1977 began in Sweden in the autumn of 1976.

Could there be a relationship between earthquakes and the sunspot cycle? I compared this in fig. 2. The spotted line shows frequency of sunspots while the heavy drawn line measures earthquakes in Sweden. The resemblance between the two curves is really striking!

At first it seems difficult to understand what sun spot activity has to do with earthquakes but the positive correlation could be due to the fact that the rotational speed of the earth is affected, or that sun spots affect the movements of great air-masses which could have some "trigger effect" on earthquakes.

We will now take a look at the geographical distribution of 494 UFO observations from 1963-1978, fig. 3. The distribution is partly explained by population density. There are exceptions, though. The larger cities Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö, Uppsala and Norrköping have, in general, fewer observations than expected. This could be explained by poorer observation conditions, lighter night skies.

The whole northern part of Sweden has twice as many sightings as expected, except for the western mountainous part with low population density.

Local areas with high numbers of sightings are: (I refer you to numbers on fig. 3)

1. Gislaved and Gnosjö district. 3,6 times the expected number of observations. This area has had an average of one sighting per year during the 70s. There were no earthquakes in the vicinity until Sept. 6, 1977, when a strong quake occurred. (3,0 on the Richter scale which is more than usual for Sweden). The very same night there were several observations of UFOs. One woman, living 20 km from the epicentre, even thought she saw white-dressed beings on the flying object she observed. After the quake there have been very few sightings from this district.

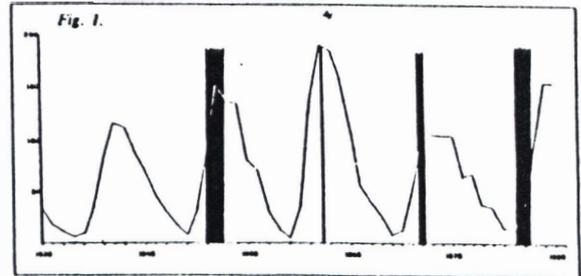
2. Nyköping and Oxelösund district. 4 times the expected number of obs. This district has had, since 1976, an active UFO-Sweden group, but despite this the area has had a constantly high rate of sightings for the last 20 years. Almost all UFO sightings are made in areas with strong magnetic fields, close to the large Bråviken fault line. You will find a close study of this area in AFU Newsletter vol. 25. No earthquakes registered in this area, except for one in 1970, 40 km apart.

3. Köping, Arboga and Kungsör (KAK) District. 8 times the expected number. This is partly explained by the existence of an active UFO-Sweden group, but not totally. The group is still active but the observations have nearly ceased after 1978. No earthquakes registered, except for one 40 km apart in 1973.

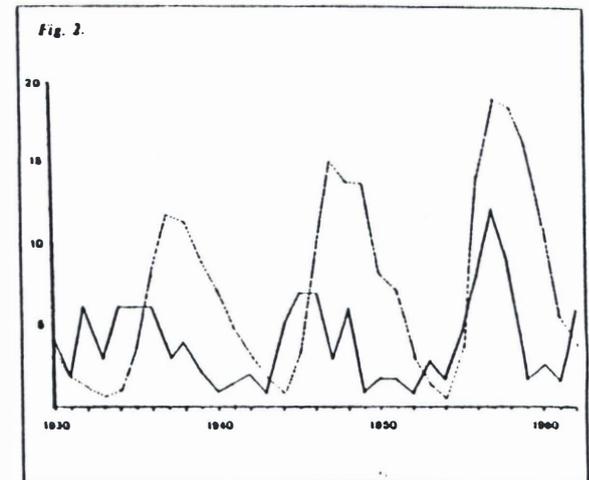
4. Vallentuna. 4 times the expected rate of sightings. Nearly all of the Vallentuna observations (they are about one hundred, mostly unpublished) are from the flap in 1973-74. This is the most intense flap yet in Sweden and some of the observations are very interesting. I will list some of them here:

October 1973: Three pillars of light searching from the clouds towards the ground and, then, from the ground towards the clouds. The light beams were parallel to each other in a 30° angle. As they went out there were flashes on the ground.

February 1974: Four yellow-white beams meet horizontally in an open field. They descend and go out. White, shining UFO with different colours around



Curve shows frequency of sun spots 1930-1980. Dark columns indicate UFO waves.



Swedish earthquakes 1930-1962 (heavy drawn line) and the sun spot cycle during the same years (dotted line).

the edges moving across a field. Light-beams from the object against the ground on different occasions. Object leaves but returns after five minutes. Then there are beams from the ground towards the object.

March 24, 1974: 10-30 meters wide UFO of a yellow-white colour descends to an altitude of 4-5 meters. Suddenly there comes, with five second intervals, a beam from the ground against the object. This is repeated three times.

May 26, 1974: An intense red light in the woods. The observers run towards the light. When they arrive about 10 meters from it, it goes out.

Sept. 27, 1974: Beams of light coming from the ground. One meter wide and 25 meters tall.

In this region, north of Stockholm (county of Uppland), there has never been any earthquake. That's why it came as a great surprise that this area, on Dec. 23, 1979, experienced one of the most powerful quakes ever to occur in Sweden. This indicates that there can be very powerful stresses built up in areas where there has never been any earthquake registered. The quake had its epicentre 35 km from Vallentuna.

Is this the explanation why window areas like Nyköping and Vallentuna are out of the earthquake belt? (fig. 4) Is the bedrock and the faults more stable here and the tectonic stress higher?

5. County of Dalarna. Two times the expected number of observations. The sightings follow, exactly, the mining district of Dalarna with a wealth of different minerals, but this is also a more populated area. There are also earthquakes in Dalarna. (The most recent flap of sightings in Dalarna occurred in January, 1985. Editor).

6. Sundavall and Hårnösand area. 2,5 times the expected number of sightings. This makes quite a lot of observations because Sundavall has a large population. It also has an active UFO-Sweden group, but there are reasons to believe that UFO groups sometimes are products of an increased rate of UFOs. Because of the UFO group, the reports from the Sundavall area have a higher quality, less number of misidentifications. Sundavall is, also, an earthquake centre and there are remains of an old volcano here. This makes Sundavall very interesting and we will return to this area later on.

7. Kiruna and Gällivare. Four times the expected rate of sightings. Kiruna-Gällivare is the main mining district of Sweden. It is also an area with many earthquakes.

The geographical distribution of 153 earthquakes is shown in figures 4 and 5. There is a belt of quake activity from the northeast to the southwest, across Sweden. Sweden is put under pressure at a right angle to this belt as indicated by the lines in fig. 5.

Persinger, in his study, got the strongest correlation between UFO reports and earthquakes using six month increments. Fig. 6 shows number of UFO reports (heavy line) and earthquakes (broken line) for six month periods from 1963 to 1978, in Sweden. The UFO peaks of -67, -71 and -73 are followed by peaks in the earthquake activity during the following period. The high UFO peak of 1976 has a quake peak in the same period.

Next, I tried to find all "flaps" in SweCat. When such a local flap was located I then looked at that area to see if there were any earthquakes after the flap. Chances ought to be greater for a positive correlation between flaps and earthquakes since it is more probable that we have "true" UFOs during a flap than among single sightings. The flaps I found are:

Year(s)	month(s)	number of obs.	flap area
1965	Aug.-Dec.	5	Arboga, Örebro and Karlstad
1967	March-April July-Aug.	12	Norrbottnen & Västerbottnen
1971	Jan.-Febr.	3	Sundavall
1973	January	4	Dalarna
1973	July	5	Norrbottnen
1973-74	Sept-Nov		
1975	Nov.-March	6	Vallentuna
1975	Oct, Dec.	7	Värmland
1976	Febr-April, June	7	Sundavall
1976	May	5	Norrbottnen
1977	Febr-March	4	Norrbottnen

During the autumn of 1976 there was an increase in observations over the whole of Sweden but I was unable to detect any local flaps during this period. It is very interesting that we have no flaps from the southern part of Sweden (south of the Stockholm area), despite the fact that a majority of the population lives here. The flaps from the northern-most counties (Norrbottnen, Västerbottnen) are more widespread and not very local. The very local flaps we find in mid-Sweden (Värmland, Dalarna and the Sundavall area).

Figures 7-12 show flaps and the following earthquakes. The maps show UFO observations and earthquakes occurring during the respective periods.

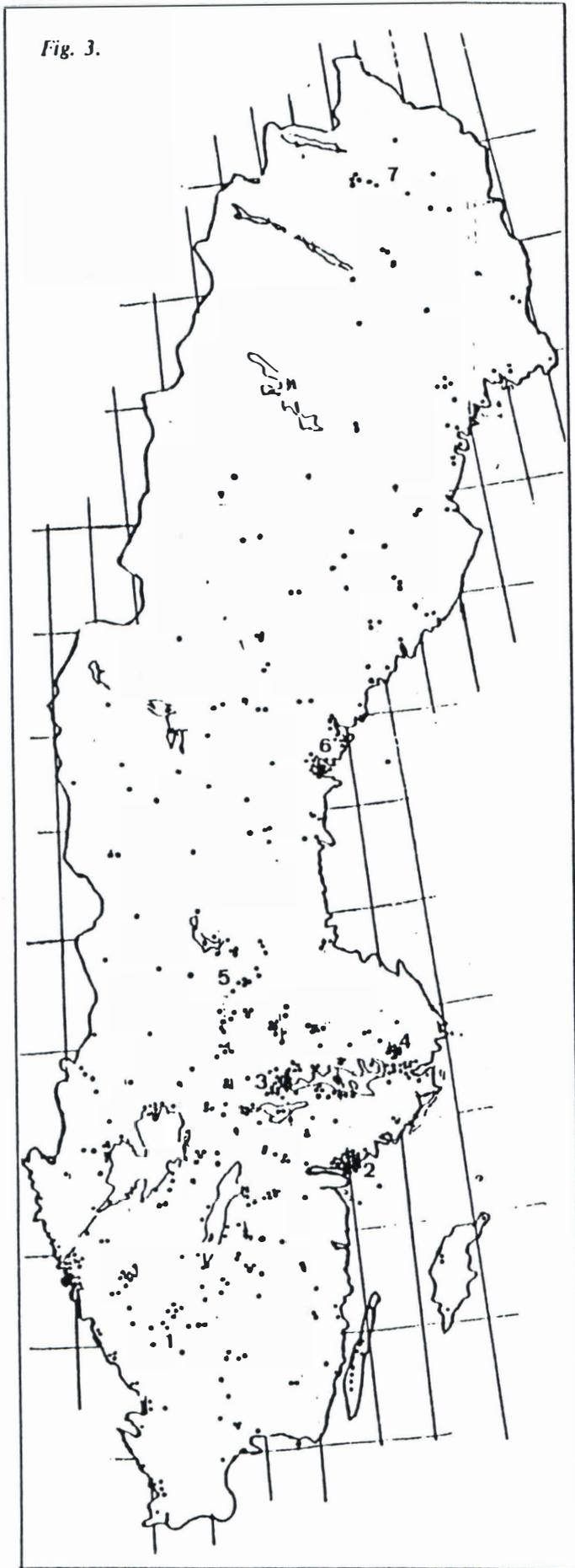
The most interesting area which, on two occasions, has shown a correlation is Sundavall-Hårnösand. I took a closer look at this district. From the local group I have gotten more observation data (not published before). There are a total of 54 sightings from a 20-years-period. From the seismic department of the Uppsala university I received data on a total of 14 quakes from the area (62-63°N, 17-19°E). Fig. 13 shows that the correlation is very strong. Only two earthquakes (1970, 1973) were not preceded by UFO reports.

Figures 14-16 shows the same comparison for three other areas. The accordance is not as clear as in the Sundavall area, but here we also have much larger areas.

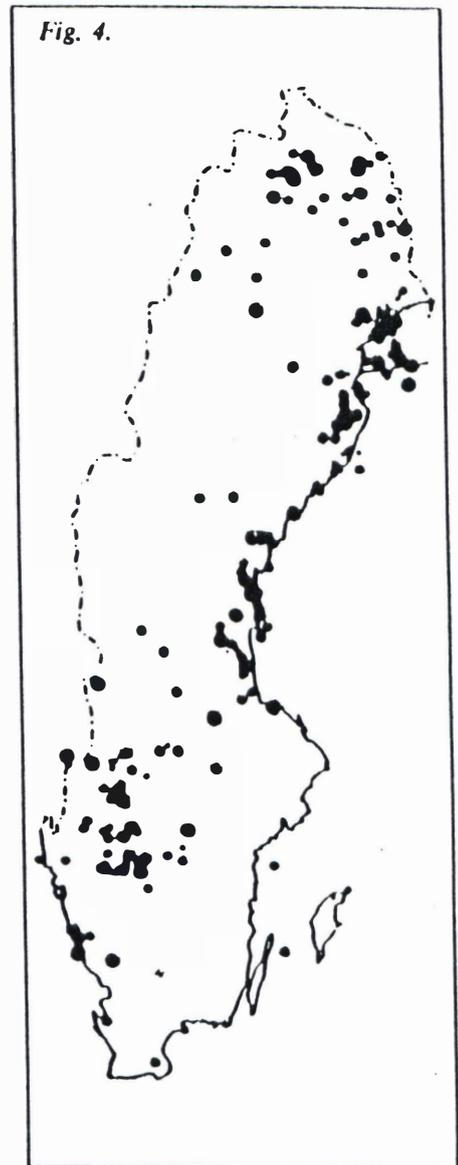
I am aware that, although some facts in this study suggest a correlation UFOs/earthquakes, it is not proven yet. Maybe this article can give some ideas on how to proceed.

From now on the seismograph is actually a tool for the ufologist. In Norway, the "Project Heasdaalen", on my suggestion, have had a seismograph in use for six months. It did not, however, record any movements in the bedrock of the valley. The Heasdaalen flap is now into its fourth year. In November 1984 sightings have started up again.

For more details about the Swedish study please write to: Dan Mattsson, P1 7239, S-611 90 Nyköping, Sweden. I want to get in touch with other ufologists involved in similar studies.



Geographical distribution of published UFO case reports 1963-1978.



Distribution of 153 Swedish earthquakes 1963-1978.



Author Dan Mattsson specializes in the study of UFOs versus geophysical phenomena.



Fig. 5.
Lines indicate zones where most earthquakes occur.



Fig. 7.
UFO sightings (dots) and earthquakes (stars) during 1967. Note that 1/3 of UFOs occurred in the county of Västerbotten, where few earthquakes occur.

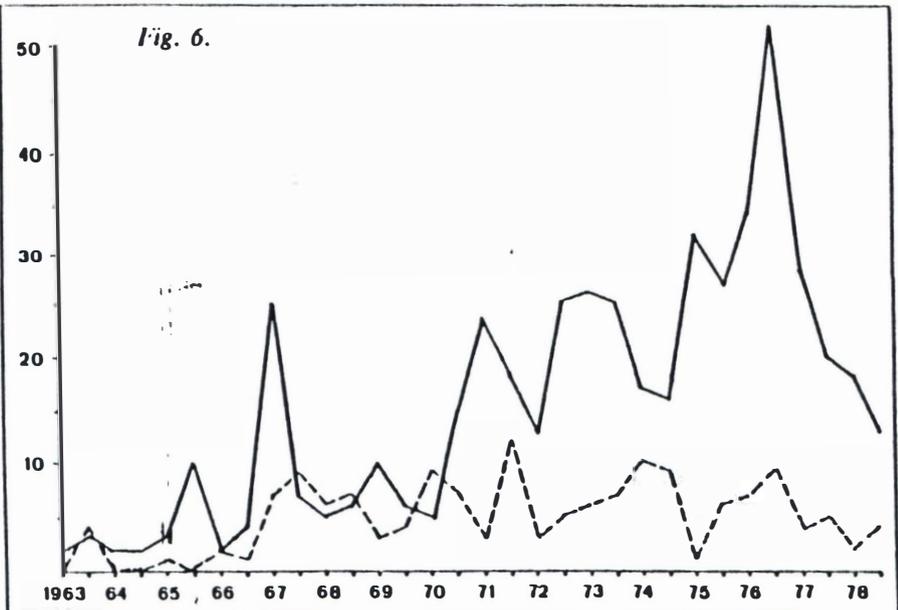


Fig. 6.
Number of UFO sightings (heavy-drawn) and number of earthquakes (dotted) during six month periods, 1963-1978.

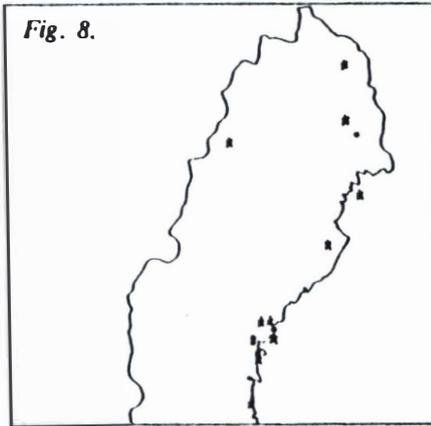


Fig. 8.
UFO sightings first half of 1971. All quakes for 1971. Note concentration in the Sundsvall-Härnösand area.

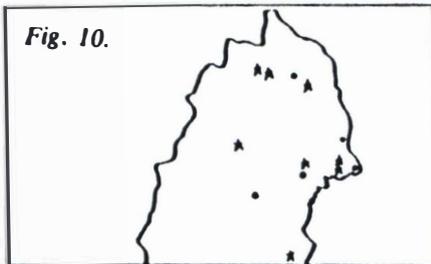


Fig. 10.
UFOs during second half of 1973 and all quakes during next year, 1974.

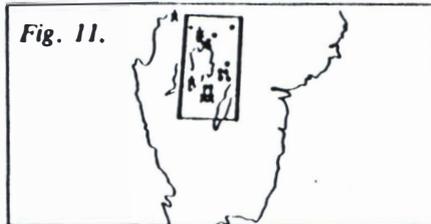


Fig. 11.
All UFO sightings in the Lake Vänern area Oct. 1975 - April 1976. Earth quakes (stars) occurred between March and Sept. 1976.

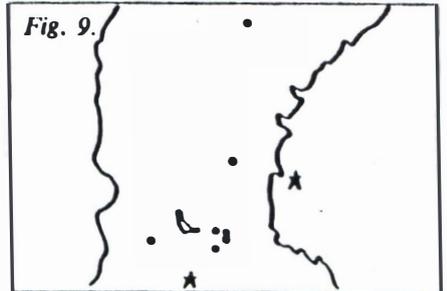


Fig. 9.
All UFO reports and earthquakes first half of 1973. UFO flap in the county of Dalarna occurred on a "weak zone", compare figure 5. Quake in Dalarna, May 30.

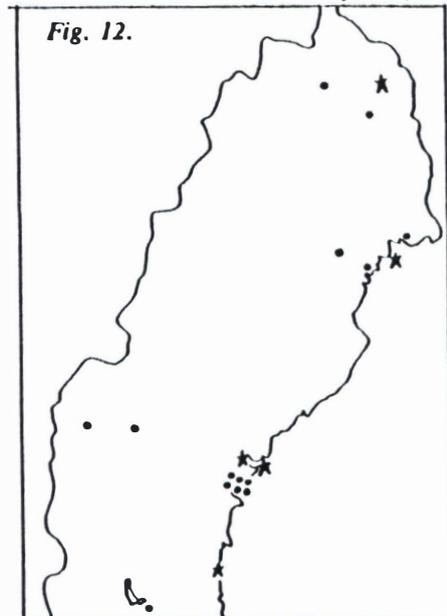
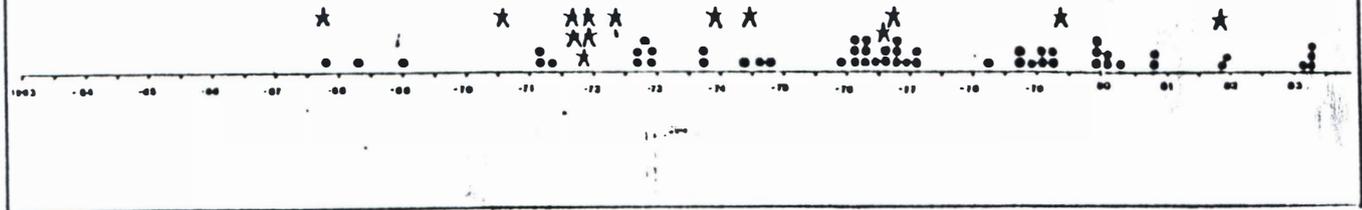


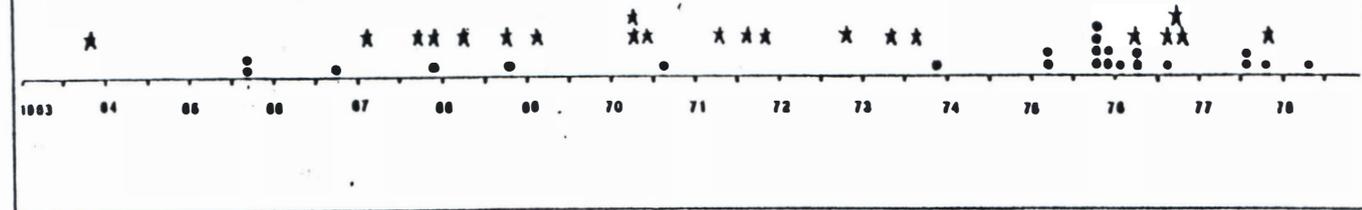
Fig. 12.
All 1976 UFOs (dots) and all quakes (stars) during the second half of -76. Both concentrate in three areas: the iron ore fields in the north, the northern Baltic and the Sundsvall area.

Fig. 13.



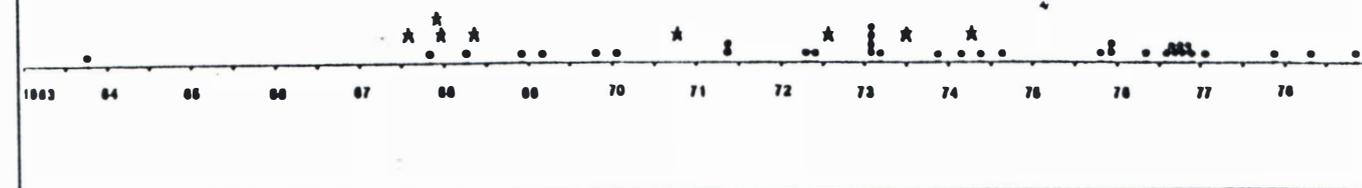
The Sundsvall - Härnösand area.
UFO sightings (dots) and earthquakes (stars) during the 1963-1983 period.

Fig. 14.



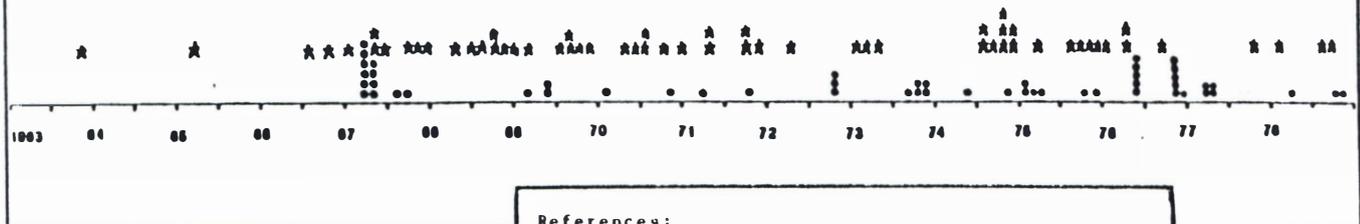
The Lake Vänern area (counties Värmland & Västergötland) in the 1963-78 period.

Fig. 15.



Dalarna. (60°-61°N).

Fig. 16.



Västerbotten-Norrbotten.

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Artwork in the vignette is by Sven Andersson.

THE LINLEY LIGHTS

Linley is a hamlet a few miles south of Ironbridge in Shropshire. It is one of the many sites in Shropshire that JONATHAN MULLARD is studying as part of his detailed Earth Mysteries survey of the county.

Turning onto the track leading to remote Linley, the St Leonard church is the first building encountered. It is a remarkably complete Norman structure, boasting a famous Green Man tympanum (see front cover) above the blocked north door. The church is connected with Linley Hall and its accompanying cottages and outbuildings several hundred yards to the south by a rough track. That is the extent of the place.

But in 1913/14 Linley was the scene of an outbreak of exceptional phenomena, as Mullard has discovered from his research. A "ball of light" was seen flitting around one of the cottages and another clinging to the tower of the church. Lightballs may also have been observed in the Hall. In addition, spirals of "vapour" were seen, both light and dark in tone, and latches on doors lifted without human agency. Mysterious noises were heard, including explosions in the air.

Vapour spirals accompanying lightball events are old friends to Earth Lights (EL) researchers. It is thought they may be associated with the "white lady" and "black monk" genre of ghosts: sure enough, a bare mile from Linley there is an established "white lady" ghost tradition. The lifting latches and aerial explosions sound

suspiciously like electromagnetic anomalies.

Further, EL investigators have come to expect psychic outbreaks concurrent with lightball and associated events: perhaps the earth energies involved with the atmospheric and other anomalies can also trigger psychic episodes within and around suitable people in such vicinities at such times (one thinks of Mary Jones in the 1904/5 Barmouth area outbreak; the reported poltergeist effects near St Brides Bay in 1977; even Hessdalen investigators have confirmed psychic outbreaks amongst the scattered population of their bleak Earth Lights site near the Norwegian/Swedish border). It turns out there were indeed reported poltergeist events at Linley - such as teacups, furniture and garments moving of their own accord.

Finally, EL people have become almost blasé about finding faulting correlating with such event sites. The theory only requires rock, in actuality, but faulting does seem to be the catalyst for providing the geological energy "motor" for lightball and associated geophysical and possibly psychic phenomena. Well, two surface faults DO encompass Linley like callipers about three-quarters of mile to west and east. Moreover, a drift boundary crosses the track between the church and the hall, probably indicating further geological disturbance. More details are currently being sought via the British Geological Survey.

New Jersey Light

There used to be a section of disused railway track in Washington Township, New Jersey, USA, that had a legend: "A brakeman had long ago lost his arm in an accident along that stretch and now, if you watched and waited at nights, you would sometimes see his ghost walking along the track with a lantern seeking his lost limb."

The legend is doubtlessly fiction, but the repeated appearance of a light, like the ghost's lantern, weaving back and forth across the track was not. It had been seen many times. In the 1970s a team was set up to study the phenomenon of the spooklight. They called themselves "Vestigia" and included scientists among the researchers.

In America there are phenomena called "spooklights" or "ghost lights" as we shall see in future issues: some of us over here in the UK would call them "earth lights" - they are all the same phenomenon. Vestigia found that not only was there an old railroad track, but there was also a geological fault running concurrently with it. The team went on to make a close study of the light phenomenon associated with the track/fault: moreover, it is the most scientific study of ANY type of UFO ever undertaken: strange, then, that some ufologists still have problems accepting the fact of earth lights.

Over a period of time Vestigia observed, photographed and took physical measurements related to the light during its occasional

appearances. The light was about 18 inches in diameter, globular but containing a bullet-shaped core within the glow of light. The area where it appeared sometimes gave certain people an inexplicable feeling of "dread". Resistivity changes were measured in the rails when the light bobbed above them. On one occasion when the light "went out", a sudden and extreme rise in the readings from a geiger counter were noted shortly afterwards. The readings soon dropped back to normal.

A particularly remarkable observation, which was communicated to me in America recently, was that, apparently, with the team stretched down the line, the light was visible at one end of the line but not at the other. This suggests a mono-direction of photon emission...a serious challenge to current physics (though perhaps not at the theoretical levels of the "new physics").

