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LOCAL UFO REPORTS

THE NATURE OF THE UFO PHENOMENON DICTATES THE OFFICIAL
ATTITUDE OF SKEPTICISM

E D I T O R I A L

Editorials

The editorial is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks confronting the editor of a small UFO magazine. The difficulty is not in finding something to write, but in resisting the temptations. The temptations are particularly strong when no obvious topic suggests itself. They are, for a British UFO journal editor:

1. To write, in unintelligible jargon, about nothing in particular.
2. To pen some trenchant comments about the politics and policies of other UFO organizations.
3. To be facetious.

We have not yielded to temptation 1 (at least, not intentionally. We have fallen into temptation 2 (in MUFORG Bulletin days), but to comment on its results and consequences would only stir things up again and probably result in some fascinating but irrelevant correspondence. As for temptation 3, we fell by the wayside in our editorial "Amiable Eccentrics? Yes!" in Vol. 2, No.1. To our surprise, we were congratulated by ufologists wearing funereal expressions, who solemnly assured us that they agreed with every word of it.

Oh, well. Any volunteers to write a guest editorial for the next issue?

Dr JAMES E. McDONALD - Professeur de Météorologie, Doyen de
Physique de l'Institut de Physique Atmosphérique de l'université
de l'Arizona

OBJETS VOLANTS NON IDENTIFIES - Le Plus Grand Problème Scientifique
de Notre Temps?

Traduit de l'américain par René Fouéré, cet ouvrage a été
édité sous la forme d'un numéro spécial de la revue "Phénomènes
Spatiaux". Ecrit par un savant, il constitue l'une des meilleures
réponses scientifiques qu'on puisse faire aux détracteurs de la
réalité spécifique des objets volants non identifiés.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(The views expressed by correspondents are not necessarily shared by the editors.)

From Mr ALAN O'TOOLE

Dear Sir,

Reading John Rimmer's article on fairy lore in the Jan/Feb issue of MUFOB, I found that he had come to much the same conclusions as myself. The lore of the little people is indeed worldwide; there is indeed a memory of a troglodytic race (In fact, the belief in the Sidhe, or hill dwellers of Ireland still persists