Eventually, the railway line was pulled up, but the light continued to make its appearance. Its undulations were modified in the absence of the strip conductor the rails formed, but it still manifested. What the current state of events are with regard to the light is not known at present.

An inexplicable light appearing in the atmosphere, correlated with a fault, causing electromagnetic side-effects and effects on human consciousness. These are all the hallmarks of earth lights. The fact of their existence will not go away.

Cotswolds Lights

DAVID CLARKE

David is Jenny Randles' AI UFO investigator for the south Yorkshire area, but spends much of his time conducting historical UFO work. Recently, he has been researching with Granville Oldroyd into British spooklights. This work, SPOOKLIGHTS: A BRITISH SURVEY, will be fully reviewed in TLH when it is published. In the meantime, David is kindly allowing TLH a brief preview of a sample of the material.

Our research has centred around the Burton Dassett Hills on the NE extremities of the Cotswolds, Warwickshire. A large number of local people, as well as visiting journalists reported seeing extremely brilliant, manoeuvring low-level lights at close range over these hills during the years 1923 and 1924.

The lights centred on the pre-Norman "All Saints" Burton Dassett church. The hills are riddled with minor faults and the church is situated over the actual "Burton Dassett Fault"! It is built into the hillside in a series of step-levels, and there are a number of carvings of dragons/serpents on the supporting pillars and nave inside. The church is near an ancient beacon overlooking the site of the Battle of Edgehill (1642) and overlooked itself by the earthworks of Gredenton Hill. A "phantom army" appeared in the sky over the Edgehill site area for several months after the battle and was witnessed by farmers, shepherds, magistrates and officers sent from Oxford by Charles I. The whole area is riddled with ghost stories (Ed. and contemporary paranormal events, too, I understand.) and one of Watkins' legs ran nearby.

The local name for the light was

"Jenny Burntail". It is most interesting that a fierce earthquake hit Herefordshire on the night of Friday January 25 1924, the same night as the "ghost" light reappeared on the Burton Hills, this time casting an even more luminous brilliance.

One of the witnesses of the lights was a Mr George White:

Out of sheer curiosity, in company...I paid a visit to the Burton Hills a few weeks ago (February 1923). It was about 7 pm and when we had been there a short time...we turned round and about 200 yds away was a strong and dazzling light like that of a motor headlamp. It was a perfectly lovely sight, and held us fascinated. It flitted about and passed through bushes and over fences at high speed; then it passed over us and disappeared with a flash into the ground. We could feel it hover around, and it appeared to be looking for something, for the light swept the ground. The light ... was so bright, and yet there was a ghastly red-dy-blue patch on the top. Later, when we saw it round Burton Dassett church, there was a tinge of orange colour. There was nothing whatever to be afraid of ...I was a sceptic before, but I swear I have never seen anything like it.

The prevailing explanation for the lights at the time was that "marsh gas" was the culprit. However, recent research by chemists has shown that CH₄, even in combination with phosphides, cannot "create" will-o'-the-wisps - and, moreover, the mixture is not spontaneously flammable.

Credit: Paul Devereux

THINKING BALL LIGHTNING

From Albert de Rochas, Vies successives, Leymarie, Paris
1924 (first edition had been in 1916), page 390

Rochas, who was one of the most enterprising anomaly researchers ever, wrote this generally-overlooked study of regression hypnosis more than half a century before the current orgy.

In the course of one of his investigations, he questioned an alleged spirit concerning the apparent signs of intelligence displayed in certain cases which were ostensibly ball lightning. The reply came, that while such forces on Earth are without intelligence, on other levels of being they do have intelligence. The hypothesis that ball lightning could possess rudimentary intelligence is therefore false as regards our Earth, but could be true elsewhere in the Universe, where the 'enveloping electric sheet' (= couche) is made with an 'evolved electricity' capable of obeying an external intelligence. In this state it can take whatever form the intelligence which controls them wishes, so that they can be transformed into - for example - the cones which serve as vehicles for the spirits.

Given that the spirit - insofar as it existed at all - was talking nonsense, this is none the less interesting simply in that it shows us that such ideas were being formulated 70 years ago. Rochas himself evidently took such communications with a pinch of salt, and it is most likely that the communicator was giving him feedback from his own mind. Intriguing, though, to find him thinking - whether consciously or unconsciously - along such sophisticated lines.

Credit : Hilary Evans

ÉPHÉMÉRIDES

6 août 1363

• Le tonnerre tombe sur la tour de l'église de Saint Loup. •
Aufauvre. Les tablettes historiques de Troyes (Paris, 1858).

9 juillet 1382

• La foudre tombe sur la cathédrale et endommage la charpente. •
R. de M., Cath., tome I, pp. 128-129.
(Il ne s'agit pas de la tour actuelle ni du grand clocher, construit en 1410 et aujourd'hui disparu.)

1385

• Coup de foudre [sur la Cathédrale]. •
Amédée Aufauvre, Troyes et ses environs (Paris, 1864), p. 150.

1417

Juvénal des Ursins rapporte qu'en l'année 1417, aux diocèses de Troyes et de Châlons, « se leva un foudre ou tonnerre et merveilleuse tempête qui ne dura pas moins de quatorze heures », notamment à Lhuître. Toutes les récoltes de la terre furent détruites, foudroyées et battues « mieux et plus que fléaux », et plusieurs personnes furent tuées. Certaines furent trouvées mortes « avec les os tous comminés et desrompuz sans que la peau et la chair fussent aucunement entamés ».

Juvénal des Ursins, Histoire de Charles VI, p. 338.

1472

Un jour du mois de février, vers 8 heures du soir, alors qu'il faisait très chaud, « il descendit du ciel deux grandes clartés comme deux chandelles, passant devant les yeux des regardants, qui semblaient être fort épouvantable et en issait mainte grande clarté, mais ce ne dura guère ».

Jean de Troyes, cité par Eugène Maury, Calamités publiques et faits météorologiques avant 1790. Grande Imp. de Troyes, 1914, 32 pages in-8.

22 mai 1511

La foudre tombe de nouveau sur la cathédrale et endommage des panneaux d'une verrière.

R. de M., Cath., t. II, p. 155.

25 mai 1556

• Le tonnerre tombe pour la seconde fois, sur le clocher de la cathédrale, et y cause de grands dégâts. •

Aufauvre, Les tablettes historiques de Troyes, p. 79.

• Le clocher [de la cathédrale], dont l'aiguille s'élançait dans les nues à plus de 108 mètres de hauteur, ne pouvait manquer d'avoir de nombreux démolés avec l'électricité... •

Aufauvre, Troyes et ses environs (Paris, 1864), p. 152.

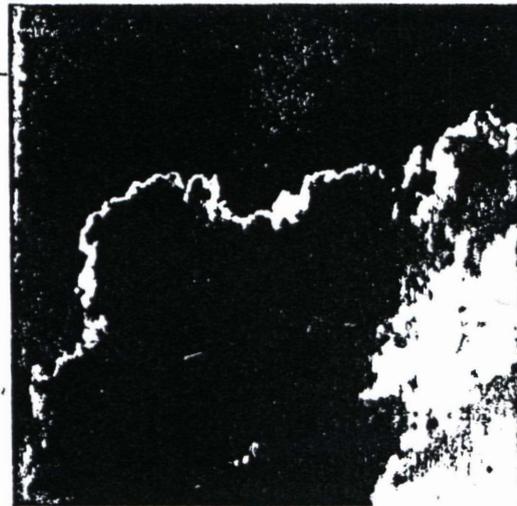
1577

Nouveau méfait du tonnerre sur la ville de Troyes (R. de M., Cath., t. I, p. 47).

À la fin du printemps, celui-ci « s'adonna à la chaleur, grande pour la saison à cause de laquelle s'engendrèrent des nuées en l'air sur la fin du mois de mai et commencement de juin, qui causèrent des grêles et des orages si terribles que les biens de champs en furent gastés et perdus, et notamment entre Sens et Troyes, environ 9 lieues de long et une de large et commença au village de Malay en tirant sur Saint-Mards, Aix-en-Othe et jusque près de Troyes et y fut la foudre si cruelle que le pays pensait être en quasi-abîme. La grêle y fut si grosse que l'on trouva des loups morts par les champs (...) les lièvres et agneaux furent pareillement trouvés morts des coups de ladite grêle.

Les biens de la terre en furent si bien rompus en aucuns endroits qu'il n'y fut besoin de faucher ni moissonner. •

Claude Hatton, Mémoires, Cité par E.-L. Collot, Aix en Othe et la région, p. 90.



1579

La foudre tombe [pour la seconde fois] sur l'aiguille du clocher de la cathédrale.

Aufauvre.

11 janvier 1584

Le clocher de Saint-Rémi est frappé de la foudre. L'ouragan cause de grands dommages dans la ville de Troyes.

Aufauvre, Les tablettes historiques de Troyes.

4 juin 1605

À Venduvre, « le 4 juin [...] une fille fut tuée d'un coup de foudre se tant mis à l'abri sous un poirier (...) ».

Registre paroissial, coll. communale. Relevé aux Archives dép.

16 juillet 1613

À Venduvre, « le 16 jour de juillet [...] il fit un grand orage [...] lequel [...] une no[m]mée Nicolle Carrée fut tuée d'un coup de foudre proche le château de La Villeneuve, sur la fosse de laquelle on fit ce quatrain :

« Larc ne pouvant porter Impulsant de soy-mesme
La foudre descendant de la campagne ignée
Lan mil treze, six cens, de Juillet le sezlesme
Le darda sur le chef de Luquine Carrée. »

Registre paroissial de la coll. comm. Relevé aux Arch. dép.

1617

Incendie du clocher de Saint-Pierre, à Bar-sur-Aube, occasionné par la foudre ; le feu fut si ardent que les sept cloches furent fondues.

Chevalier, Histoire de Bar-sur-Aube, cité par E. Maury, op. cit.

1618

La foudre tombe [pour la troisième fois] sur l'aiguille du clocher de la cathédrale.

Aufauvre, Troyes et ses environs.

1640

La foudre tombe [pour la quatrième fois] sur l'aiguille du clocher de la cathédrale.

La foudre endommage considérablement le couvent de la congrégation Notre-Dame, à Troyes. (R. de M., Cathéd., tome I, p. 47.)

17 janvier 1653

À Rigny-le-Ferron, « l'an 1653 [...] le dix septiesme jour du mois de janvier sur les six heures du soir ait arrivé un grand tonnerre et esclaires et grelle a lestonnement de beaucoup de p[er]so[n]nes la quelle grelle a brisé beaucoup de vitres tant en l'église de ce lieu que autres lieux de la ville (...) »

Registre paroissial, collection communale. Relevé aux Arch. dép.

15 juin 1660

Le jeudi 15 juin, jour de la Fête-Dieu, un orage s'abattit sur Eclance. Un bourgeois y fut tué par la foudre.

Ahid Cautin, « Quelques seigneuries... » Cité par E. Maury, op. cit.

Août 1667

A Villehardouln, mort d'un homme tué d'un coup de tonnerre.

Registres paroissiaux, Collection du greffe. Relevé aux Arch. dép.

6 mars 1677

L'ancien clocher de la cathédrale est frappé de la foudre et subit une violente secousse. L'évêque Mallier volt, d'une fenêtre de l'évêché, le tonnerre tomber sur l'édifice.

Aufauvre, Les tablettes historiques de Troyes.

3 juillet 1697

La foudre tombe [pour la cinquième fois] sur l'aiguille du clocher de la cathédrale.

Le tonnerre tombe pour la septième fois sur le clocher de la cathédrale qui devait, trois ans plus tard, entraîner la ruine de toute la toiture et endommager considérablement l'édifice.

Aufauvre, Les tablettes historiques de Troyes.

Nuit du 7 au 8 octobre 1700

Le fluide électrique embrasa le sommet du clocher. Malgré les efforts tentés au début de l'incendie, la flamme gagna de proche en proche, et bientôt l'aiguille qui planait au-dessus de la ville ressembla à une torche ardente dont les lueurs grandissantes jetaient au loin de sinistres clartés...

Amédée Aufauvre, Troyes et ses environs, p. 152.

Pour la huitième fois, la foudre frappe le clocher de la cathédrale (Lucien Morel-Payen, Alm. T.A. pour 1935, écrit qu'elle avait été frappée seize fois en trois siècles sans être trop endommagée).

Cet accident, survenu à une heure du matin, détruit le clocher qui s'élevait à 180 pieds, la toiture et ses plombs, les cloches et une statue colossale de Saint-Michel, posée à la pointe du pignon de façade, du côté du portail. En tombant, cette statue crève une voûte et tue trois ouvriers.

Des dommages considérables sont ainsi occasionnés à la tour, aux voûtes et aux vitraux.

Amédée Aufauvre, Les tablettes historiques de Troyes, p. 152.

Note du curé Filleux, de la paroisse des Noës.

En cette année, la nuit du septième octobre, le feu du ciel a tombé sur l'église Saint-Pierre de Troyes et a brûlé entièrement la cloche du clocher et toute la charpente [...] la perte est estimée par des experts plus de trois cent mil livres.

Archives communales, fin du registre de 1700 (Relevé aux Arch. dép.)

Note du curé Matoulyot, de la paroisse de Plney :

Le huitième jour du mois d'octobre 1700, à une heure ou environ après minuit, le feu du ciel tomba sur le cloché de l'église Saint-Pierre de Troyes, cathédrale du diocèse, et s'attacha au-dessous la pomme du dit cloché en forme d'une étoile pendant une bonne demie heure.

Il fondit le plomb, et, ayant pénétré jusques aux bois, il brûla le dit cloché et ensuite toute la haute couverture de l'église, et non celle de bas costés, sans qu'il soit resté de la dite couverture ny du dit cloché aucune chose. Les maisons du voisinage n'en ont ressentis aucun dommage parce que l'air étoit fort tranquille. La perte est fort considérable et est estimée, avec les voûtes qui sont fort endommagées, à cinq et six cent mil livres. Les seigneurs évêques François Boutillier et Denis Bouthillier, travaillent fort à son rétablissement et y contribuent de tout leur pouvoir.

N.B. : Ce texte a été repris et résumé au feuillet 20^o du cahier de l'année 1700 de la collection communale.

Mai 1701

Le 18 mai, à Lusigny est inhumée Antoinette Noël, âgée d'environ 21 ans, qui a été tuée d'un coup de tonnerre... ; elle est inhumée dans le cimetière, après qu'on eut trouvé sur elle des marques de chrestien...

Registre paroissial.

Jeudi 7 août 1701

A Trouan-le-Petit, le jeudi 7 août, est enterré André Person trouvé mort sous les ruines d'une grange du château de Mr de Longueil, l'accident étant arrivé par un coup de foudre.

Registre paroissial, série communale. Relevé aux Archives dép.

Lundi 24 mai 1706

A 7 heures et demie du soir, le tonnerre tomba sur la flèche du clocher de Saint-Pierre, à Bar-sur-Aube et le feu se communiqua rapidement aux trois dômes.

Délibérations [du Corps de Ville ?] Cité par E. Maury, op. cit.

Le même jour à huit heures, le clocher de l'abbaye de Clairvaux fut également détruit par la foudre.

Sémillard, Manuscrits, tome II. Cité par E. Maury, op. cit. (celui-ci indique que le chroniqueur troyen se trompe d'année, plaçant ces deux sinistres en 1703).

25 mai 1706

[A Chavanges] - Il a fait de terribles nuées, de la grêle qui a causé grand dommage. Le tonnerre est tombé sur le clocher de Chavanges et sur l'église St-Pierre de Bar-sur-Aube.

Registres paroissiaux (minute). Relevé aux Arch. départ.

21 juillet 1707

A Lusigny, sont inhumés dans le cimetière trois femmes décédées la veille subitement, s'en retournant de fauciller.

Registre paroissial, coll. comm. Relevé aux Arch. dép.

27 juin 1713

A 2 heures et demie de l'après-midi, la foudre tomba sur le clocher d'Hampligny et y mit le feu. Sémillard, Manuscrits, tome II. Cité par E. Maury, op. cit.

Dimanche 23 juin 1720

A Montfey, le dimanche vingt-trois juin, sur les quatre heures du matin, il (...) est tombé pendant près d'une demie heure une grêle grosse la plupart comme des œufs, cornue, de la hauteur du genou, poussé par un grand vent et sans pluie, qui a perdu entièrement tout ce qui étoit semé sur la terre, sans espérance d'aucune récolte, les terres, les vignes, les prez, les chenevrières, les arbres, les fruits, les jardins ont été foudroyés ; cet orage est tombé sur tout le finage d'en bas de la paroisse et a perdu également toutes les paroisses voisines, et un pays de plus de 20 lieues de long sur une demie de large. On n'a de mémoire d'homme rien vu de semblable.

(Collection communale.) Recueilli par les Archives dép.

19 (?) octobre 1726

Phénomènes météorologiques qui jettent l'effroi dans la population. Le bruit de la fin du monde se répand et la foule épouvantée remplit les églises.

Le ciel est en feu ; des lueurs électriques le sillonnent, accompagnées de détonations.

Aufauvre, Les tablettes historiques de Troyes.

15 août 1733

A Bragelogne, le 15 août, sont inhumées deux personnes tuées dans les champs par le feu du ciel ou par le tonnerre.

Registre paroissial (minute). Relevé aux Arch. dép.

30 juin 1742

Dans l'après-midi, un violent orage s'abattit sur la région de Soulaines, de Morvilliers et d'Epothémont. Deux jeunes gens de cette dernière localité (...) qui gardaient des bestiaux (...) ont été foudroyés sous un arbre qui les abritait.

Etienne, Monographie d'Epothémont. Cité par E. Maury, op. cit., p. 18.

30 juin 1742

Le 30 juin 1742, dans l'après-midi, un violent orage s'abattit sur la région de Soulaines, de Morvilliers et d'Epothémont.

Deux jeunes gens de cette dernière localité, Nicolas Baveux, âgé de 24 ans et Edme Lurat, âgé de 21 ans, qui gardaient des bestiaux près du fort de l'étang de Villemahu, furent foudroyés sous un arbre qui les abritait.

Le lendemain matin, Nicolas Canivet, lieutenant en la justice de Morvilliers, se transporta, avec son greffier, François Tassin et Michel Boullenger, sergent, à l'endroit où les jeunes gens avaient été tués.

Il trouva les corps et cadavres desdits Baveux et Lurat sur leur séant, le dos appuyés contre un petit pommier sauvage, étant sur la rive des bois usagers de Morvilliers...

Lesdits deux cadavres avaient été accidentés par le tonnerre et éclair d'icelui, suivant ce qui a apparu à leur visage et estomac tout noirs et brûlés.

D'après Etienne, Monographie d'Epothémont.

Jeudi 14 novembre 1743

A Ossey-les-Trois-Maisons, sur les 2 ou 3 heures après-midi [...] on a entendu de gros coups de tonnerre accompagnés d'éclairs, de pluies et de grésil en abondance.

Archives communales. Relevé aux Arch. dép.

15 août 1746

La foudre tomba à 8 heures du matin, sur la grange d'une ferme d'Espagne. Cette grange fut incendiée, de même que les écuries voisines.

Archives départ. E. 161. Cité par E. Maury, op. cit., p. 19.

26 juillet 1751

[A Fontenay-de-Bossery], Marie Léger, fille de Louis Léger, laboureur, et de Marie Léger, âgé de dix-huit ans quatre mois, ayant été frappée du tonnerre dans l'église le vingt-six juillet est morte sur-le-champ et a été inhumée le lendemain dans le cimetière de cette paroisse en présence de Louis Léger, Michel Léger, André Clerain et Etienne Bertrand qui ont signé pour la plupart... »

Bulletin paroissial (minute). Relevé aux Arch. de l'Aube.

30 août 1761

Le clocher de Saint-Urbain dont la légèreté répondait à l'élégance de l'édifice, est frappé de la foudre. C'est depuis cette époque que l'on voit l'informe tabellière servant d'abri à la sonnerie.

Aufauvre, Les tablettes historiques de Troyes. Voir aussi Lucien Morel-Payen, Ann. T. A. 1935.

27 juin 1764

A Pont-sur-Solne, « le 27 juin, veille de la petite fête Dieu [...] sur les six heures du soir [...] Il a fait un orage épouvantable [...] entre autres deux coups de tonnerre à faire frémir les plus déterminés. Il est tombé sur cette Eglise ou paroisse en trois endroits [...] le premier carreau (1) ou coup de foudre a découvert le comble du cœur et l'a parcouru dans l'endroit où est posé la croix en forme d'arc-en-ciel en éclatant [...] brisant une partie de la tuille et se jetant encore sur d'autres couvertures du bâtiment a costé.

La deuxième foudre a percé un mur de 6 pieds d'épaisseur à côté de la sacristie dans la chambre du curé, et a comme pris plaisir à jeter les pierres et les décombres sur son lit. Il y avait dans ladite chambre un petit Jésus dans une crèche [...] Il a été mis en morceaux et le petit lit de taffetas sur lequel l'enfant Jésus estoit couché a été transporté dans l'autre chambre attendant sans être endommagé. La foudre a percé un autre mur pareille épaisseur pour se transporter dans la sacristie, où elle a frappé en plusieurs endroits. L'enfant du chantre a vu du feu qui voltigeoit et s'en est enfuit en pleurant [...] Celui du bedeau qui estoit dans l'église a été jetté par terre, apparemment par l'impulsion de l'air [...] Car il dit avoir été poussé et n'a point eu de mal que la peur. Au second coup aussi effrayant que l'autre [...] le tonnerre est tombé dans la cuisine, où se estoit réfugié le Curé avec l'aïnée de ses sœurs [...] Cette foudre a éclaté comme ils sortoient et a environné cette sœur qui est tombée comme morte au pied du Curé qui s'est enfuit dans la salle en criant [...] ma sœur est tuée du tonnerre [...] Deux de ses neveux [...] a ces mots, ont fondu en l'arme [...]

Et le curé retournant sur ses pas pour voir si le feu avoit pris [...] a trouvé sa sœur qui se relevoit, en lui disant [...] vous n'êtes donc pas morte ? [...] Elle a répondu quelle n'avoit rien entendu ny vu [...] mais seulement senti un coup sur la teste qui l'avoit renversée.

C'est une espèce de miracle [...] car le Curé a vu plusieurs carreaux de feu lentourer et les troupes qui estoient en garnison ont vu sortir la foudre enflammée par la cheminée de cette cuisine.

Apparemment que cette même foudre a aussi passé dans la chambre au dessus, on s'est aperçu qu'elle avoit ouvert deux batans ou portes d'armoire par les gonds ou bien en déchirant le bois et les démontant comme avec un mauvais ciseau. On s'est aussi aperçu qu'il avoit percé le mur au dessus du banc des marguilliers et que de là [...] il avoit monté dans la tribune a costé de la cuisine où il n'a fait bien du ravage. L'instant d'avant [...] cette place estoit occupée par la plus jeune des sœurs du Curé qui [...] heureusement venoit de quitter cette place pour courir après ses neveux dont elle estoit inquiète. Cette sollicitude luy a valu la vie, car la foudre l'auroit réduit en cendres.

En un mot [...] ce jour là le tonnerre a son ordinaire, a fait des choses surprenantes car il a aussi esté tomber à cent pas de là, vis-à-vis la porte de la fermière de Prieuré.

Et c'est un miracle que le pleuré appartenant à Monsieur Labbe de Fleury [...] Evêque de Chartres, n'aye pas esté consumé par les flammes et cinq ou six personnes réduites en cendre.

C'est ce que le sieur Baudouin [...] Curé certifie véritable pour avoir vu par luy même tout ce qui est cy dessus et des autres parts [...] rapportés à Pont le 28 juin 1764. Baudouin [...] curé. Collection communale.

(1) Carreau : Poétiquement : « Carreaux de la foudre ». Expression due au fait que l'on croyait la foudre formée d'une matière solide que l'on comparait aux carreaux d'arbalète. J.D.

1768

[A Lignol-le-Château] « l'été a été des plus orageux ; on a souffert dans quantité de Pays de la grêle et du tonnerre ».

Note du curé in Registre paroissial (minute). Relevé par les Arch. dép.

27 juin 1772

[A Gumery] « le vingt-sept juin 1772 sur les onze heures du soir, il y a eu un orage des plus violents et un vent impétueux accompagné d'éclairs très vifs, continuel et de tonnerres. Huit granges ont été abattues dans la paroisse [...] beaucoup de toits endommagés, de maisons découvertes [...] des arbres arrachés, cassés, tortillés en différentes manières de sorte que l'on a été obligé de couper bien des bols avant leur temps. Le fracas que tout cela causoit empêchoit de distinguer le tonnerre. Il n'y a point eu de grêle [...] Les grains ont très peu souffert [...]

Cet orage a duré dans sa force près d'une heure [...] Il a tenu plus de quatre-vingt lieues de pays et causé dans beaucoup d'endroits des dommages bien plus considérables, la nécessité ou on se trouvoit de tous costez de faire des réparations ont fait monter le prix de la thuille. et des journées des ouvriers qui ont profité de la circonstance. »

Note du Curé Tonnellier in Registre paroissial (minute). Relevé aux Archives de l'Aube.

24 mai 1773

A Racines, « les nommés Elol Berlot, Etienne Challley, manouvrier, demeurant au hameau des Cousturots, de cette paroisse de Racines et Forgeot, tisserand audit lieu, ont été incendiés par le feu du ciel le 24 mai qui a réduit leurs bâtiments en cendres [...] On ne pouvait en approcher tant le feu étoit ardent ».

Registre paroissial, collection communale. Relevé aux Archives départ.

10 août 1774

Un orage d'une grande intensité éclate au-dessus de Troyes et de la banlieue. La foudre cause un incendie à Saint-Mesmin, et une trombe compromet ce qui restait de froment sur pied.

Aufauvre, Les tablettes historiques de Troyes.

27 juin 1783

Violent orage qui répand l'effroi dans la ville. Le tonnerre ne cesse de gronder pendant plusieurs heures de suite. Le fluide électrique frappe la ville en plus de vingt places, sans cependant occasionner d'incendie.

Les églises de Saint-Nizier de Troyes, des villages de Sainte-Syre et de Saint-Léger, sont frappées de la foudre.

Aufauvre, Les tablettes historiques de Troyes. N.B. Dans ses registres paroissiaux, le curé de La Ferté-Macé, en Normandie, a noté ce qui suit : « Depuis le 12 juin jusqu'au milieu d'octobre 1783, on a remarqué dans l'air pendant plusieurs mois, des brouillards secs que les physiciens de notre temps appellent brouillards électriques.

Ils ont beaucoup obscurci l'atmosphère et nous dérobaient les rayons du soleil et de la lune deux à trois heures après leur lever et surtout après leur coucher. Le soleil et la lune pendant les brouillards étoient rouges comme du sang du matin au soir. »

11 juillet 1788

Violent orage qui, pendant toute la nuit, consterne tous les habitants de Troyes et du voisinage.

Le clocher de Thennelières est foudroyé.

Aufauvre, Les tablettes historiques de Troyes.

Lundi 8 septembre, 1788

Lundi 8 septembre, à six heures du soir, deux hommes de Précy-Saint-Martin furent frappés de la foudre et trouvés morts sur le chemin de traverse de Lesmont et Précy. Cet accident arriva au premier coup de tonnerre qui précéda la pluie. On a observé sur la tête du nommé Deligny une plaie d'environ deux pouces de long sur un demi-pouce de profondeur, avec une cavité d'un pouce

sous la peau; les cheveux étoient grillés, il y avoit à ses jambes et dessous les doigts de ses pieds de légères meurtrissures, auxquelles étoient collées de petites parcelles du cuire de ses souliers (déchirés par la foudre), tous ses habits étoient en morceaux, sans aucune plaie apparente sur son corps que celle de la tête. Il paroît qu'il a été enveloppé par la foudre, et qu'elle a fait explosion sur lui; car on a trouvé son argent ainsi que des lambeaux de ses habits, jusqu'à vingt pas; ses bas de coton étoient seulement criblés de trous. Les canelures de son porte-colle d'argent ont été fondus par le fluide électrique, et ses boucles de jarretières et de souliers du même métal tortillées et noircies; mais sans fusion; ses boutons de manches qui étoient d'étain n'ont éprouvé aucune altération. Son camarade mort à trois pas de lui, n'avoit aucune plaie apparente, mais seulement un peu de sang à la bouche; ce qui prouve qu'il a été suffoqué par la vapeur sulphureuse.

Journal de Troyes, 17 septembre 1788.

12 juillet 1789

Un orage éclate au-dessus de Troyes. La foudre cause plusieurs dommages au réfectoire du Collège.

Aufauvre, Les Tablettes historiques de Troyes.

Vendredi 8 avril 1842

Vendredi dernier, à trois heures après-midi, la foudre est tombée à Nogent-sur-Seine, par la cheminée du sieur Amédée Delaunay, boulanger, cour Gallet, pendant qu'il étoit avec quelques personnes tout près de cette cheminée. Le tonnerre a causé peu de dégâts, et n'a heureusement atteint personne; il est sorti en cassant un carreau de la porte vitrée de la cour. La commotion a été si forte que tous les voisins ont cru qu'il étoit tombé chez eux. Malgré le plus abominable temps, il s'est trouvé du monde en un clin d'œil pour porter des secours, s'il en eût été besoin. On en a été quitte pour la peur.

Petites-Affiches de Nogent.

Mardi 12 juillet 1842

On nous écrit des Riceys, 13 juillet 1842: Hier, dans l'après-midi, le tonnerre est tombé dans la maison de M. Gérard-Verdin, propriétaire à Ricey-Haute-Rive; heureusement, personne n'a été tué ni blessé. Le fluide électrique s'est dirigé d'abord sur un fil de fer servant à faire mouvoir une machine qui, placée au-dessus d'un tuyau de cheminée, est destiné à empêcher la fumée. A la faveur de cet appareil, le fluide s'est introduit dans une pièce de l'étage supérieur, où il a dégradé une petite portion de mur, en prenant pour conducteur une tringle de grands rideaux. De là, il est descendu dans la salle à manger, où le couvert étoit mis. Mme Gérard-Verdin préparait son dessert à côté de la cheminée, lorsque, tout à coup, le fluide perça le mur au-dessous de la glace, et couvrit cette dame de plâtras et autres débris, sans lui faire aucun mal. L'état de surdité de cette dame, occasionné par son âge avancé, ne lui avoit pas permis d'entendre la détonation. La pendule qui étoit sur la cheminée, ainsi que d'autres objets électrisables qui se trouvaient dans la salle, n'ont point été dérangés, ni endommagés.

En sortant de la salle, le tonnerre a entraîné avec lui, à travers un carreau, plusieurs fragments de plâtre retrouvés depuis dans la cour, à quelques mètres de la fenêtre.

A cet instant, M. Gérard-Verdin qui étoit sur son perron et se disposoit à rentrer pour se mettre à table, est resté comme anéanti et suffoqué par l'odeur du soufre, sans cependant qu'il lui arrivât de plus grand mal.

Poursuivant sa course rapide, le fluide est allé de là dans une maison voisine, en s'introduisant par la cheminée. Là, il brûla légèrement le jaret du sieur Buot (dit le Prussien), et cela, chose étonnante, sans endommager aucunement son pantalon.

L'Aube, samedi 16 juillet 1842.

Mardi 19 juillet 1842

Mardi dernier, à quatre heures du soir, le tonnerre est tombé à Bar-sur-Seine, sur la grande croix du cimetière. La pierre qui lui servoit de pied a été brisée en plusieurs morceaux.

L'Aube, mardi 26 juillet 1842.

Dimanche 9 août 1842

La foudre est tombée, dimanche dernier, dans plusieurs endroits de notre ville (Troyes).

Il n'y a eu, heureusement, aucun accident à déplorer.

L'Aube, mardi 22 août 1842.

Vendredi 9 juin 1843

Le 9 juin, la foudre est tombée à Arembécourt, sur la maison du sieur Lorphelin; elle a seulement brisé le tuyau de la cheminée.

L'Aube, mardi 20 juin 1843.

Août 1843

Nous lisons dans le dernier numéro de l'Echo d'Arcis:

Il y a peu de jours, vers sept heures du matin environ, par un temps calme, mais sombre et pluvieux, un globe de feu s'est montré aux yeux de plusieurs personnes qui se trouvaient dans les rues de Plancy (canton de Méry, arrondissement d'Arcis-sur-Aube), et il a disparu instantanément. L'apparition de ce météore igné a été accompagnée d'un violent coup de foudre qui a causé un ébranlement général.

Le fluide électrique, en faisant irruption par le tuyau du poêle dans un atelier où une trentaine d'ouvriers bonnetiers étoient occupés, a secoué violemment ceux qui étoient assis.

L'un d'eux, homme déjà âgé et atteint de douleurs rhumatismales assez aiguës, sentit le fluide frapper la fonture de son métier et passer sur son visage; presque au même moment, le banc du métier et l'ouvrier furent lancés à quelques pas de là.

Cet événement parait jusqu'ici avoir eu une influence plutôt bénéfique que fâcheuse sur la santé de cet homme, car il n'a pas encore, depuis la secousse qu'il a ressentie, éprouvé les douleurs rhumatismales qui l'avaient travaillé cruellement jusque-là.

L'Aube, 17-18 août 1843, p. 3, col. 2.

Nuit du dimanche 26

au lundi 27 janvier 1845

Une bourrasque de vent, qui s'est fait sentir dans la nuit de dimanche à lundi, a causé de grands dommages aux habitants et aux propriétés.

On nous rapporte que la foudre est tombée en plusieurs endroits, entr'autres à Cussangy, sur la maison du sieur Joseph Lalrat; après avoir pénétré par la toiture du grenier, elle y a cassé une des solives du plancher et est descendue dans une des chambres du rez-de-chaussée, où elle a dégradé tous les mortiers. Les personnes qui étoient couchées dans cette maison en ont été quittes, fort heureusement pour la peur, car elles n'ont éprouvé qu'une commotion extraordinaire qui les faisoit trembler dans leur lit.

Le Petit Courrier de Bar-sur-Seine cité (sans date) dans L'Aube, n° des 27-28 janvier janvier 1845.

Jeudi 11 septembre 1845

[A Troyes], jeudi soir, vers six heures, la foudre est tombée sur un pin du jardin du sieur Maugoust, Ilmonadler à la Tour-Boileau.

Plusieurs personnes qui se trouvaient chez ce dernier s'en aperçurent à l'odeur sulphureuse qui tout à coup les incommoda.

Leur conviction devint encore plus grande sur l'action du fluide électrique, lorsqu'ils virent pendant 10 minutes de la fumée s'échapper de la cime de l'arbre résineux.

La foudre n'a laissé nulle autre trace de son passage.

L'Aube, n° daté 14-15 sept. 1845, p. 2, col. 1.

Vendredi 24 juillet 1846

Hier, vers dix heures du soir, la foudre est tombée sur la caserne de la gendarmerie; sur l'aile droite des bâtiments occupés par MM. les officiers. La foudre n'a causé fort heureusement aucun événement fâcheux.

Aujourd'hui, il est facile de voir qu'une vingtaine de tuiles ont été soulevées ou brisées. On remarque également avec curiosité que quelques morceaux de ces tuiles ont été en quelque sorte vitrifiés par le fluide électrique. Une solive du grenier a été à moitié rompue, une cheminée quelque peu lézardée et quelques pierres qui formoient cordon en ont été aussi détachées.

En pénétrant dans le grenier, le fluide a laissé, d'une manière inoffensive des traces sensibles de son passage, puis est ressorti par la partie nord-ouest du bâtiment, et a roulé le long du qual aux pieds de M. Baudesson, directeur des contributions directes, qui se rendoit avec sa demoiselle et son fils à la soirée de Mme Doyen.

Un ouvrier cordonnier qui se trouvait près de la gendarmerie a été atteint par le fluide ; cet homme ne pouvant résister à la vive commotion qu'il éprouva, tomba à terre, mais peu après il put se relever et gagner sa demeure. •

L'Aube, 25-26 juillet 1846, p. 3, col. 1.

Le sieur Loppin qui, le 24 juillet, fut violemment atteint, près de la caserne de la gendarmerie par le fluide électrique, est aujourd'hui si dangereusement malade, que les médecins perdent tout espoir de le sauver. •

L'Aube, 2-3 août 1846, p. 4, col. 1.

Hier, 24 juillet, vers huit heures du soir, la foudre est tombée à Nogent-en-Othe près Saint-Mards, et y a consumé deux maisons et une écurie. •

L'Aube, 25-26 juillet 1846, p. 3, col. 1.

Vendredi 28 août 1846

Vendredi soir, vers neuf heures, la foudre est tombée à Lagesse, près Chaource, sur une maison couverte en paille. Instantanément elle a été envahie par les flammes, ainsi que deux autres maisons presque contiguës. Rien n'a pu être sauvé. •

L'Aube, 30-31 août 1846, p. 2, col. 1.

Lundi 28 septembre 1846

Une lettre que nous recevons de Blaincourt nous annonce que la foudre est tombée, le 28 septembre, vers cinq heures du soir, à Juzanvigny, canton de Soullains, au domicile du sieur Lallemand, père des malheureux incendiés de la ferme de la Folle.

Deux bottes de chanvre déposées près de la cheminée ont seulement été consumées, grâce aux personnes de la maison qui ont pu étouffer, dès son principe, ce germe d'incendie. La foudre n'a laissé de son passage aucun autre indice. •

L'Aube, 1^{er}-2 octobre 1846.

Samedi 21 mai 1864

Un incendie, occasionné par la foudre, a éclaté à Cormost (canton de Bouilly), le 21 courant à midi, au domicile du sieur Nicolas Mosdler, marchand de bols et à détruit, en moins d'une heure, tous les bâtiments ainsi que le mobilier qu'ils renfermaient... •

L'Aube, 25-26 mai 1864.

On écrit de Bar-sur-Seine, que samedi dernier, 21 mai, vers deux heures de l'après-midi, un violent orage a causé des dégâts considérables dans plusieurs communes de la vallée de l'Ource et de la Seine ; à Loches, à Landreville, à Essoyes, à Verpillères, à Cunfin, à Buxeuil, à Nueville, à Gyé, à Courteron ; et dans quelques autres localités, les vignes et les arbres fruitiers ont été détruits par la grêle.

Déjà ces communes avaient eu beaucoup à souffrir de la gelée ; mais aujourd'hui on y considère la récolte de la vigne comme compromise. •

L'Aube, 27-28 mai 1864.

On nous écrit de Vaudes que samedi dernier, 21 courant, la foudre est tombée sur la bergerie du sieur Nicolas Brunet, propriétaire. Deux agneaux ont été tués, la cloison démolie, et la toiture brisée. •

L'Aube, 27-28 mai 1864.

Le 21 du courant dit l'Echo d'Arcls, la foudre est tombée à Droupt-Sainte-Marie, sur la maison habitée par le sieur Jaubert, Léon, bonnetier. Celui-ci était sorti.

En rentrant, il remarqua des dégâts dans la maison et dans sa grange ; cinq carreaux d'une fenêtre étaient cassés.

Il n'a rien été brûlé. •

L'Aube, mardi 31 mai 1864, p. 3.

On nous écrit de Vaudes que, samedi dernier, 21 courant, la foudre est tombée sur la bergerie du sieur Nicolas Brunet, propriétaire. Deux agneaux ont été tués, la cloison démolie, et la toiture brisée. Un commencement d'incendie s'est déclaré dans les fourrages placés au-dessus de l'étable ; mais de prompts secours ont arrêtés les progrès du feu. •

L'Aube, 27-28 mai 1864, p. 2, col. 2.

Jeudi 2 juin 1864

Jeudi 2 juin, dit l'Echo d'Arcls, vers six heures du soir, un orage d'une assez grande violence a eu lieu sur la commune de Chassericourt. Le tonnerre est tombé sur une écurie appartenant à M. Pierre-Louis Travaillet, où il a tué une vache.

Il était entré par la toiture dont il a broyé une grande quantité de tuiles. Diverses pièces de bois qui forment clôture au bout de l'écurie, ont été brisées avec fracas.

La première des six vaches a été tuée, deux domestiques ont été renversés par le coup. La grange était remplie de fumée et de poussière.

Le dommage est d'environ 400 F. •

L'Aube, 12-13 juin 1864, p. 3, col. 2.

Mardi 7 juin 1864

Accident causé par la foudre.

Mardi dernier, pendant l'orage qui a éclaté sur la vallée de l'Aube, vers une heure de l'après-midi, un des ouvriers occupés à la tranchée de Jessains a été frappé mortellement par la foudre, un second a été renversé et a éprouvé de violentes douleurs aux épaules, et un troisième a ressenti les effets du fluide électrique dans les jambes.

Ces trois ouvriers avaient quitté le chantier, et au lieu de s'abriter sous des sapins comme leurs camarades, ils s'étaient sauvés en courant à Jessains. L'ouvrier mortellement frappé habitait Dolancourt ; il s'appelle Louis Collin, et est âgé de 32 ans. On n'a trouvé sur son corps aucune trace de blessure ; mais son chapeau a été déchiré et carbonisé.

Le Mémorial.

Jeudi 16 novembre 1876

Jeudi dernier, 16 novembre, entre quatre heures et demie et six heures du soir, un orage violent, précédé d'une pluie diluvienne, a éclaté à Faux-Villecerf, canton de Marçilly-le-Hayer. Le tonnerre est tombé sur la maison du sieur Siron-Challoy, maréchal-ferrant à Faux-Villecerf. La foudre a coupé la cheminée de la forge construite en briques comme avec un couteau et a rasé la toiture. Les briques ont été éparpillées, brisées toutes en menus morceaux, et elles ont volé à sept ou huit mètres autour des bâtiments. Un fusil chargé, placé dans l'intérieur de la maison a éclaté par suite de la commotion électrique. Une forte détonation s'en est suivie. Des plaques de tôle ont été tordues en spirale. Aucun autre accident ne s'est manifesté, et personne n'a été blessé au dedans des bâtiments, sur les murs desquels la foudre a marqué son passage en plusieurs endroits.

L'Aube, Vendr. 24 nov. 1876, p. 2, col. 4.

Septembre 1898

A Ramerupt, M. Ferrot, l'aubergiste du village qui, depuis le matin s'est plaint de la chaleur accablante, se traîne péniblement sur le pas de sa porte. Atteint de rhumatismes aigus aux jambes, il ne se déplace qu'avec des cannes et tout effort le fatigue.

Comme il tourne la tête pour regarder vers le centre du pays, un éclair gigantesque suivit d'un horrible claquement le foudre.

Projeté violemment au fond de la pièce, il tombe sans connaissance ; on le ramène difficilement, mais le malheureux reste prostré, complètement aveugle.

Il ne retrouve progressivement la vue qu'au bout d'une dizaine d'heures.

Les douleurs s'atténuent alors et il s'aperçoit avec une surprise étonnée que ses rhumatismes ont complètement disparu.

Mme J. Gagnière, Vie en Champagne, n° 270, Pierre Gauroy.

La terre de ses colères. Cité par Mme J. Gagnière, Vie en Champagne, n° 270, p. 15.

Mardi 5 juin 1900

A Troyes, le tonnerre est tombé dans l'ancienne propriété de M. Marot, près de l'usine Quinquart.

Le Petit Troyen, mercredi 6 juin 1900.

Mardi 12 juin 1900

La foudre est tombée non loin de Pargues, sur une meule de paille appartenant à M. Régnier-Virey, cultivateur à Pargues.

Cette meule qui comprenait environ 1 600 bottes de paille de blé a été totalement détruite.

C'est une perte de près de 500 francs pour le propriétaire.

Le Petit Troyen, vendredi 15 juin 1900.

Le 12 courant, vers trois heures de l'après-midi, M. Regnault Charles, âgé de 60 ans, propriétaire aux Alceys, revenait des champs.

Ayant pénétré dans son écurie où se trouvaient quatre vaches et un cheval, il vit une de ses vaches étendue à terre ; elle avait été foudroyée ; les autres animaux qui se trouvaient dans la même écurie n'ont eu aucun mal.

M. Regnault estime sa vache 500 francs. Il y a assurance.

Ibid.

7 au 8 juillet 1919

- Aux Riceys... La foudre est tombée sur la pointe du clocher entre minuit et une heure du matin, incendiant l'édifice qui brûla à la façon d'une torche. -

Commission météorologique de l'Aube. Résumé des observations faites à Troyes et dans les divers stations du département en 1919. Annuaire de l'Aube pour 1921, p. 88.

Jeudi 12 mai 1921

Saulcy. - La foudre a endommagé deux poteaux téléphoniques. -

La Tribune de l'Aube. Mardi 17 mai 1921.

2 mai 1921

- Le 2 mai, un orage assez intense, venant du sud et se dirigeant vers le nord, embrase tout le département moins l'arrondissement de Bar-sur-Seine.

... Une chute de foudre est signalée à Barberoy sur l'usine électrique. -

Comm. météo... Annuaire de l'Aube pour 1922, p. 60.

Dimanche 15 mai 1921

Juzanvigny. - Orage aussi violent que dans les communes voisines. La foudre tomba sur l'étable de M. Ernest Brouillard, tuant les deux vaches qui s'y trouvaient. -

La Tribune de l'Aube, mercredi 1921.

Rouvres-les-Vignes. - ... la foudre est tombée sur le clocher, heureusement sans l'incendier. -

La Tribune de l'Aube, mercredi 18 mai 1921.

Lagesse. - Dimanche, vers 13 heures, un orage d'une assez grande violence s'est abattu sur notre commune... Au cours de cet orage, la foudre tomba en divers endroits. Chez M. Ricard Jules, elle arracha une rampe de la couverture; chez Mme veuve Chamolin, elle tomba dans la cheminée sans causer de dégâts, mais Mme Chamolin et l'une de ses filles qui se trouvaient près de la cheminée en ressentirent une violente commotion dans les jambes. Dans la campagne, plusieurs arbres furent également atteints de la foudre. -

La Tribune de l'Aube, mercredi 18 mai 1921.

Gélanes. - Vers 2 heures du soir, la foudre tomba sur l'étable de M. Boulet Emile, de Longuepierre et tua un veau.

Une botte de paille commença même à flamber. Sans la présence d'esprit d'un voisin, M. Praslin, qui accourut à la vue de la fumée sortant de l'étable, un sinistre plus grand aurait été à déplorer. -

La Tribune de l'Aube, mercredi 18 mai 1921.

Arsonval. - C'est surtout de 2 heures à 3 heures 30 qu'il (l'orage) a éclaté dans toute sa force. Les éclairs sillonnaient les nues, tandis que le tonnerre grondait sans interruption. La foudre tomba en trois endroits, abattant, à la sortie du village, un poteau télégraphique. -

La Tribune de l'Aube, mercredi 18 mai 1921.

Montaillin. - La foudre est tombée en trois endroits sur des poteaux télégraphiques, mais ne causa presque pas de dégâts. -

La Tribune de l'Aube, vendredi 20 mai 1921.

Fresnoy-le-Château. - La foudre est tombée en plusieurs endroits. Chez M. Ganne-Roy, fermier au Haut-Chêne, elle frappa à mort un cheval qui se trouvait dans un parc proche de la ferme. -

La Tribune de l'Aube, vendredi 20 mai 1921.

Argançon. - La foudre tomba sur un peuplier, le labourant presque de haut en bas. -

La Tribune de l'Aube, vendredi 20 mai 1921.

Arrentières. - La foudre est tombée sur un polder appartenant à M. Aubry et situé à environ 30 m des habitations. -

La Tribune de l'Aube, 18 mai 1921.

Crespy-le-Nauf. - Pendant trois quarts d'heure les éclairs et le tonnerre firent rage... La foudre tomba à plusieurs reprises sur des poteaux télégraphiques et des arbres isolés. -

La Tribune de l'Aube, mercredi 18 mai 1921.

Morvilliers. - ... Le fluide électrique toucha divers endroits du pays, notamment l'établissement de M. Brisson, cafetier, où il occasionna des méfaits curieux et des dégâts assez importants... -

La Tribune de l'Aube, jeudi 19 mai 1921.

Mercredi 25 mai 1921

Vallières. - ... La foudre est tombée sur le bâtiment agricole de M. Daillant Emile, causant des dégâts matériels.

La Tribune de l'Aube, mardi 31 mai 1921.

Dimanche 5 juin 1921

Fresnoy. - Le Tonnerre est tombé dans le parc de la ferme de la Borde exploitée par M. Bleiner. Une vache a été tuée au milieu du troupeau.

Vendeuvre. - La foudre est tombée en plusieurs endroits sur une grange. -

La Tribune de l'Aube, mardi 7 juin 1921.

Villiers-Herbisse. - La foudre est tombée chez Mérat-Mony, sans cependant causer d'incendie. Le fluide, après avoir fortement détérioré deux tuyaux de cheminée et quelque peu malmené la couverture en ardoise, n'a pas causé, fort heureusement, d'accidents de personnes.

La Tribune de l'Aube, mercredi 8 juin 1921, p. 3, col. 3.

La Tribune de l'Aube, mardi 7 juin 1921.

- On a à regretter la destruction d'une partie du clocher de la vieille église de Pel-et-Der, datant du XVI^e siècle.

La foudre, tombée vers 4 heures, sur la flèche, provoqua le feu à la ferme. Mais ce ne fut que vers 5 heures qu'on s'aperçut de ce commencement d'incendie et que les secours purent être organisés par les pompiers de la commune assistés de leurs collègues de Villehardouin.

On conçoit la difficulté de la lutte entreprise contre le fléau. Néanmoins, les clochetons flanquant la flèche ont pu être préservés.

Par suite de la destruction de son support, la cloche est tombée, sans blesser aucun des courageux sauveteurs.

Ce n'est que plus tard dans la soirée que tout danger d'extension de l'incendie put être définitivement écarté. -

La Tribune de l'Aube, mardi 7 juin 1921, p. 3, col. 1.

Dimanche 17 juillet 1921

- Le 17 [juillet], le temps est lourd et orageux; un orage venant du sud éclate vers 6 heures et demi et s'étend sur tout le département, moins l'arrondissement de Bar-sur-Aube...

La foudre tombe à Saint-André-les-Vergers, et démolit une cheminée...

Comm. météo... Annuaire de l'Aube pour 1922, p. 62.

Mercredi 10 août 1921

Bar-sur-Aube. - ... Il était exactement une heure du matin, la foudre est tombée sur le clocher Saint-Pierre, faisant voler en éclats toutes les ardoises du faite, c'est-à-dire la pointe ou la partie depuis le dôme renfermant le clocher, laissant à nu le tavillonage qui se trouve fort endommagé.

Le feu se déclara ensuite dans la charpente, mais il s'éteignit de lui-même, noyé par la trombe d'eau qui s'abattit aussitôt. Le sol était hier couvert de tous les débris de ces ardoises et des bouts de tavillons consumés.

Heureusement que les habitants des maisons entourant l'église avaient fermé leurs persiennes, sans quoi il ne serait pas resté, par suite des éclats d'ardoises, un seul carreau aux fenêtres. Cependant, l'un des éclats a atteint quand même et cassé la vitre de l'imposte de la demeure de M. Delettre, cocher. Heureusement aussi que le feu se soit éteint sous la forte chute d'eau, car, en raison de la violence du vent, les flammèches auraient communiqué l'incendie à tout le pâté de maisons se trouvant de chaque côté de l'église et dont la plupart sont en bois.

D'autre part, à ladite église Saint-Pierre se trouve enclavée, au midi, une petite maison comprenant une chambre au rez-de-chaussée et une chambre au premier étage, laquelle est occupée par Mme veuve Beauguillot, ménagère. Or, la foudre est descendue par l'escalier conduisant au premier étage, aplatisant comme une véritable galette un tuyau rond de cuisinière appartenant à cette personne, puis fit une brèche dans le mur de la chambre du rez-de-chaussée sans causer de dégâts à la vaisselle déposée sur les rayons situés près de cette brèche et finalement disparut par où elle était venue, après avoir causé une frayeur, toute naturelle d'ailleurs, à Mme Beauguillot... -

La Tribune de l'Aube, vendredi 12 août 1921, p. 2, col. 3.

Bar-sur-Seine. - ... La foudre tomba en deux endroits différents, sans causer de dégâts.

Jeudi 1^{er} juin 1922

Fontaine. - Trois ouvriers, MM. Charetrale, Fourmy et Pamentier, qui étaient occupés à la maison, s'étaient, à l'approche de l'orage, réfugiés

dans le tas de foin. La foudre tomba non loin d'eux, mais aucun ne fut atteint. »

La Tribune de l'Aube.

Lundi 16 juillet 1928

Troyes. - Chez M. Hugo, cultivateur aux Vieilles Vignes, la foudre tomba sur l'écurie aux vaches, ne produisant aucun dégât, mais présentant un phénomène assez caractéristique. Un carreau de cette écurie fut troué comme au passage d'une balle. Aucune bête ne fut atteinte. Une voiture garbère rangée devant cette écurie fut déplacée de 10 mètres. L'antenne de T.S.F. de Mme Maisonnaive fut rompue sans autre dégât.

Le transformateur électrique de Saint-Parres-aux-Tertres, à haute tension de 20 000 volts, eut son fil de terre arraché, 3 plombs de haute et 2 plombs de basse tension furent fondus. »

Troyes. La foudre détruisit le potelet électrique amenant la lumière aux vestiaires (du Stade de l'Aube). »

Creney. - Mme Bertaux, charcutière, vaquant aux besoins de son commerce, aperçut soudainement une gerbe de feu jaillir au-dessus du clocher de l'église. La foudre tombait effectivement sur le clocher, déséquilibrant le coq, arrachant les ardoises de la toiture de haut en bas dans une ligne en S et les projetant dans la cour de l'habitation de M. Briclot-Berthaut Lavau. - La foudre tomba sur la grange de Mme Vve Gobin, arrachant les ferrements de la porte. »

La Valotte (Cnme de Lavau). - La foudre tombait bientôt sur la grange de M. Hippolyte Gérard, 78 ans, cultivateur.

Ce dernier, alité depuis 6 mois, atteint d'une maladie de cœur, était au lit sous la garde de son gendre M. Fardet.

Sous la violence du tonnerre, M. Fardet quittait le malade et, sortant de la maison, apercevait la boule de feu dévalant la toiture, s'abattant sur une pompe à main pour s'écraser dans la cour.

Croyant que le feu allait se communiquer au bâtiment, M. Fardet donnait l'alarme.

Au prix d'un effort surhumain, le septuagénaire se leva et se rendit sur le seuil de sa chambre. Il n'y resta que quelques secondes, retourna péniblement au lit où il tomba foudroyé par la commotion. Il était mort. »

Lundi 16 juillet 1928

Savières. - A 20 h 30, les éclairs sillonnèrent le ciel, la foudre tomba en plusieurs endroits sans aucune chute d'eau.

M. et Mme Flamisset, vaquant dans leur cuisine, aperçurent une gerbe d'étincelles jaillissant d'un poteau-lumière voisin et reçurent une commotion si violente qu'ils furent impulsés à tout mouvement, pendant plus d'une heure.

La foudre tomba également sur l'habitation de Mme Tixerant, déplaçant une armoire et projetant Mme Tixerant à terre. Dans sa chute, cette dame fut légèrement blessée et dut recevoir les soins du docteur Dupont, de Payns. Le jeune Tapprest, âgé de 8 ans, qui jouait dans la cour de l'habitation avec un cerceau en fer n'eut aucun mal mais son cerceau fut brisé. »

Le Petit Troyen, jeudi 19 juillet 1928, p. 2, col. 3.

Montceaux. - Pendant plusieurs heures, les éclairs aveuglants sillonnèrent le ciel et de violents coups de tonnerre se succédèrent très rapprochés.

La foudre est tombée en différents endroits, notamment dans le parc à bestiaux de la ferme de l'hopiteau où une des plus belles vaches du troupeau fut frappée à mort. »

Le Petit Troyen, vendredi 20 juillet 1928, p. 2, col. 4.

Samedi 4 août 1928

Sainte Savine. - Les méfaits de la foudre. Elle est tombée sur le monument aux Morts. Importants dégâts.

Au cours de l'orage qui éclata dans la nuit de vendredi à samedi, vers 2 heures du matin, se succédèrent, au-dessus de Sainte-Savine, de fracassants coups de tonnerre. Le coq en bronze, qui surmontait le monument aux Morts, érigé au milieu du cimetière, fit paratonnerre et le monument, en forme de pyramide, fut foudroyé.

Hier matin, les ouvriers, en arrivant dans la nécropole, s'aperçurent du fait. Le coq gaulois, haut de 1,40 m, et pesant environ 60 kg, gisait à terre, dans l'allée qui va du monument au mur parallèle à la rue des Noës. Tout autour du socle étaient épars de gros morceaux de pierre, ayant formé la partie supérieure du tronc de pyramide,

et sur lesquels étaient inscrits les noms des héros morts pour la France.

La foudre était tombée sur une pointe de la crête du coq, qui avait été fondue et présentait une section brillante comme de l'or, et polie comme si la lime y avait été passée. Le fluide avait suivi le corps métallique du coq et le fer à scellement qui était noyé dans la pierre. Puis, ne trouvant plus de corps conducteur, il s'était répandu dans la pierre qui avait éclaté. Le monument avait été ainsi décapité et un cube de pierre, qu'on peut évaluer à près de 2 mètres environ, gisait en morceaux autour de la base du monument. En tombant, les blocs ont causé des détériorations aux motifs d'ornement, notamment aux angles de la corniche qui domine le piédestal, ainsi qu'aux couronnes et palmes qui étaient déposées au pied du monument. Deux mille kilos de pierre ont été ainsi projetés à terre. Dans la chute du coq, le bronze fut fendu à la naissance des ailes et le piédestal — sur lequel on lit le nom de l'auteur "Lecourtier" — fut tordu. »

Le Petit Troyen, dimanche et lundi 6 août 1928, p. 2, col. 1.

Dimanche 30 septembre 1928

Molins-sur-Aube. - La foudre incendiaire. Elle détruit une grange avec toutes ses récoltes et une étable.

Un coup de tonnerre ébranle tout à coup la maison réveillant les habitants. M. Lignier, entendant vibrer les fils d'énergie électrique, se lève.

Il jette un regard dans la direction de la cour. Une lueur rouge montant de la grange embrase le ciel.

— Le feu, le feu est dans la grange, s'écrie M. Lignier. Il passe un pantalon à la hâte et, suivi bientôt de son père, se précipite vers les écuries et les étables.

Les animaux sont sortis non sans difficulté et lâchés dans les pâturages avoisinant la ferme.

M. Lignier revient à l'étable où le commis Krigel, ignorant du danger, en raison de son infirmité — il est atteint d'une surdité complète — dort à poings fermés. Il réclame aux traitements de son patron et ne consent à bouger qu'après avoir vu la lueur de l'incendie qui déjà embrasait l'ensemble de la grange et gagnait la toiture de l'étable. »

La Tribune de l'Aube, 1er-2 octobre 1928, p. 3, col. 2.

25 mai 1930

A Saint-Léger-sous-Brienne, deux femmes sont atteintes par la foudre, mais s'en tirent avec des blessures peu graves.

Almanach T. A.

13 juin 1930

A Magny-Fouchard, un cultivateur est tué par la foudre.

Almanach T. A.

15 juin 1930

La foudre tombe sur le clocher de l'église de Planty.

Almanach T. A.

18 juin 1930

A Rosnay-l'Hôpital, une ferme est incendiée par la foudre.

Almanach T. A.

2 juillet 1930

A Coclois, une grange est incendiée par la foudre et détruite en quelques instants.

Almanach T. A.

26 mai 1931

La foudre incendie les magasins de l'usine Tournon à Troyes.

Almanach T. A.

26 juin 1931

Une jeune femme de 19 ans, à Mathaux, est grièvement blessée par la foudre.

Almanach T. A.

4 juillet 1931

A Blaincourt, la foudre tombe sur une ferme et incendie les communs.

Almanach T. A.

12 juillet 1932

La foudre incendie une grange sise à Arcis, route de Torcy.

Almanach T. A.

15 juin 1933

La foudre incendie, à Plnoy, un corps de bâtiments et de deux granges, le tout appartenant au même propriétaire.

Almanach T. A.

22 juillet 1933

Un cultivateur de Polvres est tué par la foudre, à deux cents mètres de son exploitation

Almanach T. A.

10 juin 1938

A Rosnay-l'Hôpital, la foudre détruit la grange d'une exploitation agricole.

Almanach T. A.

14 avril 1946

Un mystérieux engin serait tombé à proximité de Forêt-Chenu (Cne de Saint-Phal). Les chancelleries sont alertées... Le gouvernement demande une enquête.

Il ne s'agit, très probablement, que d'un phénomène électrique appelé « choc en retour ».

Almanach E.E.

30 juillet 1946

La foudre incendie une maison à Lhuitre.

Almanach E.E.

28 août 1949

A Avant-lès-Marclilly, la foudre s'abat sur un bâtiment agricole. L'écurie et la grange sont entièrement détruites.

Almanach E.E.

12 juin 1955

A Radonvillers, la foudre tombe sur les dépendances d'une ferme.

Almanach E.E.

18 mai 1959

Une ferme de Gumery est détruite par un incendie provoqué par la foudre.

Almanach E.E., Almanach Ind.

20 juin 1959

A Villy-le-Maréchal, la foudre incendie une grange ; à Champigny, une étable.

Almanach E.E.

La foudre allume le feu au clocher de Pouan-lès-Vallées. A Jeugny, elle provoque un début d'incendie.

Almanach de l'Ind.

25 juin 1959

A Radonvillers, la foudre incendie un bâtiment d'une exploitation agricole.

Almanach E.E.

26 juin 1960

A Salon, la foudre embrase une écurie.

Almanach E.E.

23 mai 1961

A Vannes, hameau de Sainte-Maure, la foudre incendie deux hangars et un garage de ferme.

Almanach E.E.

16 septembre 1964

A la Villeneuve-au-Châtelot, la foudre incendie une exploitation agricole.

Almanach E.E.

28 mars 1966

A Bagneux-la-Fosse, un cultivateur est tué par la foudre qu'avait attirée la fermeture à glissière de son blouson.

Almanach E.E.

23 mai 1966

A Barbercy, la foudre incendie une grange.

Almanach E.E.

21 août 1966

A Viâpres-le-Petit, la foudre provoque un incendie. Une ferme est totalement détruite.

Almanach E.E.

15 juillet 1967

La foudre provoque deux incendies, l'un à Saint-Léger-sous-Margerite, l'autre à Sainte-Maure

Almanach L. Ch.

20 juillet 1967

A Troyes, rue de la République. En pleine nuit, une formidable explosion ravage des appartements dans l'immeuble de la pâtisserie « Les Lutins ». L'atmosphère orageuse peut accréditer la thèse d'un phénomène électrique.

Almanach E.E.

2 août 1967

Près de Maroles-sous-Lignièrès, la foudre frappe un pompier qui s'apprêtait à tirer une fusée paragrêle.

L'éclair brûle l'œil droit de la victime.

Almanach E.E.

28 septembre 1967

Dans l'aube, quatre incendies provoqués par la foudre éclatent en 12 heures : à Luyeres, Magnicourt, Orvilliers et Villehardouin.

Almanach E.E.

1^{er} août 1968

La foudre incendie le grenier d'une maison au Hameau « Les Boullins », près de Maraye-en-Othe.

Almanach E.E.

2 août 1968

A Maraye-en-Othe, la foudre provoque un incendie dans une maison d'habitation.

14 juin 1969

Bar-sur-Aube. Dans cette localité, la foudre provoque un début d'incendie dans une maison inhabitée.

Almanach E.E.

16 juin 1969

A Jeugny, la foudre tombe sur un arbre qui abritait un cultivateur et sa femme : ceux-ci sont brûlés au deuxième degré.

Almanach L. Ch.

9 juin 1970

En pleine nuit, à Bar-sur-Aube, la foudre provoque un incendie dans une maison d'habitation.

Almanach L. Ch.

17 juin 1970

La foudre provoque un incendie dans des dépendances agricoles de Cussangy.

Almanach L. Ch.

23 mai 1971

En pleine nuit, à Troyes, la foudre provoque un grave incendie dans un pâté de vieilles maisons. Six personnes sans abri.

Almanach L. Ch.

3 août 1974

A Marigny-le-Châtel, la foudre tue trois personnes : un cultivateur, sa femme et son fils de 16 ans. Thierry qui déchargeaient de la paille dans la cour de la ferme du Moulin.

La remorque et le tracteur sont embrasés. M. et Mme André Hazouard, respectivement âgés de 46 et 44 ans, laissent six orphelins.

Almanach E.E.

12 décembre 1974

La foudre met le feu au campanile de l'église de Sainte-Maure.

Almanach L. Ch.

18 août 1975

Au cours d'un orage, la foudre tombe sur le clocher de l'église de Soulaives. Celui-ci prend feu immédiatement et s'écroule quelques minutes plus tard, dans une immense gerbe de flammes.

L'église, datant du XVI^e siècle, classée monument historique, est sauvée. Le sinistre sera circonscrit deux heures plus tard.

C'est le deuxième incendie en un siècle.

Almanach L. Ch.

19 juillet 1976

La foudre provoque l'incendie d'une bergerie à Magny-Fouchard. Dix moutons ont été carbonisés. Le feu a ensuite gagné un silo à grains et une grange.

Almanach L. Ch.

10 juin 1977

La foudre provoque l'incendie d'une grange à Voué.

Almanach L. Ch.

18 juin 1977

Neuville-sur-Selne. Un violent orage s'abat sur la région barséquanaise. Spectacle d'Apocalypse, la foudre frappe la vénérable statue de Notre-Dame-des-Vignes qui, depuis 1864, reposait sur la colonne qui avait été érigée à son intention, la faisant littéralement éclater en morceaux. Etrange menhir au sommet de l'éperon de Champbouton, la colonne continue à dominer la vallée.

Mais la vierge au Raisin n'est plus là pour bénir le vignoble environnant.

J.-P. Pastissié. « L'Est-Eclair », 2 février 1978.

20 juin 1977

Troyes. Un orage d'une extraordinaire violence provoque l'incendie d'un grand magasin et l'effondrement d'une maison ancienne.

Almanach L. Ch.

2 juin 1978

La foudre provoque un début d'incendie dans un appartement du nuit des Charmilles, à Troyes.

Almanach L. Ch.

THOUGHTS ON THE HESSDALEN PHENOMENON

Erling Strand
 Project Leader, Project Hessedalen

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What can the Hessedals-phenomenon, and similar phenomena in other parts of the world, be ? Can they be a part of 'other dimensions' ? Some scientists, working in astro-physics, have claimed that there have to be 11 dimensions. They claim that it would not be possible to explain everything they see and measure in the universe without defining these eleven dimensions.

If that is so, can it then be possible that the UFOs are normally a part of some of those seven others, those that we are not normally aware of - or that they use them for travelling ? This might explain those reports where the witness claims that the UFO(s) 'suddenly disappeared' or 'suddenly appeared'. We have two such reports from Hessedalen.

The fact is also that we have a lot of reports from Hessedalen, but far fewer from the surrounding countryside - even if the UFOs seem to be moving into that area. Maybe the UFOs just 'disappeared' before they reach that area ?

Why were there so many UFOs in Hessedalen ? Some claim that there is a connection between UFO sightings and movement and strain in the ground. If the UFOs are in the 'hidden' dimensions, and there is a connection with the ground strain/movement, maybe we could find out more about the UFOs (and about some of those other dimensions) if we try to learn more about our own ground. In Hessedalen we did not record any ground movement : all movements recorded had their centres in other parts of the world. But we did not measure strain. Strain usually occurs before the movement (or quake). Now we have recorded some small quakes in the Hessedalen area : maybe there were strains in the area at the time the UFOs were observed ?

If these further dimensions exist, it may be that they can be used to explain some of the other unexplained phenomena in the world. Many of those who worked with the Hessedals-phenomenon experienced some unexplained 'discoveries'.

Sometimes I write about 'the UFOs', sometimes about 'the Hessedals-phenomenon'. To me they are the same thing : the reason why I gave it the other name was that most people misunderstood what I meant by 'UFO'. But when I spoke of 'the Hessedals-phenomenon' I did not have to explain what I meant.



Ghost lights remain as Marfa's top attraction

By DENNIS STACY
Special to the Star-Telegram

There is not a whole lot to do in West Texas after the sun goes down and the stars come out. The radio station in Alpine signs off the air promptly at 6 p.m., rain or shine, and without cable or a satellite dish, television is still more of a miss than bit proposition.

Of course, there's McDonald Observatory atop Mount Locke, outside Fort Davis. There you can go the last Wednesday of each month, the weather willing, and peer through the University of Texas' 107-inch telescope at remote celestial objects millions of light years away. So popular is this activity, however, that reservations are required six months in advance.

Then there are the Marfa Lights, ghostly globules of phosphorescent luminosity that hover and dance over the scrub brush dotting Mitchell Flat. Tourists and locals alike have been seeing and writing about the lights for more than a century. The first recorded report was made by rancher Robert Ellison in 1883, the same year Marfa was named after the heroine of a Russian novel. (Legend has it that a railroad executive's wife, passing time during a water stop, chose the name out of a book she was reading.)

Before the train and electricity, the lights contributed heavily to Mescalero Apache folklore — the lights usually playing the role of a heartbroken brave wandering the desert in search of his lost squaw. Ironically, Ellison at first thought the lights he was seeing in the dis-

lance were Indian campfires. The Apaches could have told him better, but the two parties were hardly on the best of speaking terms at the time.

Since then, and despite a continuing controversy about whether the phenomenon even exists, the lights have proven to be Marfa's most enduring tourist attraction. Students from nearby Sul Ross State University in Alpine, have been known to hold "light parties" along US 90 between the two towns.

The preferred parking spot is near two concrete columns on the south side of the road, about five miles east of Marfa, which mark the entrance to an abandoned Air Force base. Pilots training there during the war were said, apocryphally, to have dropped bags of flour where the lights were seen. Nothing would be found the following day but a white spray of scattered flour, of course.

An even taller tale has it that at least on one occasion a pursuing airplane was led into a fatal crash by the mischievous lights. Supposedly, a pilot practicing night flying was led on a cat-and-mouse chase over the rugged terrain. At the last moment the light darted away in a sudden turn and the plane plowed into a mountain.

More mundane accounts of the mystery tell of a yellowish ball of light about the size of a basketball. It may dim and flare, hover, rearrange itself into several other luminous globes or dance madly like a bouncing ball over the lyrics of an invisible

song. For some reason, the lights seem to prefer an area around the Nopal Ranch, just south of US 90.

The lights, although fairly reliable, are not something by which one can synchronize a watch. Pat Ryan, editor of the *Marfa Independent*, has gone into the brush several times in search of the lights. "I've gone out there with some of the local experts," Ryan said, "but I've never seen anything yet. I think a lot of people are seeing car headlights on the Presidio highway."

Ryan also warned against mistaking one of the numerous ranch night lights in the area for the Marfa Lights. For starters, those are a bright electrical blue and are stationary, whereas the ghost lights tend toward a pale yellow and sporadic movement. Ryan said he is not willing to rule out that something mysterious is happening on Mitchell Flat, only that he has never witnessed anything he could unequivocally say were the lights.

Joe Skelton, of Alpine, who runs the Gulf station next door to the newspaper, said he had seen the lights on occasion, once counting as many as seven separate sources. The sighting that made him a believer, however, occurred one night between Van Horn and Marfa, as he and his wife were returning from El Paso.

Skelton was driving. His wife was asleep in the front seat beside him. In the rear view mirror he saw what he thought was an "18-wheeler too close for comfort." Skelton turned to look over his shoulder and: "Gone!

Nothing! Just like that," he said, snapping his fingers. Then he added, "Those lights have made good Christians out of a lot of people who weren't before."

Aside from their proselytizing abilities, the lights also appear to have a crude capacity to interact with their human observers, either moving farther away as one approaches, or disappearing.

Another incident reported by Skelton is a case in point. He and a friend, following in a pickup, were on their way to a ranch they were working on near McDonald Observatory. Both vehicles were equipped with CB radios. Skelton saw a flash "as bright as a searchlight" in the hills and picked up his hand microphone. "Hey! Did you see that?" he radioed his friend, and at that moment the light went out.

"We drove on a couple of miles and the exact same thing happened again. Soon as we'd start talking about it, it'd go out," Skelton said.

Frank Tolbert, the late newspaper columnist of Dallas, noted a similar pattern. Tolbert, in the company of others, spied a bright light which he first thought to be Venus. But when ever he stopped the car for a closer inspection and reached for his camera, the light winked out.

Lack of a ready and simple answer, however, as the carnival man might have said, keeps the people coming back. In March 1984 the *Wall Street Journal* sent a reporter down to prow the local haunts and collect

anecdotes. During the same month *Science 84* devoted its "Mysteries" column to the Marfa Lights, again without resolving the issue.

The article did briefly review the four possible scientific theories that have been put forward over the years to explain the lights — phosphorescent minerals, methane or swamp gas, St. Elmo's fire (a form of naturally occurring static electricity) and headlights bent and refracted by temperature inversions.

Each, of course, has its objections. Geologists have failed to locate any significant deposits of phosphorescent minerals in the area and the surrounding countryside is decidedly lacking in swamps. Also, there does not seem to be any clear and obvious focal point for St. Elmo's fire, which seems to prefer church steeples, lightning rods and ships' masts.

b01-0010

ref: Hilary Evans

As we have seen, hallucinations of realistic human figures are occasionally evolved out of vague luminous forms, and some of the cases of hallucinatory lights suggest that the hallucination has been arrested at this preliminary stage, and has failed to reach a more definite form; e.g., No. 408. 11 (see *Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. VI., p. 351). But there are other cases where the hallucinatory form is very definite and does not itself suggest that greater definiteness might, under different circumstances, have been attained. The only reason for regarding such hallucinations as undeveloped is that in some instances we seem to be able to trace them to suggestion, ordinary or telepathic, and that the suggestion in question would naturally be expected, if it produced a hallucination at all, to produce a human figure. The following is a case in point.

(191. 2.) From Miss Williams.

"11, Cleveland-terrace, Coatham, Redcar, September 23rd, 1889.

"I was living at home with my parents at Eston-in-Cleveland. There was a working man called Long living in the village, not far from our house, whose wife was taken ill. Dr. Fulton, who at that time was staying with us, came in one night between 9 and 10 o'clock and said Mrs. Long was dying. After that we sat talking over the fire a good while, and then my sister Isabella and I went off to bed. We slept in a back bedroom, and after we got to this bedroom I said, 'Oh, I've forgotten something in the large bedroom.' To this latter I proceeded by myself, and, as I approached the door, something seemed to say to me, 'You'll see something of Mrs. Long, living or dead.' But I thought no more of this, and entered the bedroom, which I had to cross to the opposite end for what I wanted. When I had got the things in my hand, I noticed a lovely light hanging over my head. It was a round light—perfectly round. I had taken no light with me, but went for the things I wanted in the dark. I looked to see if there was any light coming in from the windows, but there was none: in that direction there was total darkness. I grasped one hand with the other and stood looking at the strange light to be sure that I was not deceived and was not imagining it. I walked across the room to the door, and all the way the light was hanging between my head and the ceiling. It was akin to the electric light: something of a cloud, though every part of it was beaming and running over with light. It left me at the bedroom door. On first seeing it a strange impression seized me, and after it left me I was so impressed that I could not speak of it to anyone for a day or two. I wondered at the time whether it had anything to do with Mrs. Long, and on inquiry I found that she died just about the time when I saw the light. If there was any difference, I judged it would be a little before, but there would not be much in it. This would be about 11 p.m., and about four years ago. It left an impression on my mind which I have never forgotten, and never shall forget. Mrs. Long was not ill many days—about two or three: she died rather suddenly. I was rather interested in her. I did not see her during her illness, but had often seen her and talked to her before.

I was perfectly well at the time, and was in no trouble or anxiety. My age at the time was 23. I have had no experience of the kind before or since. I saw no figure, only a lovely light. Before telling my sister I made her promise she would not ridicule me nor call me superstitious.

"To the best of my recollection this is a correct statement.

"MARY HELENA WILLIAMS."

"P.S.—The light which I saw was a palish blue. It emitted no rays, so that all the rest of the room was in darkness. It was wider in circumference than my head, so that as I walked I could see it above me without raising my head. As I left the room it remained, and when I looked again was gone. It was in a corner, where the darkness of the room was deepest and the least chance of illumination from the windows on the right and left, that I first saw it above my head. I had no fear, but a kind of sacred awe. The light was unlike any other that I ever saw, and I should say brighter than any other, or, at least, purer. Looking at it did not affect the eyes. It was midway between my head and the ceiling."

The sister who was with Miss Williams at the time corroborates her account as follows:—

"August 8th, 1891.

"I recollect my sister Lily seeing the bright light. When she came back to the room where I was she was quite pale, and sat down on the floor. She was so awe-struck that she did not tell us what she had seen till the next day. I remember that a woman who lived near us died about the time my sister saw the light, and that we connected the two circumstances together.

"ISABELLA FULTON."

Here, the hallucination, if not due to a telepathic impulse, would seem to have been due to the occupation of the percipient's mind with the idea of the imminent death. Why, then, should it take the form of a light, unless this was, as it were, a rudimentary condition of a hallucination which failed to reach the human form?

Among the lights in our collection, 9 are described as round or oval lights, or balls of light or fire; of these 7 are connected by the percipients with some individual who is stated to have died at or about the time of the experience. Of the remaining 8 cases of lights, two are described as columns of light, or luminous clouds about the height of a human being, 3 resembled bright points of light, as stars or candle flames, and 3 appeared like a general glow of light.

1894-
Proceedings, Society for
Psychical Research vol x p124-5

bol-0011

Date of Sighting: 9-10-76
Time: 03.30 approx
Duration: 3-5 mins.
Observers: Andy Collins
19, St. Davids Way,
Wickford, Essex
Tel: Wickford 4189

Location: Warminster, Wiltshire
Class: B3b
Ref: AC/148
Barry & Steven King & Alan Denham (Friend of
554, Goresbrook Road,
Dagenham, Essex
Tel: 01-593.4670
Steves)

On Friday 8th October myself and the aforementioned members of the Dagenham Paranormal Research Group set out on one of our investigation visits, this time to Wiltshire. Among the places on the visit were Stonehenge, Avebury, Silbury and Warminster. The trip was to last the whole weekend returning on Sunday evening.

After driving constantly from London we arrived in Wiltshire during the early hours of Saturday morning and eventually found Warminster about 3 am. The idea was to sleep in the car, so we ventured outside the town to find a suitable place to park. This was not as easy as at first thought as there appeared to be no laybys or suitable areas. Eventually about 3 miles to the north of Warminster we came to a staggered crossroads, to the left was Nortant Bravant and to the right was an unmade road without any signpost. As there was quite thick fog we could not see what was up the road but still decided on trying it.

We ventured warily up the road knowing that it was either farmland or as we were close to Imber, Army Ground. We were travelling at about 5mph up this road which was on a hill, keeping a watchful eye out for irrate farmers. On our left was a row of trees and behind them fields, to our right was a ploughed field, bordered from the road by a wall about 3 feet high.

Then at about 90° to the right of the car we caught sight of a very bright light source about 100 yards away and about 4 foot off the ground. It was round in shape, about 8 ins. diameter, and brilliant white. It appeared to be jogging up and down and looked to be coming our way at about 5 mph. The ground nearby appeared to be illuminated by the brightness. Our immediate reaction being that it was a head lamp of a farmer on a moped come to throw us off his land. We carried on up the road keeping the light in sight. It still seemed to be coming towards us and jogging up and down as if it were a moped in a ploughed field.

We speeded up a little and finally came to rest high above the field. The car was turned round and the light was watched again. It now appeared to be behind a row of trees we had passed, travelling up the road. The road infact bent a little towards the left from where we were. This appearance that it was travelling up the road was because the ball had appeared at this point, larger than before and higher off the ground.

After watching it for about a further minute it was blocked out or discontinued in the trees on the other side of the road which was about 120 yards away.

Being so tired, we all thought there was nothing odd about this, still thinking it was a moped or motircycle. After settling down we all went to sleep without even thinking anymore about the light.

Later on that morning after some breakfast we moved off in the car down the unmade road towards the area where the 'Moped' was seen. On roaching the point we stopped the car and got out to try and find any tyre marks that may have been left. Studying the field there appeared to be only one place where the 'Moped' could have joined the road and this was a gateway about 15 feet across. The rest of the border was surrounded by this 3 foot high wall. Then on looking in the field which had been recently ploughed and was very muddy, no tyre marks at all could be seen. Neither in the field or between the gateway, nor was there any mud at all on or near the road.

This incident was soon forgotten and the rest of the trip went off quite successfully although we had to return home due to bad weather and fatigue

on the Saturday night.

No more was thought about the event until early January when I purchased a book by Warminster researcher, Arthur Shuttlewood called 'The Flying Saucerers'. For on Page 38 there described a phenomenon seen on a number of occasions nicknamed 'The phantom motorcyclist'. This phenomenon had a remarkable similarity to the 'Moped' seen by us on 9th October 1976. After consulting with the other members that saw the light, we decided that what was described in the book was the same or a similar type of thing as seen by ourselves. It was then agreed that this incident should be recorded officially for future reference.

Notes

The weather was very foggy at the time with a cloudbase of not more than 500ft, and a visibility of about 150 yards. There was little or no wind and the ground was wet.

Due to the fact that no noise could be heard in the still air, and no tyre tracks could be found, a motorcycle or moped now seems out of the question. The only other suggestion that comes to mind is ball lightning. But owing to the manoeuvres of the light and its duration visible, this seems also out. There is no possibility that the light could have been a torch light owing to the immense power of the source, and again no visible tracks left in the field or gateway.

Other than this, unless further information can come to light I can find no logical explanation for the phenomenon seen.

Report Form Completed: 19-2-77

Report Closed: 19-2-77

Andy Collins
19, St. Davids Way,
Wickford,
Essex, SS11 8EX
Tel: Wickford 4189

For the Dagenham Paranormal Research Group.

GROUP	BUFORA REF.	YEAR	NUMBER
	/INVEST REF		AC/143	76

SECTION B SIGHTING DETAILS

1. Location: 5 MILES NORTH OF WARMINGTIER Grid Ref:
 Nearest town/village: WARMINGTON County/district: NORTSHIRE
2. Date: SATURDAY 27th of OCTOBER 1976 3. Time: from 05.59 a.m./p.m./midday/midnight until 05.59 a.m./p.m./midday/midnight Timing method: WATCH
4. Duration: exact UNKNOWN or minimum 3 MINUTES maximum 5 MINUTES
 Any break in sighting: NO
5. Dimension: 10-12 CM or ACTUAL (distance) or angle subtended:
 6. Angular elevation: initial - 1° final - 5° exact/approx.
 Bearing: initial 180° final 275° approx.
7. Object at ground level? 4 FT. OFF 8. Manner of disappearance: BEHIND TREES AND/OR DISCONTINUED
9. Photograph Radar Measurements made during sighting Occupants Artifact
10. Effects—Psychological/physiological Animal Plants Electrical/magnetic Physical Radioactive
 Other: NO (If questions 9 or 10 are ticked, also complete appropriate supplementary questionnaire)
11. Most unusual feature of sighting: THE APPEARANCE OF AN EXTREMELY BRIGHT SOURCE OF LIGHT
12. Other witnesses: Number THREE Names, addresses and relationships:
 BARRY M. & STEVEN KING, 55 1/2 GORLSBROOK ROAD, DAGLHAM, ESSEX
 AND FRIEND OF STEVE'S, ALAN DENHAM
13. Object(s): Number ONE Colour BRILLIANT WHITE Shape CIRCULAR, HEADLAMP, OR BALL
 Sound NONE Smell NONE Sharp/Hazy Outline
 Brightness AS THAT OF A MOTORCYCLE OR MOPED HEADLAMP (compared to star, venus, moon, sun etc.)
 Describe any changes in above aspects: POSSIBLE INCREASE IN BRIGHTNESS
 If object(s) moved behind or in front of a known object, describe: SEVERAL TREES
14. Sky and weather conditions:
- | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---------------------------------|
| Clouds | Temperature | Wind | Precipitation | Astronomical |
| — |°C | Vel.....m/kp.h | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dry | <input type="checkbox"/> Stars |
| 8 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cold | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Light mist | <input type="checkbox"/> Moon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clear sky | <input type="checkbox"/> Cool | <input type="checkbox"/> Breeze | <input type="checkbox"/> Fog | <input type="checkbox"/> Planet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scattered cloud | <input type="checkbox"/> Warm | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Rain light/heavy | <input type="checkbox"/> Sun |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Much cloud | <input type="checkbox"/> Hot | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong | <input type="checkbox"/> Snow | <input type="checkbox"/> NONE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Overcast | | Coming from..... | Visibility.....m/yds | |
| Type: FOG | Humidity: Dry/Average/Very Humid | | | |
| Base height:..... | Sky: BRIGHT/Fairly Bright/Dull/Twilight/Dark | | | |
- Other local conditions: THICK FOG, VISIBILITY ABOUT 150 YARDS
15. Artificial lights: HEADLAMPS OF OWN CORSAIR CAR
16. Sighting through glass: WINDSCREEN OF CAR Spectacles: BARRY KING ONLY
 other device: NO or from inside vehicle: CAR WINDSCREEN or building: NO
17. Witness movements: ALL WITNESSES IN CAR TRAVELLING AWAY FROM OBJECT AT ABOUT 5 MPH
18. Attention of witness drawn to object because: APPEARANCE OF BRIGHT LIGHT NEAR GROUND
19. Witness reaction: ALL WITNESSES THOUGHT LIGHT WAS HEADLAMP OF APPROACHING MOPED OR
20. What did the object resemble? HEADLAMP OF MOTORCYCLE MOTORCYCLE
 And how was it different? LIGHT WAS EMITTED FROM THE WHOLE SOURCE NOT JUST FROM FRONT
21. Unusual events during hour before sighting: NONE
 During sighting: NONE
 After: ONLY TIREDNESS DUE TO LONG JOURNEY
22. Any time lapse or error: NO
23. Previous knowledge or experience of UFOs: EX. BUFORA E. I. C. INVESTIGATOR AND RESEARCHER FOR VARIOUS UFOLOGICAL ORGANISATIONS, FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT, SAME FOR B. KING
24. Witness qualifications or experience in observing: PRESUMED VERY GOOD
25. Vision or hearing defects: BARRY KING WEARS SPECTACLES
26. Any psychic experiences: BARRY KING ONLY
27. Any recent medical treatment: NO
28. Report made to any official or the press/radio/TV:

L'ÉCLAIR EN BOULE

L'éclair en boule constitue une des plus curieuses manifestations de l'électricité. L'observation si intéressante communiquée par M. Violle, à une des dernières séances de l'Académie des sciences, a éveillé

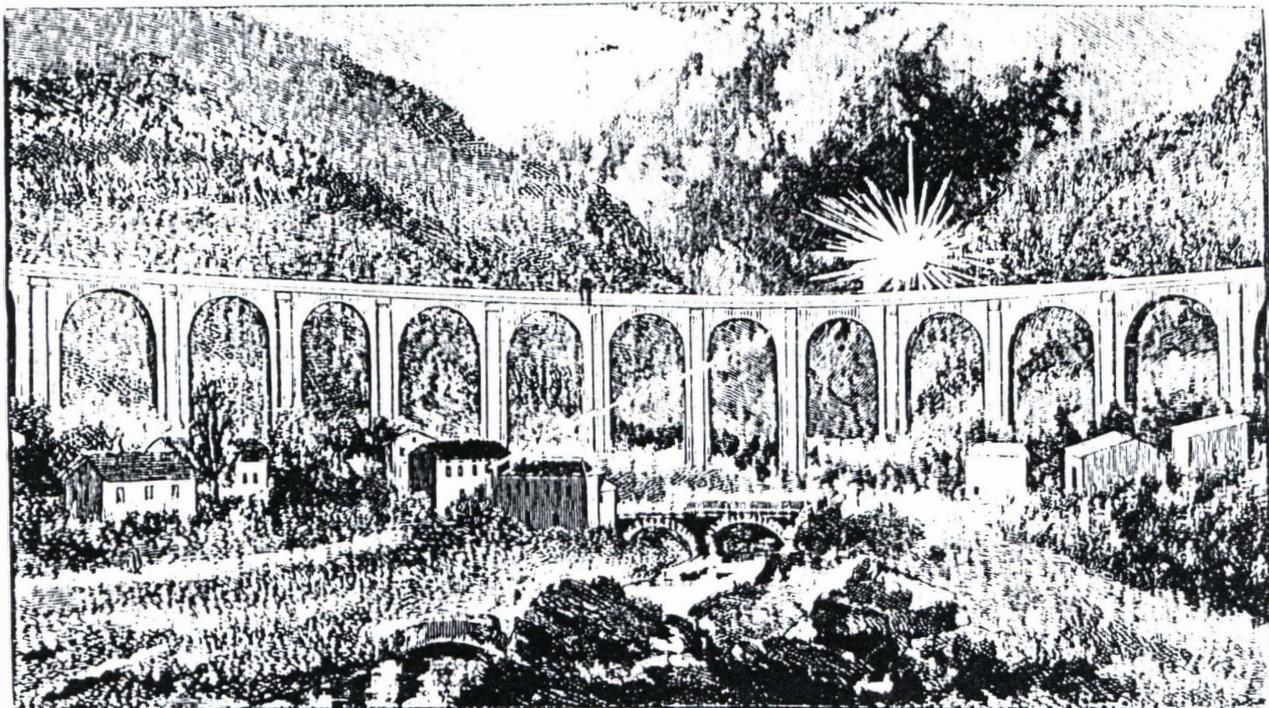


Fig. 1. — Apparition d'un éclair en boule dans les Gorges du Loup, près de Nice, (Le trait blanc indique le trajet du météore.)

de nouveau l'attention du monde savant et incité les physiciens de tous les pays à trouver la clef du mystérieux problème posé par la nature.

Ainsi que l'a fait observer M. Darboux, on a peu d'observations récentes de ce phénomène dues à des savants. Il est évident que ces observations seraient du plus grand intérêt et aideraient, dans une large mesure, à la découverte de la vérité.

C'est pour cela que je crois utile d'apporter ici le résumé d'un fait précis, dont mon père, M. Louis Otto, ingénieur, et trois personnes de ses amis, dont je pourrais citer les noms, ont été les témoins, il y a peu d'années, dans les gorges du Loup, au moment de la construction de la voie ferrée qui relie Grasse à Nice :

« Le temps était à l'orage. De larges gouttes de

pluie commençaient à tomber. Mon père et ses amis déjeunaient dans une des salles de l'hôtel des « Gorges-du-Loup », dont la fenêtre était ouverte. Soudain, poussé par une rafale, un globe de feu de 20 centimètres environ de diamètre, pénétra dans la pièce où étaient les convives. Pareil à une bulle de savon légère, le globe de feu, se balançant doucement et paraissant flotter dans l'atmosphère, fit le tour de la pièce sans toucher à aucun objet (fig. 2).

« Emporté par un courant d'air, il ressortit par la fenêtre, avant que mon père et ses amis, en proie à une émotion bien légitime, eussent pu essayer de fuir. L'apparition avait duré cependant 10 secondes.

« Les convives suivirent du regard la boule mystérieuse. Chassée par le vent, elle franchit, en une

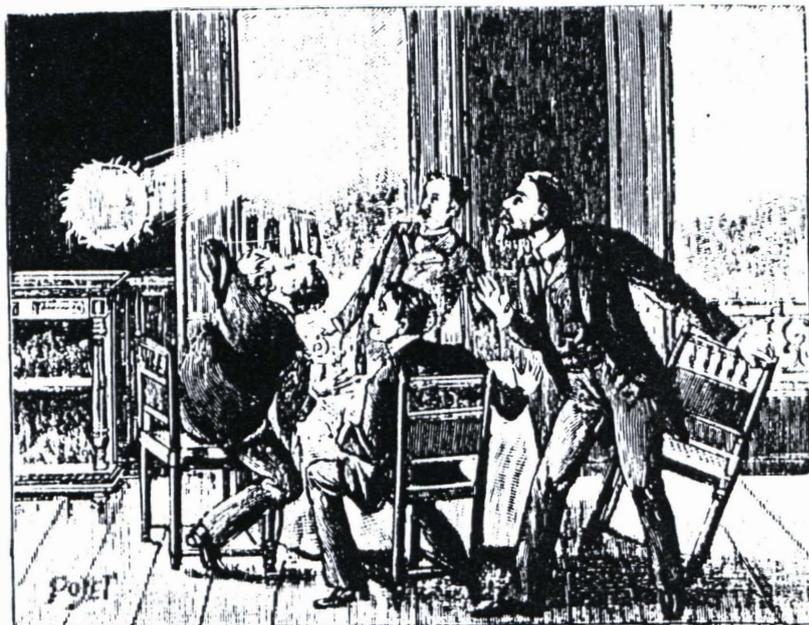


Fig. 2. — Le globe de feu dans la salle.

minute, la distance qui sépare l'hôtel des rochers à pic qui surplombent le torrent du Loup.

« Une explosion formidable retentit, au moment où le météore heurta les rochers (fig. 1). Des grondements, pareils à ceux que provoque un violent coup de tonnerre, ébranlèrent l'espace. Puis tout se tut : le globe de feu s'était évanoui. »

De ce fait précis, il y a des conclusions intéressantes à tirer. La première est que l'énergie électrique peut être condensée sans l'intervention d'aucun lien apparent avec un solide, sous forme de sphère lumineuse d'une densité apparente à peu près égale à celle de l'air.

La seconde est que le simple contact avec un corps solide, comme la paroi d'un rocher, suffit pour détruire les liens invisibles qui tiennent agrégées les molécules dont le groupement constitue le météore, pour rompre l'équilibre du système et provoquer une décharge dont la violence est identique à celle du tonnerre. L'éclair en boule ne saurait être mieux comparé, à mon avis, qu'à quelque redoutable combinaison exothermique dont la constitution moléculaire nous échappe et qui serait, au point de vue physique, ce que la mélinite est au point de vue chimique.

Plusieurs expérimentateurs ont essayé de reproduire, dans les laboratoires, le curieux phénomène dont je viens de parler.

Au cours de mes recherches sur l'électricité à haute tension, j'ai découvert un procédé expérimental très simple qui permet d'atteindre, dans une certaine mesure, le résultat cherché.

Il suffit pour cela de disposer parallèlement, à une distance de 30 millimètres environ, deux lames métalliques et de les porter à un potentiel élevé (50 000 volts environ). Dans ces conditions, l'effluve ne jaillit pas ; mais, dès que la tension dépasse une limite déterminée, un petit globe de feu prend naissance, surmonté de flammes multiples, et se promène, avec un sifflement particulier, entre les deux lames métalliques. En disposant l'expérience d'une manière analogue, mais en séparant les deux lames conductrices par un diélectrique ou en munissant une des plaques métalliques d'une série de pointes, on obtient un effluve violacé du plus bel effet, avec dégagement abondant d'ozone.

MARIUS OTTO,
Docteur ès sciences.



bol-0014

Nordic UFO Newsletter 1985 no 2

STRANGE LIGHT PHENOMENON OBSERVED AT SAARIJÄRVI

Date: Monday 29 July 1985

Time: 12.00 pm

Place: Saarijärvi in the vicinity of the town Mahlu, central part of Finland

Witnesses: Olavi Schroderus and Erkki Nieminen

Nature of sighting: Strange sparkling light spot with a light column

Here is the story told by the observer:

"It was Monday 29 July 1985. I, Olavi Schroderus, and Erkki Nieminen were in Erkki's summer cottage during that evening. The weather was calm, very cloudy and dark. We were sitting inside the cottage, watching TV and eating sausages. The time was around 10.30 pm when I went outside in order to move my car from the road. The road was going through the yard of the cottage, so if people should be able to drive to the other cottages nearby, I had to move it. I finally parked the car to a place some 40 m from Erkki's cottage. At that time, nothing unusual could be observed.

At Erkki's cottage the forest road branches off to the shore of Lake Kalajärvi and goes on to the other cottages. I placed my car on the road that leads directly to the shore. Because the electric current to the movable TV-set was becoming inadequate, we had to take the accumulator from Erkki's car. To be able to put the lights on also in the cottage I had to move my car again to the grass in the yard of the cottage. I went to move my car at about 12.00 pm.

When I was walking towards the car, I noticed on the left hand side of the forest road, some 16 m away, a reddish, strangely sparkling light spot on the ground. It was about 0.5 m in diameter. I stopped at once and tried to look for the origin of the light. However, I couldn't see or hear anything. I thought perhaps that the light might be coming from the Lake Kalajärvi. After having been looking around for some 15 seconds, I started to carefully approach the sparkling light on the ground. When I came to a distance of 2 m, I observed that the light was coming down in tapelike sections from an altitude of some 3 m. Thus, the light was not coming from the lake. Again, I made a halt, listening, but couldn't hear anything special. Then I carefully approached the light spot on the ground. Immediately, I began to search for warmth with my hands. I was greatly astonished when I couldn't feel any raise in temperature from the sparkling spot. After having confirmed this, at once I put both hands in the bandlike stream which was flowing from above. All of a sudden, the light clung to my hands while sparkling, and I became enormously scared. I tried to shake it off and rubbed my hands together, but it just spread around. I couldn't feel it at all, however, it didn't have any weight, it didn't burn, and I couldn't sense any smell. When I couldn't feel the light in any way, I dared to take more of it in my hands, taken from about 20 cm off the ground, where the light was more dense. Then I started to run towards the summer cottage with the light sparkling in my hands.

When I was running I held the palms of my hands upright and observed that the light didn't react to the stream of air, caused by my running. When I reached the porch of the cottage, I shouted loudly: "Look Erkki, something strange is taking place on the road". I stormed inside and Erkki was quite perplexed and couldn't say anything. I explained that more of this sparkling thing in my hands was up there on the road, and that I could not feel it in any way in my hands. Still, Erkki was quiet.

When I was showing my sparkling fingers, I stretched them a bit, causing an increasing distance between them. Hence, I observed that it still sparkled from fingertip to fingertip; a distance of some 5 mm. However, it was not very much compared with the light outside which was about 3 m. The tops of the bright areas were not pointing upwards, as normal flames of fire do, but were instead blazing between the fingers. On the fingertips the bright areas pointed out from my body. The bright light didn't

light up the cottage at all. The brightness began to vanish by and by from my fingers after some 30 seconds, and at last it disappeared completely.

Immediately, I went out to reinvestigate the light phenomenon on the forest road, but it too, had disappeared. Erkki didn't follow me outside, but looked through the window, even if he was looking in the wrong direction. He didn't see me, because of the darkness. I tried to listen and see something in the darkness of night perhaps for five minutes, but nothing happened. At last I dared to go to my car, but I was quite afraid. I backed my car to the cottage yard.

During the evening we were thinking what really had taken place. I could not sleep well that night. In the morning we investigated the area where the light phenomenon was seen, but there was not trace of any kind to be found. It was raining a little in the morning. After I had told about the matter at home, we came back on Tuesday (30 July) at the same point of time, together with other persons, but nothing happened.

On Wednesday, I called several professors at the Biological Institute and Institute on environmental research at the University of Jyväskylä. They could not give me any complete answers directly. However, they suggested two possibilities, namely fireflies and a kind of luminous bacteria. A firefly emits pointlike light, whereas the light from bacteria is yellow-green. These phenomena, however, are observed mainly around the equator, so they are not satisfactory as an explanation to these phenomena".



Olavi Schroderus showing his hands.

Investigations

Lasse Ahonen from The UFO Research of Finland visited the observation place together with Olavi Schroderus 10 August 1985. The place where the light spot had been, is the left hand side of the forest road, seen from the cottage. Nothing could be seen on the ground where the light spot had been. There were several ant paths on the place, and the small insects seemed to move as usual.

The first observation was made from a distance of 16 m, when only a clearly contrasted reddish light spot was seen on the ground. The diameter was then

50 cm and the thickness 2-3 cm.

When the observer had approached the light spot to a distance of some 2 m away, some kind of light pillar ca. 3 m high, could be seen. Where the light was coming from is unknown, because nothing particular could be seen above the light pillar. The light simply ended at a height of 3 m. It seemed to come down in bandlike wedges. The light on the ground was so dense or so bright that the ground couldn't be seen behind it. On the other hand, the trees behind the light pillar could be observed. Even if the light on the ground was bright, it was not dazzling, however.

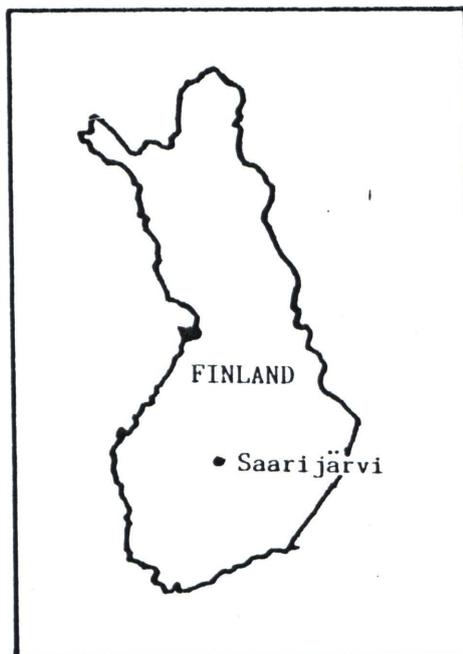
The branches of a nearby spruce were very close, but not inside the light pillar. The branches of the trees or the heather close to the light spot on the ground were not lit up.

When the light grabbed the hands of the observer, it didn't illuminate the arms at all. The light was only on the bare skin. The shoes of weren't uplit either, despite being just beside of the light spot. He did not get any aftermath; like eczema, illness or else. The light spot was stationary during the entire time of observation. The time totalled 1-2 minutes.

During the observation the weather was cloudy, very dark and completely without winds. No thunder could be detected; the temperature was about 10 °C.

What caused this phenomenon is still unexplained. It can hardly be an electric phenomenon caused by some manmade electric device, because there is no electricity or power lines in the vicinity. No reflecting objects of any kind were visible, either.

Translation by Heikki Virtanen.



Source:

"Ultra Magazine" no. 10 1985.

Information Submitted to "BOLIDE". WYUFORG- April 1986

Section1: Brief undetailed reports all of which are classified Insuff Data.

- 1) Date: 25/10/66
Time: 02:35 G.M.T.
Location: Lidget Green, Bradford, W. Yorks
No of witnesses: Two
Report: One witness observed an orange oval surrounded by red lights. The other witness saw an orange cone hover over Bradford for five mins before disappearing.
- 2) Date: 25/8/78
Time: 23:35 BST
LOC: Allerton, Bdfd, W. Yorks
No of Witnesses: One
Report: Witness was driving home when she saw a strange orange light in the sky, on looking closer she saw it was high and flying saucer shaped.
- 3) Date: 15/4/81
Time: 21:40 BST
Loc: Idle, Bradford, W. Yorks, England.
No of witnesses: Two
Report: A strange bright yellow/orange ball was seen over Idle cricket field. It was silent in the clear sky. The full moon and Jupiter were nearby. The witnesses saw the object move up and down in a zig zag fashion. At times points of white light came out of it and melted back into the object. It then stopped, became bright yellow and flew off towards Bradford Town Centre.
- 4) Date: 15/4/81
Time: 21:45 BST
LOC: Idle, Bradford, W. Yorks, England.
No of witnesses: Two
Report: The witnesses saw a reddish/yellow ball in the sky from the window of their top flat. It looked like it was on fire and lit up the whole sky around. At times it had a spotlight coming from it but made no noise. Both witnesses watched this for five minutes before it moved away.
- 5) Date: 9th March 1984
Time: Unknown (nighttime)
Location: Bank Top, Horton, Bradford, West Yorkshire, England.
No of witnesses: Two
Report: Two witnesses observed an orange flame coloured object over Bank Top Reservoir in Bradford. It was observed only for a split second before it disappeared.

6) Date: End August 1976.

Time: 04:00 BST

Loc: Peel Park, Bradford, W. Yorks, England.

No of witnesses: one.

Report: The witness, a photographer, observed a yellow/orange ball of light travelling North to South. It was high in the sky. It travelled smoothly and slowly. The witness felt a sense of calm and amazement. He also felt what he claimed was a time displacement which made him feel uneasy. The object continued on its course until lost from view.

7) Date: last week Sept, - 3rd week Oct. 1976

Time: 07:15 BST

Loc: Between Bingley and Keighley, West Yorks, England.

No of witnesses: one. Same witness as above.

Report: The witness was travelling on a bus and was looking over the valley in Denholme, W. Yorks when he saw a similar object to what he had seen a few weeks previous (see above account). The object was identical in appearance but seemed to have a lighter colour of white/yellow. The sky was clear and the object was travelling West to East just above the horizon. It was observed for about 20 seconds before it went out of sight as the bus turned a bend. The object was last seen going toward Cottingley Woods and disappeared behind the trees.

8) Date: September 1980

Time: Approx 21:30 BST

Loc: Illingworth, Halifax, W. Yorks, England.

No of witnesses: 4

Report: The witnesses were travelling home in their car in a Northerly direction when they saw an orange ball of light over Ogden Moors, Halifax. They stopped the car to observe the light which was stationary throughout the sighting. The light was observed for about ten seconds before it just vanished. The witnesses estimated the light to be about a mile away and about 3/400ft above the horizon. The weather conditions for this time were overcast, cool and dry.

9) Date: 13th September 1983

Time: 04:00h BST

Loc: Drighouses, York, England.

No of witnesses: Two

Report: The witness got up to let out her cat and looked up at the stars when she observed a large soft orange/yellow shape (ball) moving across the sky from the NorthWest to the SouthEast. The witness then awoke her husband who also observed the ball of light and they watched it for about 15 minutes in total travelling across their field of view before disappearing over the horizon noiseless

Page three:

10) Date: April 1970.

Time: 01:00 BST

Loc: Rombalds Moor, nr Skipton, N. Yorkshire, England

No of witnesses: Two

Report: The witness was awoken from her sleep by a high pitched whineing sound. Thinking the noise could be an indication of an accident on a nearby railway line she roused her husband who went to look out the window facing East. Both witnesses saw a "very bright ball of light" which hovered at a height of about 200 feet above the Moorland and which appeared to be solid. The object was at an estimated distance of one and a half to two miles. The witnesses had a clear view of the object due to the calm and clear weather conditions. It remained stationary for about half an hour before suddenly rising and flying away at speed and was out of view after approximately three seconds. As it disappeared from view, the whining noise also faded as object flew away until neither the object nor noise could be heard. Colour is unknown.

Information submitted to "BOLIDE" - WYUFORG -April 1986

Section two: Sightings in this section have all received LEVEL A Investigations and as such have Evaluations designated by the West Yorks UFO Research Group: The cases are however shortened but anyone requiring further information on the ~~full reports can obtain~~ this from WYUFORGs address quoting the case reference number.

Case Report No 1: WYUFORG Ref: WY/009

Date: Winter 1942/3

Time: 19:00h GMT

Location: Scholes, Leeds, West Yorkshire, England.

O.S. Map Reference: 375377 - Sheet Number 104

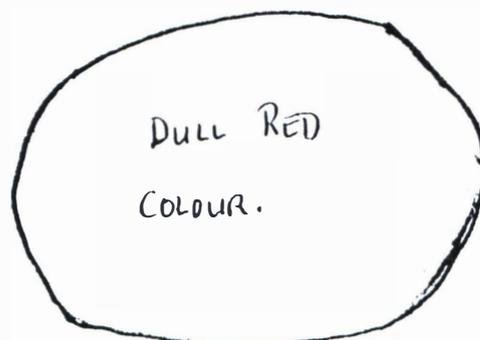
Report details:

The witness was returning home from the Railway Station at about 19:00h GMT when as she neared home she noticed a flame red ball travelling over the rooftops of the houses. The object came from the North East and was approximately forty or fifty feet high. The object suddenly descended and came to rest about six feet above the ground in a hovering position about 75 yards from the witness. The witness could now see the object was a duller red than had first been evident and also it was slightly oval with a diameter of approximately 12 feet. It was also evident that the ball of light now appeared to be of solid nature and seemed to be lit from within. Suddenly without warning the object shot off at tremendous speed in a South East direction towards Garforth disappearing in a matter of seconds as it climbed high into the sky.

Witness details: Female aged 41/2 at time of sighting. Has a vivid memory and has undergone many notable paranormal experiences in her life. These included a hazy timeslip into the future (at time it was about 1909 and the timeslip the witness now thinks took her to about the 1960s/70s) and a very vivid Out Of Body Experience which occurred around 1911.

Evaluation: Probable UFO. (UAP/MED).

Diagram of object in Case Report 1.



Case Report No2 : WYUFORG Ref: WY/029

Date: June/July 1975

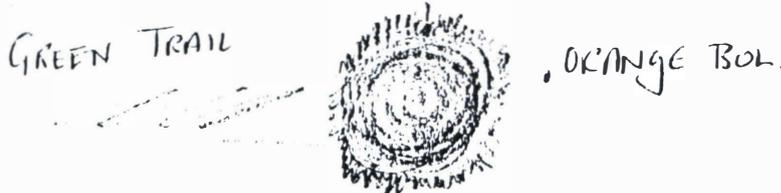
Time: 22:00h approx - BST

Location: Brighouse, West Yorkshire, England -

O.S. Ref: 147 228, Sheet No: Brighouse 12

Report Details: The witness Mr A was returning home. The weather was a typical hot summers day; dry and calm. His attention was drawn to an object in the sky. It was a ball of light about the same size as the Sun and at least as bright, reddy orange in colour travelling from the South or SouthEast to the North or NorthWest at an approximate elevation of fifteen degrees. Behind the object stretched a vivid green trail "for miles". The witness watched the object move slowly for about one minute during which he heard no noise. Once over the town the object appeared to hover over the Canal Basin for about 30 seconds before suddenly moving off to the North or NorthEast at a fantastic speed until it disappeared from sight. Total duration was between one to one and a half minutes. Points to note are: 1) The object was travelling along a valley with a fault line. 2) The valley contains a great many high voltage power lines. 3) The object appeared to follow the line of a canal/river system and the point where the object hovered is above the Canal basin.

Evaluation: UNKNOWN - Probable LITS/UAP.



Case Report No3: WYUFORG Case Ref: WY/))008

Date: 22nd August 1982

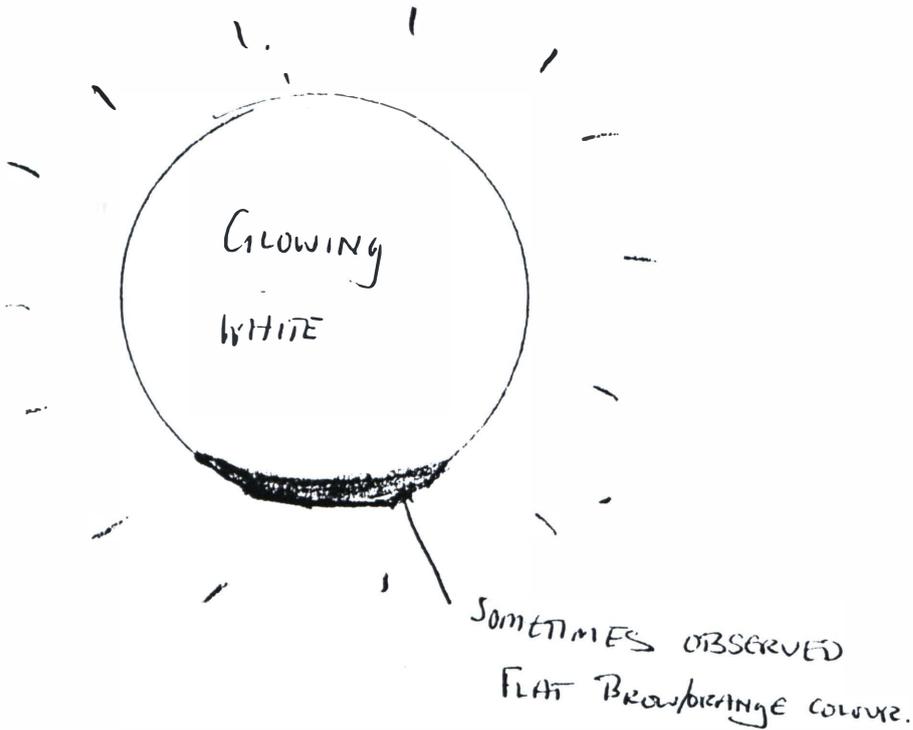
Time: 10:40h BST

Location: Norland Moor, Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire, England.

Report Details: The witness, Mr B, was in his house when he observed an object over the river Ryburn. The object dipped slowly behind some trees to the left of the river. The witness waited for the object to reappear and after a few moments it did so as an apparently bright light source once again. Although the witness had a very clear view of the object he could only see what looked like an "incandescent ball of light" and could not see any definitive shape. As the object reappeared it moved slowly up the valley (North) just above the trees and followed the course of the River Ryburn. As the object moved North still slowly following the river it seemed to get higher

.....in the sky. After about three minutes the object had moved a considerable distance down the valley so the witness ~~witness~~ moved to his sons bedroom for a better view of the object (by now Mr B had alerted his wife and eighteen year old son to look at the light). The witnesses continued to observe the object until it moved out of sight after about five minutes in the direction of Sowerby Bridge. The witnesses described the object as a ball of glowing light which seemed dazzling. On occasions there appeared to be a flat bottom with a brownish orange color to it. The object was estimated by the witness to be no larger than about five feet in diameter when first observed at a distance of 180 yards. Overall coloring of object was described as glowing white light. There was no sound throughout the whole of the sighting.

Evaluation: UNKNOWN - Probable LITS/UAP



OVNI-SÉISMES

LES OVNI SONT-ILS DÉCLENCHEURS DE SÉISMES ?

Le 9 octobre 1977, entre 19 h.30 et 23 h. 30, le château de la Roche-Courbon (Charentes Maritimes) devenait le théâtre d'un spectacle insolite. Trois OVNI évoluent autour de celui-ci et ce, durant quatre heures !

Il était environ 19 h.30 lorsque Madame Roussel, employée au château et habitant à "La Chèvrerie", aperçoit soudain "une grosse étoile qui monte et descend dans le ciel en s'immobilisant par instant".

Dans le même temps, Mlle Marie-Lise Guilbaut, 13 ans, qui se trouve dans la cour du château voit, elle aussi, juste au-dessus de la grande allée centrale qui se prolonge dans la forêt, après le parc, une autre "grosse étoile" blanche, très brillante qui se dirige rapidement dans sa direction. Les formes de l'objet se précisent très vite; il se présente sous l'aspect d'un globe blanc éblouissant, entouré d'un disque qui change constamment de couleur,

étude de la C. E. OURANOS

passant alternativement du rouge au jaune, du vert au bleu, puis au blanc. Parvenu à l'orée de la forêt, l'objet s'immobilise. Ses dimensions apparentes sont celles de la pleine Lune.

Par une fenêtre du château, orientée à l'opposé de cette observation, la mère de la jeune fille, Mme Guilbaut, aperçoit quant à elle un troisième objet qui s'éloigne dans le ciel.

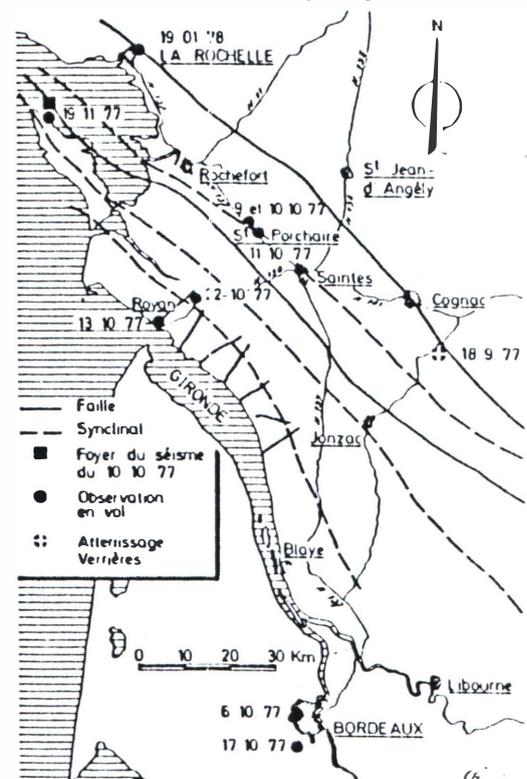
Les OVNI finissent par se regrouper à haute altitude et restent encore visibles jusqu'à 23 h. 30, puis disparaissent vers le Nord-Est.

Le lendemain, c'est-à-dire le 10 octobre 1977 à 19 h.30, les OVNI réapparaissent, mais cette fois ils sont au nombre de quatre, groupés et ayant l'apparence de grosses étoiles très brillantes. Ils entourent le château sans jamais se rapprocher puis s'éloignent, de nouveau, vers le Nord-Est.

Moins de huit heures après la fin de l'observation du dimanche 9 octobre, exactement à 7 h. 06 ce lundi 10, un bref grondement couvrit

le territoire des Charentes Maritimes durant quelques secondes. L'Institut de Géophysique de Strasbourg confirma qu'il s'agissait bien d'un tremblement de terre, de magnitude 4,5 sur l'échelle de Richter et dont l'épicentre se situait à environ 2 kms de la côte de l'île d'Oléron.

Par la suite, Monsieur René Samson, enquêteur de la Commission OURANOS, fait une constatation troublante. En reprenant toutes les observations d'OVNI qui se sont déroulées sur les Charentes Maritimes durant l'année 1977 et en pointant soigneusement celles-ci sur une carte géologique, il s'aperçoit que La Roche-Courbon est située sur le Synclinal compris entre deux failles géologiques.



Quelques jours auparavant, le 18 septembre, il y eut un atterrissage à Verrières, un petit village situé sur la faille de Cognac, et le 13 octobre une observation à Royan vient de nouveau se situer sur une faille géologique. Le 19 novembre, un OVNI de grandes dimensions est observé au-dessus de Saint-Denis d'Oléron. Cette observation s'aligne sur la faille Sud de l'épicentre des secousses sismiques. Au début de l'année 1978, le 19 janvier, un OVNI est encore observé dans le ciel de la Rochelle, juste sur la grande faille Nord.

Est-ce à dire qu'il existerait une relation de cause à effet entre les séismes et certains

phénomènes célestes assimilables aux OVNI ? Quelques membres de la C.E.O. se sont déjà penchés sur la question et, bien qu'il soit encore trop tôt pour en tirer une conclusion, on peut dire qu'il pourrait effectivement, à l'analyse des faits, exister une corrélation étroite entre certains séismes et des apparitions d'OVNI.

Des phénomènes célestes lumineux ont été vus par de nombreux témoins, avant, pendant et après des secousses sismiques.

Ainsi, lors du séisme d'Agadir (ville édiflée sur une faille géologique), plusieurs personnes virent en février 1960 une énorme boule lumineuse traversant le ciel de la ville, alors que la puissante secousse venait de tout anéantir sous une apocalypse de pierres. Cette boule semblait venir de la mer et les bulletins d'information de l'O.R.T.F. de l'époque signalèrent que "les témoins sortis de chez eux, au moment même de la secousse, auraient vu une grande lueur au large d'Agadir.

Fin novembre 1967, un OVNI survolait le Mont Konovi, ainsi que les villes de Pristina et Sofia, en Yougoslavie. Le survol de l'OVNI suivait la ligne de fracture dans l'axe N.O.S.E. des Balkans. Le 30 novembre 1967, à 8 h.24, un violent séisme se fait sentir dans la zone située par les villes de Debar, Tatovo, Skoplje, Pestkopija, Kicevo et Struca.

Au Nord-Est de l'Australie, une série de tremblements de terre fut enregistrée le 28 septembre 1969. Les secousses étaient accompagnées de nombreuses explosions et de mystérieuses lueurs vertes dans le ciel.

A deux reprises, au matin du 9 février 1971, la terre tremble dans le Sud de la Californie. Los Angeles et toute la banlieue furent fortement éprouvés lors de la première secousse. Lors de la seconde, qui eut lieu deux heures plus tard et qui toucha plus essentiellement la périphérie de la ville, de nombreux témoins oculaires rapportèrent la présence de plusieurs lueurs dans le ciel.

En 1930, un violent tremblement de terre secoue le Japon et plus de 1 500 personnes constatèrent la présence de "lueurs dans le ciel".

L'apparition de "boules lumineuses" et de "lueurs dans le ciel" a depuis longtemps été rapportée par des témoins au cours de séismes. Ce n'est qu'en recherchant parmi des milliers d'observations que l'on se rend compte de ces manifestations qui semblent être mises de côté par manque d'intérêt. Très peu d'organes d'information en ont diffusé les cas et dans

ces éventualités l'importance de leurs commentaires se trouve minimisée.

Charles Fort, dans son ouvrage "Le livre des Damnés", relate de nombreux cas de tremblements de terre en corrélation avec "de mystérieux météores lumineux. Ainsi:

— **Le 4 novembre 1732**: séismes en Suisse précédés par un "météore aveuglant".

— **Le 22 mai 1732**: en Souabe, "l'air fut traversé de brumes épaisses à travers lesquelles on apercevait une pâle lueur. Plusieurs jours avant la secousse, on avait vu des "globes de feu".

— **Le 7 juin 1779**: des secousses sismiques sont précédées de "globes lumineux" qui évoluent dans le ciel de Boulogne.

— **Le 9 novembre 1819**: le Canada et le Nord des U.S.A. sont survolés par des "lumières dans les nues" et suivies par la chute d'une matière noire après une secousse sismique.

— **Le 22 novembre 1821**: à Naples, un météore lumineux "suit la même trajectoire qu'une secousse tellurique".

— **En 1863**: phénomènes lumineux dans le ciel lors du tremblement de terre de Manille.

— **Les 12 et 13 février 1873**: séismes et "corps lumineux".

Dans les textes d'un fascicule déposé à la Bibliothèque de Marseille, en relatant le tremblement de terre du 20 mars 1812 survenu dans le Sud de la France, à Beaumont, un certain J.M. Robert fait état de phénomènes lumineux qui se sont manifestés plusieurs fois dans les communes voisines de cette localité. Le texte fait mention de "... phénomènes qui se sont manifestés notamment entre Manosque et Villeneuve d'Apert"; "phénomènes si effrayants que sept voyageurs qui étaient dans la voiture de Digne ont préféré s'arrêter à la mauvaise auberge des Quatre-Tours, plutôt que d'aller coucher à Manosque. A l'approche de la voiture, ce ballon lumineux qui voltigeait sur le chemin s'est divisé en quatre feux, et alors la vue des voyageurs s'est tellement troublée qu'ils ont cru voir danser autour d'eux quatre hommes enfermés dans une grande lanterne. A Ste-Tulle et à Manosque, une grande clarté ressemblant à une aurore boréale fut aperçue comme suspendue dans les airs, pendant quelques minutes".

Le texte parle également de faits qui se sont déroulés le 30 mars 1812 vers 8 heures du soir: "un grand météore lumineux fut visible depuis Marseille jusque Gap, mais à Beaumont, à Ste-Tulle, à Manosque et à St-

Michel, il affecta différentes directions et acquit l'apparence et l'éclat d'une vaste tour enflammée".

Au regard de tous ces faits, on constate indéniablement que des relations existent entre ces phénomènes et certains tremblements de terre. De ces quelques exemples de corrélations, nous pouvons, au moins, conclure ceci:

- 1) Nous constatons l'existence d'une simultanéité entre certains séismes et une catégorie particulière de phénomènes lumineux dont l'existence, étudiée de façon intermittente par quelques auteurs dispersés, a été reprise et étudiée par Charles Fort, mais ne semble jamais avoir été prise en considération par les scientifiques.
- 2) Ces "boules" ou "météores lumineux" survolent peu avant, ou peu après, les zones de fractures ou de failles géologiques.
- 3) Ces phénomènes lumineux ne sont signalés que dans certains cas de "secousses locales".

Haroun Tazieff parle également de phénomènes lumineux lors du tremblement de terre d'Idu (en 1930), dans son ouvrage "La Terre tremble", mais s'agit-il de phénomènes de même nature ?:

"Ce fut lors du séisme d'Idu que les phénomènes lumineux si souvent décrits par les témoins de grandes secousses furent observés par des scientifiques. Jusqu'alors, malgré l'abondance des témoignages, on doutait de la réalité de ces éclairs longs, de ces boules de feu, de ces raies irradiées, de ces faisceaux, de ces draperies aux teintes et aux intensités diverses".

Des recherches, effectuées notamment par des chercheurs japonais, ont pu mettre en évidence que des variations régionales du champ magnétique terrestre précédaient toujours les séismes. Les études sur la prévision de tremblements de terre ont confirmé l'apparition de puissants champs magnétiques lors de compressions internes intenses dans la zone hypocentrale. Ainsi, lors du séisme du lac de Kerkario au Japon (en 1938), les mesures magnétiques effectuées indiquèrent l'existence d'une très importante anomalie magnétique. Alors que des mesures étaient rééditées un an plus tard, l'anomalie n'apparaissait plus. Nous savons aussi que les OVNI engendrent des perturbations magnétiques sans doute liées à leur mode de propulsion. Existerait-il un lien entre certains mouvements tectoniques et certaines manifestations d'OVNI agissant en des endroits de failles géologiques ? Ou est-ce les mouvements tectoniques qui inquiètent les

occupants de ces engins ? Dans ce dernier cas, leur action est-elle de limiter les effets de ces mouvements telluriques ? Dans d'autres cas, l'énorme énergie produite par ces mouvements internes est-elle susceptible de provoquer un certain type de phénomènes naturels non encore identifiés ? Autant de questions qui mériteraient une étude attentionnée, car non

moins inquiétant est l'intensification et la succession des secousses sismiques depuis ces dernières années, le long de la ligne de fracture terrestre; intensification qui semble bien être en étroite corrélation avec des observations d'Objets Volants Non Identifiés.

Le Comité de la C.E. OUFANOS

601-0017

MARY KINGSLEY'S OBSERVATION

Thought you might be interested in this passage I came across in Mary Kingsley's Travels in West Africa (London, Virago Press, 1982 (from a turn-of-the-century original edition), p. 254. Ms. Kingsley was on an 1895 exploration at Lake Ncovi between the Ogowe and Rembwe rivers, then in the region of the Niger Protectorate and Gabon, when she went out at night alone to bathe and canoe on the lake waters. Then:

" ... I saw a strange thing happen. Down through the forest on the lake bank opposite came a violet ball the size of a small orange. When it reached the sand beach it hovered along it to and fro close to the ground. In a few minutes another ball of similarly colored light came towards it from behind one of the islets, and the two wavered to and fro over the beach, sometimes circling round each other. I made off toward them in the canoe, thinking -- as I still do -- they were some brand new kind of luminous insect. When I got onto their beach one of them went off into the bushes and the other away over the water. I followed in the canoe, for the water here is very deep and, when I almost thought I had got it, it went down into the water and I could see it glowing as it sunk until it vanished in the depths."

Later, on asking the natives in this very remote region, they explain it as an "Aku" -- a devil. There is no further explanation or discussion of the incident.

From Robert Coltman
Box 85
S. Chelmsford, MA 01824
via Dennis Stacy, Editor, MUFON Journal

EVENING DESPATCH

(Birmingham)

Monday, 12th February,
1923. Page 1/5.

THE DAILY MAIL

(London)

Tuesday, 13th February,
1923. Page 7/5.

**GHOST ON THE HILLS
OF WARWICKSHIRE.**

**Uncanny Light Terrifies the
Villagers.**

NIGHTLY APPEARANCES.

From Our Own Correspondent.

LLAMINGTON, Monday.

The villagers of Fenny Compton and Northend, near the Burton Hills, South Warwickshire, are growing increasingly uneasy in regard to a mysterious and ghostly appearance on the hills at night time.

First accounts of what was described by a shepherd as "a bright light wandering down the valley" were discredited, but the shepherd, William Neale, a man of strong character, persisted in his statement that he had seen the apparition "thousands of times."

Investigation proved that Neale was apparently right.

SCPTIC CONVINCED.

A party of men from Fenny Compton went to the hills one night and, according to Mr. George White, a former sceptic, they had a nerve-racking experience.

A strange and uncanny sensation crept over them as

a bright light hovered around—they could not tell from where—and an almost indescrivable form pursued a tortuous path down the valley near the old church as if looking for something.

Mr. White's cynicism was somewhat shaken by what he saw through his field glasses.

"The light was like that on a motor," he told me, "but it was so peculiar. It was so bright and yet there was a ghostly red-dy-blue patch on the top. Later there was a tinge of orange colour."

YOUTH TERRIFIED.

It appears, too, that the ghost haunts a wayside pool, and frightened a horse driven by a youth named Cotterill, who had taken a cab to Northend.

Cotterill's father told me that he had never seen his son so white and frightened and it had been impossible to induce him to go out after dark since.

The vicar of Burton Dassett, around whose house the spirit hovers, preserves a discreet silence on the subject.

DANCING "GHOST."

**RADIANT VILLAGE
SPECTRE.**

Two South Warwickshire villagers, Fenny Compton and Northend, have acquired a ghost. Just which village it belongs to does not seem to have been decided, nor is there any evidence of burning desire on the part of either village to lay claim to sole possession. Several people in each village would, as a matter of fact, be quite pleased to give it to the other.

The first person to see the vision was a shepherd. He declared that he had seen a figure of spectral light wandering down the valley. Various unkind remarks were made, and he was given to understand that, at all events in this respect, the truth was not in him.

He had his revenge a few nights later. A number of men were out on the hills together, and the apparition manifested itself once more, as a light that swayed and hovered round them. The shepherd received apologies.

The ghost appears to be very indefinite in shape, but all reports agree that it is clothed in light—"a dull, bluish flame floating off into the air," by one account. It is an active sort of spook, often appearing in a dozen different places in the same evening. It seems to delight in scaring women, for it is said to go and dance round any woman who is so rash as to walk across a meadow alone after dark.

There are, of course, the sceptics who declare that it is not a ghost at all, that it is nothing but marsh gas, that faintly luminous exhalation of carbonated hydrogen which sometimes rises from damp places, and gave rise to all the legends of the will of the wisp.

Thursday, 15th February,

1923. Page 7/1.

WILL-O'-THE-WISP.

PROBABLE EXPLANATION OF THE
PENNY COMPTON GHOST.

AN ANCIENT SPECTRE.

It is possible that the "ghost" of Penny Compton is a ghost indeed—for there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy; but the unemotional, unbiased reader will more willingly ascribe the phenomenon to some natural cause. "A bright light floating with weird movements above the Burton Dassett hills . . . a red-dy-blue light with a creepy complexion," say the reports, and there is nothing in the description to discredit the theory that the spook is our old friend will-o'-the-wisp, in one of his many fantastic guises. The alternative supposition is that there is a very substantial body somewhere behind the floating glow, and that a stout-hearted investigator with a horse-whip could soon dispel the mystery.

Will-o'-the-wisp—Jack-o'-lantern (*ignis fatuus*): by which of his names shall we know the sprit? For centuries he has led a double life, like a phosphorescent Jekyll and Hyde. He has run his course through the mythology and folklore and local superstition of every country since the year blank, while concurrently he has ambled sedately through the pages of scientific text-books, which have explained him away in the most delightfully incomprehensible language. As Jekyll, he is a respectable scientific fact; as Hyde, the terror and wonderment of the countryside in the Fens and elsewhere.

It is not surprising that Master Will has secured a firm grip on the superstitions of successive generations of yokels, for his is a sufficiently mystic acquaintance to make, on a lonely marsh track, 'twixt midnight and dawn. When one is suddenly confronted by a clut of ghostly incandescence dancing lazily on nothing, it may be very comforting, in theory, to say firmly to oneself, "This is a certain viscous substance reflecting light in the dark," but one's tongue is nevertheless apt to cleave to the roof of one's mouth just as though one were afraid!

The name *Ignis-Fatuus* was given to this strange manifestation of luminous gas "because it only fears (i.e., frightens) fools," says Blount in his "Antiquities." The old superstition, as employed by Milton in "L'Allegro," was that Jack-o'-lanterns loved to lead wayfarers astray in the dark, and mire them in marsh or ditch (compare Shakespeare, "The Tempest," Act IV., Scene I . . . "I'ayed Jack with us").

This mischievous trait is described in Drayton's "Nymphidia," in the lines:

" . . . of purpose to deceive us;
And, leading us, makes us to stray
Long winter night out of the way,
And when we stick in the mire or clay,
He doth with laughter leave us."

This is a more picturesque view than the cold scientific theory of "viscous substance" haunting churchyards, privies, and fens, because it is gotten out of fatness; it flies about rivers, hedges, etc., because in those places there is a certain flux of air.

Sailors are, or were, very superstitious on the subject of the *Ignis fatuus*. One such phenomenon playing around the rigging in stormy weather used to be an infallible indication of shipwreck, whereas two at a time were hailed with joy as a promise of calm in the near future.

The common hypothesis to-day is that Will-o'-the-wisp is the flame of burning marsh gas, but "Chambers' Encyclopaedia" ridicules this theory on the ground that marsh gas cannot ignite spontaneously. Another and more plausible suggestion is that phosphuretted hydrogen, which is spontaneously inflammable, may be produced by decaying animal matter in churchyards and swamps, but even here there are flaws in the reasoning just as there are in the argument for phosphorescent vapours. It may be assumed, indeed, that the phenomenon, though known to be due to natural causes, has never been satisfactorily explained, nor does there appear to be any limit to the variety of forms assumed by the *Ignis fatuus*. Sometimes we read of it as a lane of blue, red, green, or yellow, shimmering in a head position close to the ground; other reports tell of a ball of light bounding rapidly over the country and often rising high in the air. Again, the flame has been seen to divide into small parts, which described complicated movements like those of a waltz dance.

To the Editor of the "Birmingham Mail."

Sir,—I read with interest the account of the ghostly light seen at Penny Compton. I remember between fifty and sixty years ago, after a wet season, my father being at work at Cold Bath Cottage, Billesley Couanon, and sleeping there at that time, one night saw a light such as described in the vicinity of a rather large sheet of water known as Cold Bath Pool. Thinking it was the peachers or otherwise, he went towards the light, but as he approached it the light receded. There being no sign of human beings, he straightway came to the conclusion that it was what is commonly called a will-o'-the-wisp (or *ignis fatuus*). I believe he had seen a similar sight before in another part of the country. In my younger days I have often heard country people speak of them.—Yours, etc.,

157, Alcester Road, Moseley. C. HARRIS.

"SPOOK" STILL AT LARGE IN THE WARWICKSHIRE HILLS.

ELUSIVE HILL LIGHTS.

The "Ghost" Not Yet Laid.

MARSH GAS?

Possible Solution of the Mystery.

The "ghost" which haunts the hills of South Warwickshire has not yet been laid.

Many strange lights have made their appearance in the district, and suggested explanations are that they, like the ghost, are either due to phosphorus rising from the damp ground, or to marsh gas from which the Irish "will o' the wisp" springs.

From Our Own Correspondent.

JAMINGTON, Friday.
Dassett Hill, South Warwickshire, has this week been the goal of visitors from Birmingham and all parts of the Midlands, intent on seeing the now famous "ghost" which is stated to make nocturnal visitations at this unfrequented spot.

Whilst argument is against any theory that it is supernatural, all people in the immediate locality appear to believe in it.

According to all accounts, however, the "spook" gives no reason for the slightest fear.

Indeed, one visitor told me that he had become so enraptured with the vision that he intends to see it as many times as possible. "It fascinates me," he said.

The outstanding feature of the whole affair is the remarkable unanimity with which those to whom the light has been revealed, describe the apparition.

Like a Brilliant Headlight.

A Mr. White's version is typical. He says that it was like a brilliant headlight on a motor-car.

It flits about and through bushes, and skips over fences at great speed. Then with a final flash it disappears and knows not where.

A signman at Knightcote has also seen it.

The ghost appears to have a preference for haunting lonely paths and lanes in the vicinity of Fenny Compton.

Is It

Phosphorus?

That the ghost is the work of a practical joker is extremely improbable.

The more likely explanation is that it is due to phosphorus rising from the ground owing to the damp.

Many lights have made their appearance on the hills the last two nights.

In the meantime the apparition flits about and is extremely elusive when organised parties attempt to effect its capture.

That it is good for trade is testified by the proprietors of local hostelry who fortify visitors for their all-night vigils.

IN STAGNANT POOLS.

A SUGGESTED EXPLANATION OF THE PHENOMENON.

A "student of chemistry" writes to the "Evening Despatch":

The probable explanation of this phenomenon is certainly not accounted for by saying the light is caused by phosphorus—a element which is never under any condition found free in nature and which burns with a pale yellow flame, leaving behind as a product a cloud or coating of white particles.

More probably the cause is burning methane, or marsh gas, which is a product of rotting vegetable matter.

This assertion is lent more weight by the statement that the "ghost" prefers to haunt "stagnant pools and lonely lanes where vegetable decay might reasonably be expected to take place.

Will o' the

Wisp.

Methane burns with a pale lambent flame and is the gas which, when burning, forms the "will o' the wisp" in marshy districts of Ireland.

When burnt the products of the gas are entirely unnoticeable to the naked eye because one is an invisible gas and the other is water.

ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA COURIER
AND WARWICKSHIRE STANDARD.

Friday, 16th February,
1923. Page 5/5.

BURTON DABSETT "GHOST."

A PUZZLING PHENOMENON.

VILLAGERS' NARRATIVES.

A "ghost" has suddenly brought fame to Burton Dabsett hills.

A short time ago exclusive reference was made in the "Courier" to the fact that a mysterious light had made its appearance at this unfrequented spot, much to the alarm of milkmen and others. Sceptical comment was then made. This week, through considerable publicity in the Press, the "spectral form" has become the talk of Warwickshire, and, indeed, of all England.

While cool argument is against any theory of a supernatural visitation, all belief in the immediate locality would appear to be for it, and it would be idle to suggest that, despite the harmlessness of the apparition, there is not an uneasiness among certain villagers of Fenny Compton and Northend, some of whom I have known for many years.

A CHRISTMAS SPOOK.

It was just before Christmas that the light was first talked of, and, as may be imagined, it proved to be a reasonable topic for discussion at many firesides. I doubt, however, whether there would have been the same gaiety and laughter had it been known that on that night the "ghost" was walking the hills and afterwards vanished behind the old and historic church.

At that time the story was discredited, and Mr. William Neale, a milkman, who made the revelation, was regarded as one who indulged in "leg-pulling." I had kept in touch with him, and in musing on the improbability of the affair, came to the conclusion that he was a genuine humorist. But his story never changed, and his earnest face assumed a serious expression when he referred to the subject. "I have seen it thousands of times!" he declared the other day, and I know that he meant what he said. Mr. Neale is not a man of many words. Lately it has been interesting to watch him, in his quiet way, as one by one the sceptics have been converted, for it has now been established that this is not the imagining of a neurotic mind. In fact, the outstanding feature of the whole affair is the remarkable unanimity with which those to whom the light has been revealed have described the "ghost."

"A LOVELY SIGHT."

That told me by Mr. George White is typical. "I frankly did not believe a word of it," he says, "but out of sheer curiosity, in company with Messrs. W. Sheasby and E. Lovell, I paid a visit to the hills a few nights ago. It was about seven o'clock, and when we had been there a short time Mr. Sheasby said, 'There it is!' We turned round, and about 200 yards away was a strong and dazzling light like that of a motor head lamp. It was a perfectly lovely sight, and it held us fascinated. It flitted about and passed through bushes and over fences at a great speed; then, with a final flash, it disappeared, we know not where. We could feel it hover around, and it appeared to be looking for something, for the light swept the ground. I had my field glasses and was able to get a 'close-up' view. It was a kind of reddish-blue mixed, but beautifully blended. Later, when we saw it round Burton Dabsett Church, there was a tinge of orange colour. There was nothing whiter to be afraid of, and I have decided to go again, hoping to see it!" Mr. Sheasby says the same.

AT A WAYSIDE POOL.

Mr. W. Corbett, a signalman at Knightcote, has also seen the light approach his signal-box and then flit back to the hills. The "ghost" is reputed to haunt a wayside pool, and, according to Mr. Thomas Grubb, a carpenter, frightened a horse he and a youth named Harold Catterill were driving after delivering a coffin at Northend. Mr. Grubb shouted to the apparition, but it remained stationary and they drove past. Another dark spot, this time in Fenny Compton village, seems to have been honoured with a visit. Mr. H. Smith and Mr. P. Knight saw it flash across Dog Lane on Tuesday night last. It lit up the whole pathway.

The hills have this week been the Mecca of numerous visitors from all parts of Warwickshire; but according to various accounts their pilgrimage has not brought them much satisfaction, the situation having been buttressed by jokers plying flash-lights. That it is "good for trade," however, may be gathered from a glance at the provisions made at local hosteleries, where a week-end rush is anticipated.

PROBABLE EXPLANATION.

Naturally with such a strange phenomenon there are many conjectures and ideas as to its origin. That it is the work of a practical joker is extremely doubtful. The more probable explanation is that it is due to phosphorus arising from the ground through the abnormally damp season. Dartmoor is, of course, renowned for such lights. Those who have seen the Burton light discredit the assertion that it is a will-o'-the-wisp. It is so intensely bright. Amusing and fantastic theories come from some sources, and it has been suggested that it may be a message from Mars! Someone puts it down as being a phosphorescent owl—whatever that may be.

In the meantime, while comedians make jokes about the "Fenny Compton Ghost" and a London daily newspaper makes it the subject of insurance (1), the apparition flits about as freely as ever and is supremely illusive when strong-willed men organize parties for its capture.

R. T. K.

GAZETTE MAN'S NIGHT IN HILL "GHOST'S" HAUNTS!

TRACKING A WARWICKSHIRE VILLAGE "GHOST."

"Jenny Burn Tail," of Fenny Compton, Chased—but Escapes.

"LIKE A DULL YELLOW EYE—IT CAME FOR US."

"Like a dull, yellow eye it was, glowering at us, apparently, from beneath a nearby tree.

"There was a concerted rush to the spot, and through the mud and in the ditches we stumbled, determined to lay that ghost.

"But when we were at the foot of the tree and had flashed our electric torches on it, there was nothing at all except a derelict light circling at the side of the ruins we had just left."

From Our Special Correspondent.

FENNY COMPTON, Monday.
The moving light of the Burn Tail on Dassett Hills, South Warwickshire, still remains a mystery.

The deeper one goes into this intriguing problem—the more one sees of this fascinating, dancing glow—the more one is puzzled satisfactorily to account for it.

The ghostly light is there. There is no question about that, if ocular evidence is anything.

IN THE FARMHOUSE.

The picturesque villages of Fenny Compton, Avon Dassett, and North End contain at least a couple of hundred people who have seen it.

And I myself saw the light on several occasions on two nights—Saturday and Sunday.

I saw it at intervals during four hours on Saturday, and about half-a-dozen times during one hour of my all-night vigil on Sunday, when I was encamped in the ruined farmhouse around which the dancing light has been most frequently observed.

It is a globular glow of unusual brilliance, varying in size from a bright pin-point of light to a radiance which looks like a small Chinese lantern.

ELUSIVE.

Rarely has it been seen stationary: the majority of the observers have seen it as I saw it, moving hither and thither all over the hills, sometimes with great rapidity.

Its motion is undulatory, with sudden dives downwards, at which it generally disappears, to appear again perhaps five hundred yards away.

In its nighty dance on the hills the ghostly light has no definite orbit.

It moves either with or against or across the wind with almost equal facility.

On Saturday night, for instance, when the hills were being swept by half a gale, I saw it travelling dead against the wind at quite a good speed.

The height of the light above the ground being that most usual to it—anything from two to thirty feet.

GHOST'S "HOME."

Idyllic Surroundings Any Spectre Would Cherish.

Burton Dassett itself—the home of the ghost, judging from the fact that it has been seen there most frequently—is a lovely, picturesque hamlet set in the fold of the hills about 300 feet above the plain at whose edge Fenny Compton and North End lie.

Leaning grim and mysterious in the twilight hours, it consists merely of a pre-Norman church, its square tower standing stark against the sky, an old vicarage, two centuries-old farmhouses, one of them a battered ruin, overgrown with vegetation, and, near at hand, two small cottages.

QUAINT WINDMILL.

The church, the vicarage, and the two farmhouses stand in a rough triangle, with a pool, around which the weeping willows droop, in the middle.

All about are the undulating hills, dotted here and there with little cottages, and to the north seated with ironstone quarries.

On this side, incidentally, stand a derelict windmill, and a small round tower in shape like a Matello tower used, tradition has it, to signal by fire the coming of the Armada.

It is the kind of place where one would expect to find not one ghost, but twenty. It is the sort of place any ghost might be proud to haunt.

And yet its only spectral visitant is a dancing light, which, whatever its explanation, is certainly not supernatural in origin.

JENNY BURN TAIL.

To explain the light by natural means, however, is exceedingly difficult. The behaviour of the luminous spectre fits in with no theory so far advanced.

The most popular explanation is that the light is a kind of will of the wisp—Jenny Burn Tail is the local name—which is a phenomenon due to ethane or marsh gas.

But neither the appearance of the light nor its habits or habitat accord with this theory.

Whereas a will of the wisp is a faintly luminous haze in the surrounding darkness—a shapeless, shining patch in the blackness—the Burton Dassett ghost is a well-defined light, spherical in shape and without radiations.

It is brighter than any bicycle lamp, and glows with a dull yellow colour, tinged, when seen near at hand, with red. To liken it to a Chinese lantern describes it exactly.

Then, a will of the wisp is to be found in a marsh or a bog, and there are no marshes or bogs on the Burton Dassett Hills. There is mud in plenty: it is at least knee deep in places, as I well know.

WILD MOVEMENTS.

But once through the mud one's feet are on the solid rock of which the hills are formed.

Although Fenny Compton and North End could not be called marshy places, they are exceedingly damp and waterlogged.

And if I suggested, therefore, that the land about them may act as a huge protonator, the marsh gas protruding to the hills through fissures in the rocks.

But if that were so, one would naturally expect to find the light limited to definite areas to the points where the gas issues from the earth.

But, of course, the luminous spectre seems to take its will way anywhere and everywhere all over the hills.

Again, the Burton Dassett ghost can travel across the roads.

Several reliable witnesses say they have seen it crossing along the roads, like the headlight of a motor-car.

And it has been seen in a garden, in a field, and in a wood.

...the will of the wisp who will consent to be so unconventional. If it were not for the fact that a phosphorescent night-bird would need more phosphorus than it could carry to give out a brilliant and well-defined light—would need, in fact, to grow a several-watt-powered arc lamp out of its head—might lead an ear to those theorists who ascribe their faith to a luminous owl, a bird which has become luminous as a consequence of contact on breast and face with the phosphorescence due to decaying animal and vegetable matter which the bird's untidily leaves on the edge of its nest.

A LUMINOUS OWL.

A slightly phosphorescent owl was quite plainly seen in the bellry of Burton Church two years ago; the district is famous in owls; and an owl phosphorescent on face and breast would explain the sudden appearance and disappearance of the light.

A phosphorescent owl would also explain the erratic route of the ghostly light and the wide and free character of its wanderings.

Except on those rare occasions when the light has been seen stationary over a tree, a pool, well, the luminous owl was just passing.

In short, the case for a luminous owl or night-hawk is complete in every detail except one—no owl could give off so brilliant a light.

Why, then, would the phosphorescence last for his nightly appearances during a winter, the period during which the ghostly light has been seen?

AT 1 A.M.

Light Clears To Reveal the Mysterious Light.

...saying, however, with the theory of a luminous owl, some ghost-hunters, I found, and also a dog, went before dark on Sunday to a ruined farmhouse, and searched about among the grass-grown rooms and out-houses looking for a nest.

But the only finds were made by the dog, and, appropriately enough, perhaps, were rats.

When darkness fell, and the owl began to swoop from every covert, we took up positions of vantage on the walls of the ruined farmhouse.

Unfortunately, the night was exceptionally misty, and it was not until 1 a.m., when the mist had cleared somewhat, and, shivering with cold, we descried the light.

"IT'S COMING."

...we were facing the Edge Hills across the valley, and the light, well-defined and spherical, moved across our field of vision with its peculiar switchback motion from left to right, disappearing as suddenly as it had come.

A few moments later we saw it again, a persistent light, which seemed to be growing larger every second, moving, however, hardly at all.

"It's coming at us," gasped a nervous ghost-hunter, and come it did until, like a ball of yellow fire, it was glowing at us from beneath a nearby tree.

THE HUNTERS ADVANCE.

There was a concerted rush to the spot—the dog, the nervous ghost hunter and all. Through the mud and into ditches we tumbled, determined to lay that ghost. And when we were at the foot of the tree and had flashed our electric torches on it, there was nothing at all—nothing anywhere except a decisive light, circling at the side of the ruin we had just left.

After that we saw it again three or four times in every quarter of the compass and flitting in every direction.

Then the mist fell again, the rain began, and towards dawn a dissatisfied investigation party trudged back to the inn.

HODGE'S THEORY.

"A Bird That Dives Into Pools and Vanishes."

I have purposely refrained from speculating on the distance between myself and the light when I saw it, for the reason that on nights so pitchy dark it was impossible to discern anyone six paces away.

The estimates of the investigating party varied, when the light was a pinpoint, from two miles to 200 yards; when the light was a shining globe, from 50 to 200 yards.

The tree under which it appeared to be on Sunday night was about 80 yards distant from us by pacing.

On our way back to the inn, just as dawn was breaking, we met a farm labourer who, having been assured in response to his questioning that we really had spent the night on the hill ghost-hunting, looked at us pityingly and said in a dialect I won't attempt to reproduce:

"That ghost, I'll tell you what she is. It's a Jenny Burn Tail. What? You don't know what she is? She's a bird, with a light like a bicycle lamp on her tail, and she flies all along the ditches and dives into the pools and vanishes. That's what a Jenny Burn Tail is."

"But how does she manage to get under water?"

"Dang it, man, I ain't a Jenny Burn Tail, am I? I ain't never dived into no pool. So how should I know?"

Altogether, however, there is remarkably little supernaturalism among the people who dwell around these lonely hills.

COFFIN-MAKER'S CURSE.

Even Mr. Thomas Grubb, coffin-maker, of Fenny Compton, who saw the light on the Knightote-Fenny Compton road when taking a coffin for a burial, refuses to entertain the thought of ghosts. He mistook the light for the head-lamp of a motor-car, cursed it for taking up all the road—his expletive, he says, was "Blandyars," the South Warwickshire equivalent of goblins—and only began to wonder when it leaped over a hedge and a couple of fields off, disappeared.

No! There are many ghosts according to reports in Fenny Compton living in about half a dozen houses. But the mysterious light of the hills is too bright and cheerful-looking, too active in its gay, irresponsible way to induce credence.

All efforts having so far failed satisfactorily to explain the light, a movement is now afoot in Fenny Compton for taking guns and setting a trap.

The movers before leaving that they may receive a charge of buckshot every time they light their pipes while watching on the hills, are bravely endeavouring to do up the gunning party.

Will-o'-the-wisp

A A Mills

... a wand'ring fire
 Compact of unctuous vapour, which the night
 Condenses, and the cold environs round
 Kindled through agitation to a flame,
 Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends,
 Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
 Misleads th'amaz'd night-wanderer from his way,
 To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool,
 There swallow'd up and lost, from succour far . . .

(*Paradise Lost*, John Milton)

Nowadays, a will-o'-the-wisp is but a metaphor applied to any ephemeral thing likely to mislead the unwary. But in past centuries it seems to have been a definite optical phenomenon—a luminous glow—known to travellers throughout Europe and North America who were obliged to cross marshy land at night. It has many alternative names—*Ignis Fatuus*, Jack-o'-Lantern, Corpse Candle, *Irrlichtern*, *Feux-Follets*, *El-Fire* etc—indicative of a wide geographical occurrence.

The origin of the will-o'-the-wisp attracted considerable scientific debate in the 19th century, but no specimen has ever been 'captured' for laboratory study. Hence, with no satisfactory proof or explanation of the glow, it is not surprising that some have asserted that it was no more than a figment of the popular imagination. Is this true—or could the phenomenon (like so many 'peasants' tales') have a foundation in fact? Have the drainage and land reclamation schemes by which so many bogs have disappeared led to the extinction of the will-o'-the-wisp, or does it still shine forth on rare occasions in some lonely marsh?

Before we can begin to answer these questions we must attempt to define the object of our search more closely. A standard technique in enigmatic matters of this nature is to collect and collate eyewitness reports, and then examine them for common features. There is no lack of such reports in the

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older issues of scientific journals, and many more must be buried in the 'Letters to the Editor' sections of the popular press.

Newton was one of the first scientists to mention the will-o'-the-wisp. He certainly had no doubts as to its reality, for when discussing the various ways in which light may be generated he refers to 'the Vapours arising from purely'd Waters, usually called *Ignes Fatui*' as examples of 'Vapours shining without heat'. Like Milton, Newton would have been familiar with the Cambridge-shire fens, and an association between the will-o'-the-wisp and marshy places where vegetable matter is decomposing under anaerobic conditions is easily the most common characteristic in all accounts of the phenomenon. Actual descriptions and 'explanations' of the light seem to fall into three main classes—bioluminescence, chemiluminescence and combustion.

Bioluminescence

The glow-worm and firefly are common in many parts of the world, so it is inevitable that lights over marshy areas—obvious breeding grounds for all kinds of flying pests—should be associated by many people with luminous insects.¹ However, William Derham found long ago that this was not the explanation. He gives us an entertaining account² of how he got near to an *ignis fatuus* and examined it for himself. 'Seeing one', he says, 'in a calm dark Night, with gentle Approaches I got up by Degrees within two or three yards of it, and viewed it with all the care I possibly could. I found it frisking about a dead Thistle growing in the Field, until a small portion of the Air (even such as was caused by the Approximation of my self) made it skip to another Place, and thence to another and another'. The light appeared like a 'fired vapour' and did not consist of a large

number of smaller lights such as would have been caused by a group of luminous insects.

Derham's conclusion is corroborated by the fact that no brightly luminous flying insect is known in Britain. The female of the species *Lampyrus noctiluca* glows brightly but does not fly, its grub-like form being responsible for its popular name of glow-worm. The male flies strongly in response to the signalling female, but is so dimly luminescent that it cannot be seen when on the wing.⁴

Chemiluminescence

It is well known that certain purely chemical reactions, although proceeding at ambient temperature, are accompanied by the emission of light. They are frequently oxidations, one of the brightest being familiar to chemists as the 'luminol reaction'.⁵

Most accounts of the will-o'-the-wisp, including Newton's example, seem to fall into this category of light without heat. Derham³ includes a letter from Dr Beccari of Bologna, to whom he had written concerning these mysterious appearances. The latter assures us that the lights were pretty common in his part of 18th century Italy:

'... all of them resembling, both in colour and light, a flame strong enough to reflect a lustre upon neighbouring objects all round. They are continually in motion; but this motion is various and uncertain. Sometimes they disappear of a sudden, and appear again in an instant in some other place. Commonly they keep hovering about six foot from the ground. As they differ in largeness, so do they in figure, spreading sometimes pretty wide, and then again contracting themselves. Sometimes breaking to all appearances into two, and a very little while after uniting again into one body; sometimes floating like waves, and letting drop some parts, like sparks out of a fire . . .'

A remarkable series of papers appearing in Poggendorf's *Annalen der Physik und Chemie* between 1838 and 1859⁶⁻¹⁰ was stimulated by an account from the well known astronomer and mathematician F. W. Bessel.⁶ He recounts his observations, which were made from a skiff on a stream flowing through a peat bog, as follows:

'These appearances were observed by me on Dec. 2, 1807, early in the morning, on a very dark and calm night during which, from time to time, a gentle rain fell. They consisted of numerous little flames which appeared over ground which was covered

'motion'?

in many places with standing water and which, after they had glowed for a time, disappeared. The colour of these flames was somewhat bluish, similar to the flame of the impure hydrogen which is prepared by the action of dilute sulphuric acid on iron. Their luminosity must have been insignificant, since I could not observe that the ground under one of them was illuminated nor that the great numbers of them which frequently appeared at the same time produced a noticeable brightness . . . The flames frequently remained quiet in one position, and at other times they moved about horizontally. When motion occurred, numerous groups of the flames seemed to move together . . .

The phenomena reported by Galle⁸ and by Loeff¹⁰ appear to be of a similar nature. The latter writes:

The valley of the Fulda was covered by a heavy white fog, and a strong mouldy-smelling vapour filled the air. Suddenly, I saw a little flame scarcely two steps from me at the side of the road. I thought I must be deceived, but the moon was shining brightly and I was broad awake. To satisfy myself I started towards the light, but when scarcely a foot distant it disappeared. But not a second had passed until I saw another, then a second, three, four, others. All the little flames remained quiet in one place and neither leaped nor danced. I observed that if the lights were not to disappear I must approach them very quietly, taking care not to set the air about them in motion. When I was very careful, I was often so fortunate as to bend over the little flames and observe their colour and form at a distance of not more than a foot and a half. They were little flames of the size of a hen's egg, and they stood very quietly between the blades of grass. They were mostly of a greenish-white light, and were fairly bright. I was able to seize some of them in my hand, but no heat was to be detected. If I waved a finger near them they disappeared at once. A single flame seldom lasted longer than a minute and a half . . .

Another very detailed examination of a will-o'-the-wisp is that reported by E. Knorr, professor of physics at Kiev.⁹ The professor observed his specimen one night by the roadside, where a bridge crossed a swampy stream: 'Bushes, rushes and grass were lit up so brightly by the light that for some time I gazed at the lovely picture entranced.' But soon he proceeded to investigate in an exemplary manner. He advanced as far as he was able, but when he could feel no bottom to the marsh with his short stick he lay down flat and tried to remove the reeds in front of him so as to get as good a view of the light as possible. In the end the will-o'-the-wisp was only about eight inches out of reach, but Knorr was not able to see its extreme bottom owing to part of a rush which he had been unable to remove. The visible portion of the light appeared as a flame about five inches in height, and between an inch and a quarter and an inch and a half in breadth. Its shape was cylindrical. In the centre the colour was yellow, but towards the sides and top it appeared bright violet and then disappeared against the dark background without



An *Ignis Fatuus* that bewitches
And leads Men into Pools and Ditches. . . (*Hudibras*, Samuel Butler).
Engraving from the Mansell Collection.

showing a sharp outline.

The air was motionless at the time and the flame burned steadily, standing quietly amongst the leaves of the marsh grass. It moved backwards and forwards a little when Knorr took out his handkerchief and waved it vigorously to make a draught. When he took his walking stick and passed it rapidly right through the flame there was also a little quivering. The end of this stick was covered with a brass ferrule, and he held this in the will-o'-the-wisp for 15 minutes without it becoming appreciably warm, showing that there was no flame in the ordinary sense of the word. There seems to have been no noticeable odour or smoke. After trying everything possible, Knorr was finally obliged to leave the light. Circumstances prevented his return to the spot.

Combustion

Although the term 'flame' is used in many accounts it is clear that it is no ordinary combustion flame, and I have located only one report where the writer claims to have succeeded in igniting material from what he, at least, terms a will-o'-the-wisp. This is by L. Blesson, a Major of Engineers in Berlin. He states¹¹ that he first saw the phenomenon in a marshy area of the Forest of Gorbitz, where standing ferruginous water was covered by an iridescent film:

'... during the day bubbles were seen rising from it, and in the night blue flames

were observed shooting from and playing over its surface . . . One day, in the twilight, I went to the place and awaited the approach of night. The flames gradually became visible, showing that they burnt also during the day. I approached nearer, and they retired. Convinced that they would return again to the place of their origin when the agitation of the air ceased, I remained stationary and motionless, and observed them gradually approach. As I could easily reach them it occurred to me to attempt to light paper from them. For some time I did not succeed in this experiment, which I found was owing to my breathing. I therefore held my face from the flame, and also interposed a piece of cloth as a screen. On doing this I was able to singe paper, which became brown-coloured and covered with viscous moisture. I next used a narrow slip of paper, and enjoyed the pleasure of seeing it take fire . . .

General description

From the above extracts and other reviews¹²⁻¹⁵ it does seem that the will-o'-the-wisp was a real phenomenon, once widely known throughout Europe and North America. It was always associated with standing stagnant water in very wet marshes and peat bogs. On still, dark, warm nights it might appear as a glowing, almost flame-like volume of gas an inch or more across, but with no very definite boundary. The colour of the light was generally described as bluish, but could be more yellow and luminous towards the centre. It was not normally hot enough to produce any perceptible warmth, much less cause ignition.

The phenomenon was usually noticed

low down near the water surface, and could attain sufficient intensity to illuminate nearby vegetation. It was very susceptible to the slightest air currents, being readily extinguished. Multiple occurrences were usual, and the often-quoted idea of a single flame dancing from one place to another could simply be an optical illusion resulting from sequential activity.

It is inevitable that a number of other luminous phenomena will from time to time have been wrongly identified as will-o'-the-wisps. We can now say that—whatever it is—it is *not*:

St Elmo's fire. In the laboratory, a bluish electrical corona discharge appears on pointed ends and projections of conducting objects placed in a strong electrostatic field at atmospheric pressure. In nature, the corresponding glow has been known to be generated on a ship's mast, soldiers' spears—and even the heads of men—by the proximity of a highly charged storm cloud.

Ball lightning. This equally poorly understood phenomenon would be better termed a 'lightning ball', for it appears as a metastable floating luminous globe generated on rare occasions by a stroke of ordinary lightning.¹⁶ The object reported by Filopanti¹⁷ as a will-o'-the-wisp, and from which he succeeded in igniting some tow, seems more likely to have been ball lightning.

Exhalation of natural gas. Petroleum is normally accompanied by large volumes of associated natural gas. Deposits of gas not clearly associated with oil are also known, as is the evolution of methane (firedamp) from coal seams. Faults in the enclosing rock may allow a current of gas to reach the surface—accidental ignition may then give rise to shrines containing 'everlasting flames', as at Baku. A lower, more intermittent rate of discharge and accumulation would obviously lend itself to occasional deliberate firing to amaze the tourist!

Luminous owls. Perhaps luminous owls should also be mentioned at this point! Reports of these crop up from time to time,¹⁸ usually with the suggestion that the luminosity is due to contamination of the bird's feathers with particles of rotting wood (derived from its roosting place) rendered luminous by a fungus—the familiar 'fox-fire'. Conceivably the silent swooping flight of such a bird out hunting at night could be responsible for some otherwise inexplicable sightings attributed to the will-o'-the-wisp.

Some possible explanations

Explanations of the will-o'-the-wisp have been as numerous as they are unsatisfactory.

The idea of luminous flying insects has already been mentioned, and found wanting. A favourite correlation is with

the marsh gas which can be seen to bubble to the surface when the mud of almost any stagnant pool is agitated with a stick. This gas consists of approximately two thirds methane and one third carbon dioxide, and results from the breakdown of cellulose, proteins and fats by anaerobic bacteria.¹⁹ Methane can be synthesised by simple chemical methods in the laboratory, and shown to be lighter than air and to burn with a pale blue flame (with a yellow luminous core if of any appreciable size and un-aerated). Dislodged accumulations of marsh gas can indeed be ignited at the surface of the pool with a match, when they burn with a brief flame.

To explain the will-o'-the-wisp in this manner a major problem is how to achieve natural ignition of intermittent, disconnected bubbles of gas rising through the marsh. Successive authors of textbooks of inorganic chemistry have passed on a notion (originally due to Volta) that spontaneous ignition of marsh gas could result from the presence of phosphine (PH_3 —the phosphorus analogue of ammonia) as an occasional impurity. It is well known—from an experiment which is more often talked about than repeated!—that when this gas is made by heating white phosphorus with sodium hydroxide solution, each bubble ignites spontaneously with a bright flash and the production of a white smoke of metaphosphoric acid, occasionally as a vortex ring.¹⁹

Over the years, several workers have claimed²⁰⁻²⁴ that a volatile compound of phosphorus, assumed to be phosphine, is present in the gases evolved from waterlogged soils and the putrefaction of proteinaceous material containing bones and similar phosphates. Nevertheless, the possibility of such an extreme reduction has been challenged on thermodynamic grounds.²⁵

More recently, vapour phase chromatography has failed to detect even parts per million traces of phosphine. In the gases evolved from soil/phosphate mixtures incubated anaerobically in the laboratory.²⁶ The discrepancy is disconcerting: could some other volatile compound of phosphorus be involved?

However, as long ago as 1844, Thenard proved that the spontaneous inflammability of phosphine prepared in the above manner is due to contamination by a small amount of the higher hydride P_2H_4 ; pure phosphine is *not* self-igniting. In any case, ignition of bubbles of marsh gas—spontaneously or otherwise—would give a hot flame of short duration, which is not in accordance with most of the evidence concerning the will-o'-the-wisp.

The chemiluminescent oxidation of some volatile substance entrained in

the methane would appear the most plausible hypothesis. I have found that injecting crude phosphine (containing P_2H_4) into a current of natural gas at a level insufficient to cause ignition produced a bright green luminescent 'flame', but there was plenty of smoke and a characteristic smell—the colour was wrong too! Could phosphine and phosphorus compounds be a false trail? Clark suggested organometallic compounds,¹³ but many of these would be expected to be toxic to microorganisms.

Perhaps a better clue is given by the related 'cool flames'²⁷—the subject of some little known research by the famous organic chemist W. H. Perkin.²⁸ He found that when a combustible mixture of ether vapour and air was maintained at 260°C—a temperature just below its ignition point—a feebly luminous, bluish flame was produced. I have repeated this experiment, and can confirm that the large, lambent blue 'flame' (quite distinct from the usual brightly luminous yellow flame of ether burning in a dish) was quite cool. It would not ignite paper, and fingers could be passed through it with impunity. Now carbon disulphide exhibits the same phenomenon at around 200°C,²⁸ so perhaps some volatile, unstable, organic compound formed by anaerobic fermentation could undergo this form of chemiluminescent aerial oxidation at ambient temperatures. Ironically, a laboratory simulation proposed for ball lightning²⁹ falls into this 'cool flame' category, and seems to fit the will-o'-the-wisp rather better!

Research

There are two ways by which the existence and constitution of the will-o'-the-wisp might be resolved: by investigation of the spectrum and/or analysis of the natural phenomenon itself, or by the generation of samples of luminous biogas in the laboratory.

I have made a preliminary attempt at the latter by filling a one gallon glass bottle with an aqueous suspension of peat, garden soil and well-rotted compost, and incubating the mixture at 25–30°C in a dark place. A delivery tube was arranged to dip under water in a trough, and after some days 'marsh gas' could be seen bubbling off. It could be collected in jars and tubes by the displacement of water, and burnt with a pale blue flame when ignited. After 14 days a blended mixture containing bone meal, diammonium hydrogen phosphate, egg, dried milk and whole fish was added to the bottle. The evolution of gas was soon augmented, but (although repulsively odoriferous) it never displayed the slightest luminosity when allowed to come in contact with air, either bubble-by-bubble or in volume.

However, negative results can never be entirely conclusive—one might have missed some essential constituent—so it is desirable to investigate the natural phenomenon. And this is where readers of this journal come in. Is the will-o'-the-wisp truly extinct, or does anyone know of a locality where it may still be seen?

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—With so many more important matters clamouring for a hearing, I am almost ashamed to ask you to find room again for my luminous owl. But if, before the fatal 20th shuts off all hope, you can find a corner for it, the following extract from a letter written by a Wells man will, I think, interest many of your readers.

That an unusual roaring light has been noticed, and that almost as certainly it is conveyed by a bird, is, I think, now proved beyond question. Not only has it been seen again by my first correspondent, but also later by a policeman on his night round, and, as I learn this morning, also seen by the wife and daughter of the squire in one of whose cow-houses the bird has apparently his home.

"On December 12 several of us Eschermen (writes one of them) were standing on Wells-bar between 2 o'clock and 3. It was a very dark morning. About 4 we were all surprised to find something blowing about just like h-b-s fire. Our mittens and the edges of our coat-waistcoats were soon full; it hung to them like cobwebs, and some parts of it were very bright. I thought you would like to know about this, as it would be about the same time the luminous owl was seen, and I do not see why it should not hang on a bird's feathers as well as it did on us. There were about ten of us, so I do not think we were deceived in what we saw."

I may mention, perhaps, that the letter you were good enough to publish had been reprinted in more than one local paper.

"In a curious book entitled 'A Wonderful History of All the Storms, Hurricanes, Earthquakes, &c.' (3vo, London, 1701), occurs [writes the late Sir Henry Ellis, Principal Librarian of the British Museum] the following account of 'flames that appear upon the hairs of men and beasts: their cause.' These are sometimes clammy exhalations scattered in the air in small parts, which, in the night, by the resistance of the cold, are kindled by cleaving to horses' ears and men's hats and shoulders, riding or walking; and that they cleave to hair or garments it is by the same reason that dew cleaves to them, they being dry and attractive, and so more proper to receive them."

"Walking fire,
Compact of motes and vapour, which the night
Condenses, and the cold sereneous round."
may not, since Milton's days, have so completely disappeared from well-drained England as some of us had supposed. Your obedient servant,
Sberingham, Dec. 24. T. DIGBY FIGOTT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Will you allow me to add a little to Sir Digby Figott's account of the luminous owl, which was published in *The Times Weekly Edition* of December 20?

I first observed this phenomenon in Shropshire, one evening in February, 1892, and when I mentioned it in school next day I found that several of the children knew of it, and said at once that it was a "glimmer" (a broad, as in "full"). The derivation is obvious, and teachers in other parts of Shropshire have told me that their pupils knew both the term and the thing.

A pair of these birds, *Strix flammea*, lived in the buildings at a farm about a hundred yards from the school, and I watched them carefully. I saw the luminosity several times, but it was not so bright as Sir Digby Figott's correspondent observed, and usually lasted only for a short time, though I could see the birds flying about after the luminous gleam had ceased. I never saw both birds luminous at the same time, and I am unable to say whether the male or female, or both, possessed this power. I went to their lair in the barn several times while one was exhibiting its beautiful gleam, thinking to find out which of the pair possessed the attraction; but invariably found both birds absent. I have seen both birds leave the barn in the evening, one luminous, and the other showing no gleam.

I thought the luminosity might be connected with the electrical condition of the atmosphere, but though it was usually brightest and lasted longest when the electrical potential of the atmosphere was highest, it was not always so. It sometimes happened that neither of the birds was luminous when the air was highly charged with electricity. Nor did the luminosity appear to be connected with the hygrometric state of the air; it appeared indifferently in moist or dry air.

I could observe nothing to indicate that the luminosity was under the control of the owl. It appeared to issue from its breast, and the under sides of its wings and feet. It always appeared when the birds were in poor condition, and not at other times. I ascertained this by visiting their lair about midday, after a luminous exhibition of the previous evening. I visited them so often in this way that, after a time, they took very little notice of me.

When the owl is flying low, e.g., while searching the hedge-side in a country lane, this gleam is not visible; but as it rises suddenly to go over the hedge it exhibits it beautifully, and it is then rather trying to the nerves of horse and their driver. I have often been startled in this way.

I have never seen a human luminous, though I have been told of it by gamekeepers, poachers, and others who have seen it. I once thought I perceived it in a human form watching me as I was fishing in the canal one evening, but the gleam came from a hedgehog which was gliding across the canal, and was not reflected by its spines and hair.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
A COUNTRY TEACHER.

"The Times" (LONDON)

December 26, 1907

January 14, 1908

LUMINOUS BIRDS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The curious phenomenon of a luminous bird described by Sir Digby Figott lately in your columns will, I hope, yet obtain explanation from observers of natural history. Such an appearance, though it was spoken of as "the boggle," and a good deal of "joking and boozing" was mixed up with it, is known to have occurred in 1886 between March and October, and in the autumn of 1889, at Graystoke and at Skelton. The keeper at Graystoke believes that it was the work of poachers who had tied a bull's-eye lantern to a scotter's collar. It moved very quickly and appears to have leapt over hedges, and is described by some as "a dazzling light as large as a table lamp."

When seen at Skelton the light appeared to move in undulating curves, and not only went over hedges, but soared above the top of a fir plantation. My informant, who went out to see it two or three times, could never get near it, but is certain it was not a scotter with a bull's-eye lantern, and thinks it was a bird. Its movement, he says, was exactly like the flight of a bird.

Another informant writes me that at the end of September, 1900, the keeper at Horby-hall was approaching his horse after dark, when what he took to be a nightjar flew towards him from over a wall, and as it swerved from him it distinctly emitted a flash of light from under its wing. He described it as like the flash of reflected sunlight seen when a lapwing wheels.

One much wishes for more light upon this matter.
Yours truly,
H. D. RAWNSLEY.
It may interest your readers to know that a male "warbling" in fine plumage was found dead in the Keewick railway on New Year's Eve.

Graystoke & Skelton, Cumberland.

A LUMINOUS OWL?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—In the hope that, perhaps, if you can find room for it, some of your readers may be able to throw light on a strange story, I venture to send you one which I have received from a correspondent—a sportsman and field naturalist—whose statement of what he saw may be accepted with confidence.

My first impression on reading his letter was that a "Will o' the wisp," not probably uncommon in the neighbourhood, until exorcised by drain pipes, had wandered back to its old haunts, and that the writer had been privileged to catch sight of the lantern.

"Dancing in murky light o'er fen and lake
In his bewitched, low, marshy willow brake."

But disappearance when disturbed into a neighbouring cover and later reappearance when the place is quiet again is more in accordance with the ways of a bird than with what is recorded of the doings of such uncanny lights.

It was an old belief that the common heron, like the salmon poachers in "Guy Mannering," shows on occasions a light to attract fish within range of its spear; and Bishop Stanley writes that "there is a very extraordinary light said to be visible on the breast of a species of American bittern."

I am not aware of any record of other birds gifted in the same way. Is it possible that some tradition of the kind may be embodied in the distinctive name of the common barn owl, *Strix flammula*?

The scene of the story, which must be told in my correspondent's own words, is in North Norfolk. In the interests of a probably feathered hero, I strike out more exact local references.

"Last Sunday evening" (December 1), "I had," he writes, "gone to post some letters about 7.45 p.m., the evening being dark and calm, with slight fog. I saw what I at first took to be the lamp of a motor-cycle proceeding rapidly on the — road, about half a mile to the south, when it suddenly stopped, rose some yards into the air, and returned apparently several hundred yards, and again stopped and rose higher into the air. I called the attention of some passers-by to it, but the countrymen merely said it 'looked funny,' and they had never seen anything like it.

"My groom's cottage being only a few minutes' walk, I called him out with his wife, and we looked at the dull lamp pursuing its aerial evolutions. Soon after I met my son, and, getting the services of a man, we crossed over to a parallel road to get a better view. Stopped by a gate, we had a splendid opportunity of watching it. Once it crossed the field in our direction to within about 200 yards of us, when it turned back and disappeared in a meadow by the stream. Negotiating a nasty fence into the meadow, we disturbed it and it rapidly flew and disappeared into Mr. —'s plantation. About 10.30 I went again into the lane, and after waiting some time the bird (for such it certainly was) emerged from the wood and pursued the same tactics. It then alighted on the ploughed field, but rose after a few seconds, and, after flying round it, again alighted on the other side of the field, about 150 yards from where I was standing.

"It remained more than five minutes, during which time it passed twice across the field of my belt-glasses, or rather the glasses passed across it, only to magnify what looked like a large lamp surrounded with mist. The light suddenly disappeared, and I saw it no more.

"I am quite convinced it was an owl."
Your obedient servant,
Sberingham, Dec. 7. T. DIGBY FIGOTT.

LUMINOUS OWLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—The appearance of a luminous night bird in North Norfolk, which you were good enough to allow me to chronicle in *The Times* has attracted so much attention and given rise to so many questionings that, if you can, before finally dismissing the matter, find space to allow me to add a few words to what I have already written, I shall be much indebted to you.

I have this afternoon returned from a two days' visit to the gentleman on whose property the birds (there are two) have made themselves at home. Though not fortunate enough, as I had hoped, to see them myself, I have personally interviewed ten trustworthy witnesses of the many who have been more favoured, including, among others, the wife, daughter, and son of my host, the last an officer who served in the South African war, his bailiff, a policeman, the village schoolmaster, and the clerk and porter at the railway station.

I cannot expect you to spare room for the details of the stories they have to tell, interesting though they would be to every one who cares for natural history, and will only say that, unless evidence, one-half of which would be considered by any Court of law sufficient to hang a man, is to be entirely ignored, there can be no doubt that a pair of birds carrying a yellowish light, so strong as to have been when first noticed mistaken by two men at different places for bicycle lamps, have during the last few weeks been seen by some one (often by many people at once) almost every night hawking, like barn owls, along the hedge rows on brook side, resting for five or ten minutes at a time on a gate or trees, and every now and then swooping on to the ground.

A swoop a few nights ago was, the schoolmaster told me, in his hearing followed immediately by what he believed to be the squeal of a young rat.

Perhaps the most interesting story of all was that told by the farm bailiff, who assured me that when one of the birds, which he had been watching for some time as it hunted round a wheat stack on a very dark night, flew off and lit on a tree, which he pointed out to me, on the other side of the field, the light it gave out was so strong that he could see distinctly the outlines of the branches round it.

I confine myself to a repetition of the facts as told to me, and do not attempt to offer any explanation. But to no one who has puzzled over the phosphorescent trail of such small creatures as centipedes on a damp autumn evening, or read in the reports of the Challenger expedition or elsewhere of the wonderful light-carrying contrivances of many deep sea fishes, will the phenomenon appear either impossible or unnatural.

If the use or purpose is asked, none who as boys have caught sparrows with a bull's eye lantern or watched the startled amazement which for a moment paralyses a dormouse if a match is struck suddenly and held to the cage, will have any difficulty in finding a possible answer.

If, as your correspondent "A Shropshire Teacher" believes, the light is brightest when the bird is in a poor condition, one might be tempted to fancy that nature, red in tooth and claw, may have her softer moments and be ready at times to step down from the iron pedestal from which she watches with impartial eye the struggle for existence, to lend a hand to help the lame dog over the stile.

From stories which have reached me since "luminous owls" became the talk of the neighbourhood I am inclined to think lights of the kind may be less rare than has been supposed, and that, but for the fear of ridicule, we might oftener hear of them.

I should like to repeat some of the strange tales told me, but have already, I am afraid, put a dangerous strain on your patience.

Your obedient servant,
Sberingham, Jan. 7. T. DIGBY FIGOTT.

EASTERN DAILY PRESS (Norwich),

JANUARY 16, 1908

THE LUMINOUS OWL. BIRD SHOT IN THE DARK AT WEST BILNEY. GAMEKEEPERS STORY.

To the Editor.
Sir—I have read of the luminous owl. I saw one of them in West Norfolk when I was a gamekeeper at West Bilney Hall for a gentleman by the name of Denton. I was out one very dark night chopping up fox earths. While I was so engaged I saw a very bright blue light pass close by my face, and was very much startled as I saw it going away from me. But, having been a shooter I must of my life, I did not pay much regard to it. I put it down as some insect.

A few nights afterwards I was again in the same wood, known as the High Plantation, and saw the same light again some distance from me. For several nights I visited the wood with my gun, and at last I saw the light skimming over the ground. I waited till it came within a few yards of me, and then fired at the light. It being dark, you may fancy my surprise when I found a poor old, half-starved barn owl dead on the ground. I thought he had been gathering glow worms, as it was getting late in the winter, but I have seen a great many owls since then, but I never saw one before give out any light.—Your humble servant

FRED BOLFE.
Hoe, East Dereham, January 14th.

To the Editor.
Sir—On Christmas Eve, 1902, at twelve o'clock p.m., my father went to visit some traps, which were set in a field called the Farther M Acres, a narrow field about 5 or 8 hundred yards long, running from the Dawson Road to a back lane. The next morning he told me that he had seen a light, as if from a lantern, which came along the back lane at the top of the field, then straight down the field to within a short distance of where he stood. It then went across the field several times from side to side, until it reached the back lane, quartering the land, then down the lane into a plantation which is called "Frog's Hall." At the time we laughed at him, and told him of the spirits which were likely to be about on Christmas Eve, but after all, he perhaps saw that which, although uncommon, was real.—Believe me, yours faithfully,
B. B. RAPWELL.
Barkness, Aylsham, 14th January.

To the Editor.
Sir—Before the luminous owl is snuffed out, and its history added to the Hon. Rothschild's great work on "Extinct Birds," I'd like to say a few more words on the subject, and, in brief, review the situation as the arguments put forward by the pro-owls who, rightly or wrongly, look upon me as the Norfolk Dinosaur—the chief of the anti-owl rebels.

So far, the evidence has not, I assert, been sufficient to hang a man, and I say this with all humility, as he comes a plebeian, and a poor attendant-officer, who ought to be submissive, and open his mouth (shutting his eyes), to spoon down all the trash and phosphorescence his betters choose to fill him with. I am not built that way. And all this fuss seems to have been about one (maybe two) mythical something, "which must be a bird!" and "if a bird—an owl"—a thing which gallops, according to "H.S.M. (Have I seen M. Herd?), at about twenty miles an hour." Why, then, was it arrested for excessive speed? Yet my plea for a whole colony of beautiful little sea birds, in danger of extermination, passes by unheeded. O this perverse generation!

This insignificant east coast Elijah is as yet unacquainted and unacquainted by the hosts of Heav. Even Sir Dighton's thunder in the "Times" lacked the lightning of first hand evidence. Mr. Hammond resents my unbelief, and tells me, in effect, "to wait and see." I am still waiting with eager fingers, and am "be forrarder" how to be proceeding?

The "School Officer's" feeble effort resulted in seeing two owls on a school chimney. If he'll call round at one of my schools I'll show him twenty on the blackboard in half as many minutes. My offer is as helpful to the case in point as his narration.

My good friend, Mr. T. Southwell, comes and leaves behind a suggestion of powder tracks. Then up you come, sir, with your big F.E.S. 47. gun, loaded to the muzzle with damp powder, to annihilate the little wuffling chief. First-rate! First-rate! leaving only more powder tracks and the smell of smoke, so to speak, behind him.

Next, up dashes Mr. Rudd at a stale worm, so to speak—with such a poor array of arguments, of which the only one (in spite of Mr. J. H. Gardner's decision to damn meat on the 16th, I suppose he wanted a dagger in the eye) is "I hear today (15th) that he is going over to the owl." Let me advise him, if he be a smarter business man than he is a debater, to drag a refreshment stall over with him, for I hear there's something like a crowd prowling around these dark, cold nights.

He saw my professor's tail was odd. So did I. Didn't he, or some other Norwich folk did go into the old Ben Norton's show on the Hill to see a pony with the tail growing where the head ought to be, and found an old shape of a pony with the tail bird in the manger? This is modern history. (Would he like another?) And this year ago, I humbly submit, to the luminous owl exhibition, I saw the article in the "Field," referred to by Mr. Rudd, and found it mostly a cold hash made up of this owl's previous writings. Mr. Frank Fink F.E.S., is another London humorist. Perhaps I've done enough to "artify" who kindly applied the notion of "artistry" to what he thought an overcharged gall or a tricky liver.

Now, sir, and gentlemen of the jury, I leave it to you to say who has as yet, come off worst in the case. No owl is yet to hand, and at the very utmost the chief supporters of such a monstrously expensive refer to "something that must be a bird" and that an owl. To my mind it is just as likely to be a vagrant turkey, or a disoriented goose, or a retracted pterodactyl, or a dainty pteropteryx, or a glorified rampharyngus.—Yours

JOHN KNOWLITTLE.
Yarmouth, January 14th.

To the Editor.
Sir—I trust this bird will not disappear altogether without the suggestion of your prominent correspondent being carried out, but that it will be sought, examined by experts, and then liberated at the place it was found, that it may regain its usual haunts. It puzzles me that anyone with any pretensions to being a naturalist can be content to know little, instead of endeavouring to know more.

The first to attribute the light, which has been seen by many inhabitants of this neighbourhood both this winter and last, to an owl is not one so likely to give birth to a mythical fancy as some of those who friends who sit at home in their armchairs seem to think. Having been for many years a keen sportsman and an admirer of nature in the rural districts of North Norfolk, it may be supposed that he can distinguish between the movements of a squirrel jump and the flight of an owl. A hawk does not in this part of the country sit along by hedges over the fields, or fly upon into the trees. It seems a pity that those who mock at the discoveries of others should not, before packing, take the trouble personally to investigate the matters under consideration, and thus add value to their expression of opinion.—Yours faithfully

ONE WHO DESIRES TO KNOW MORE.
North Norfolk.

In the "Gleaner" this week Mr. Minnie Ferguson, referring to the discovery of the heavy owl in evidence of its young, says on the authority of Mr. Edward Kearton that "One such bird lived close to a village in the eastern counties of England not long ago, and went so far as to carry off even's eggs, bury its talons in the scales of the next watercourse, and commit other outrages, which rendered it such a terror that it had to be shot."

FEBRUARY 7, 1908

**LUMINOUS OWL AT HELLESDON.
ITS CAPTURE AND DEATH.**

The luminous owl, or at any rate, a luminous owl, for there may be more than one, was captured on Wednesday morning by Mr. Edward B. Cannell, at Upper Hellesdon, and died from purely natural causes a few minutes afterwards. "John Knowlton," writes a "Daily Press" reporter, who has enquired into the circumstances, may be relied upon to wrap for the luminous owl I have only to do with the facts, which are these:-

Mr. Edward B. Cannell is the engineer at Norwich City Asylum ("John Knowlton" will chuckle at that I have no doubt, but Mr. Cannell does not live at the asylum, he is a trained and highly responsible man and is known to nearly everybody).

I asked Mr. Cannell to tell me how he came to get the owl.

"Yesterday morning," said Mr. Cannell, "between 8 and 8.30, when it was still dark, I went out into my garden. I had my dog with me. There is a grass bank about 2½ feet high on one side, and a grass verge of a wall on the other. I saw something shining on the grass bank, which for the moment startled me. It fluttered down, crossed the path, and got up against the grass bank. I had no trouble in catching it, and I did not hurt it in any way. It was an owl, and it was bright and luminous. I should say it was an ordinary barn owl, but the taxidermist will tell you all about that. I carried it indoors, and put it on a stand, and went out in the garden again. I do not think the dog saw the bird at all. When I came back into the house the bird was dying. It was still luminous, but perhaps the glow was not so strong as when I saw it first. When I came in to break fast, the bird was quite dead. Of course it was daylight then, and I could see no luminosity in the bird. The light had gone out. I have no doubt at all that the bird was luminous when I saw it first. It was the life-sized light which first attracted my attention. The luminosity appeared to me to be phosphorescent in its nature. There are a number of owls that fly about among the trees at the asylum every night, but I have never seen a luminous one before."

THE LUMINOUS OWL.

INTERVIEW WITH TAXIDERMISTS.

BIRD TO BE PRESERVED.

The luminous owl captured by Mr. Cannell at Hellesdon on Wednesday morning has been sent by the gentleman to Messrs. Roberts & Bon, the well known taxidermists, of 34, Castle Market Street, Norwich, who are now preserving, or "studing" it.

Mr. T. Roberts, in an interview with a "Daily Press" reporter yesterday, said the bird was a very good specimen of the barn owl, "Scops scapula." It was a female. The body was in fair condition, that is to say it was not at all starved, and there were no marks of violence upon it, but the body was "flabby," as though the bird had been ailing for some time. Parasites were found upon the body, as they would be found on the bodies of all birds, but Mr. Roberts is not yet able to say whether these parasites are other than those which he usually found on owls. He has preserved them, and they will be subject to further examination.

Mr. Roberts said the bird is a beautiful specimen of its kind. The feet and neck are of a light buff. The plumage would probably be seen even in a bad light.

When asked as to whether the body of the bird was still luminous, Mr. Roberts said he had seen no luminosity about it, indeed, to adapt the language used by "Mark Twain" with respect to his celebrated jumping frog, "There ain't no difference between the points of this owl and the points of an ordinary owl."

Among all the letters which have been published concerning the fascinating fowl, the one written by Mr. Fred Rolfe, of Elm, East Dereham, which appeared in the "Daily Press" of January 19th, was one of the most authoritative. Mr. Rolfe stated:-

"I have read of the luminous owl. I saw one of them in West Norfolk when I was a gamekeeper at West Bilney Hall for a gentleman by the name of Bentley. I was out one very dark night stopping up fox paths. While I was engaged I saw a very bright blue light pass close by my face, and was very much startled as I saw it going away from me, but I put it down as some insect. A few nights afterwards I was again in the same wood, known as the High Plantation, and saw the same light again some distance from me. For several nights I watched the wood with my gun, and at last I saw the light skimming over the ground. I waited till it came within a few yards of me, and then fired at the light. It being dark, you may fancy my surprise when I found a poor old, half-starved barn owl dead on the ground. I thought he had been gathering glow worms, as it was getting late in the winter, but I have seen a great many owls since then, but I never saw one before give out any light."

Is it not possible that the explanation of the "luminosity" which Mr. Cannell and Mr. Rolfe and many others have seen may be found in the similarity of the condition of the two birds which have actually been secured? Mr. Cannell's has been fairly well nourished, but is "flabby," as if ailing for some time. Mr. Rolfe's bird, which probably was not inspected with such skilled care as Mr. Roberts' was able to give Mr. Cannell's, was a "poor old half-starved" bird.

The parasites found on Mr. Cannell's bird will be examined microscopically. It might go some way towards the clearing up of a matter which has interested thousands of persons far and near if the trunk of Mr. Cannell's bird were also handed over to some scientist who is competent thoroughly to examine it.

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The Luminous Owl.—Referring to the luminous Barn-Owl, which gave rise to so much controversy, it may be mentioned that it is still alive, or at any rate was so in February, and on the same property where it was before, but is no longer so bright as it was. Luminous Barn-Owls, I learn from Mr. L. Ternier, have recently (December, 1909) made an appearance in Spain, where two were seen.

THE ZOOLOGIST, No. 826—APRIL, 1910

J. H. GURNEY, f. 2. 5; ORNITHOLOGICAL REPORT FOR NORFOLK
(1909)—assisted by other Norfolk

naturalists

BARN-OWL (*Tyto alba*).

Re-appearance of the luminous Owl.—Early in January a luminous Barn-Owl (see *Brit. B.*, i, p. 289, ii, p. 35, iii, p. 32) turned up at Rushall, near Harleston, but was not seen after February 3rd. Mr. George Saunders, who seems to have had the best view of it, describes the light as falling with some brilliancy on a straw stack when the Owl flew round it. Another witness, Mr. Dunnett, said anyone might have mistaken it for a distant lamp, while a third compared the bird of night to a pale star!

On February 15th, 1921, a luminous Barn-Owl was seen over the marshes at Haddiscoe, but its luminosity does not seem to have been great, it frequently lit on the marsh, and once or twice came quite close to Mr. Farman who was out duck fighting. It would appear, therefore, that these birds are not so rare as has been supposed.

With regard to the cause of this singular luminosity in Owls, no better theory has been suggested than that originally advanced, which ascribed it to contact with the luminous touchwood supposed to be produced by certain *Mycelium* forming fungi. Phosphorescent bacteria are liable to exist in any seat of decay and putrefaction; and a bird living in a hollow tree might be expected to rub against fungus growth.

BRITISH BIRDS, no. 9, vol. XVI; February 1, 1923

J. H. GURNEY, ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTES FROM NORFOLK
FOR 1922 (29th ANNUAL REPORT)

Finally, we mention an altogether different kind of luminous flying object—the “luminous owls of Norfolk.” These apparitions, seen in the county of Norfolk, England, were barn owls whose feathers carried the powder of the luminous fungus *Armillaria mellea*. This widely distributed fungus infests dead trees and old stumps, where owls may roost during the day. Birds or bats so infested shine brightly in the dark. These owls were seen in the Norfolk district in 1866, 1897, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1921, and 1922. One of the owls, shot by a gamekeeper in 1897, continued to shine for several hours after its death.

DONALD H. MENZEL, “THE UFO ENIGMA”
page 58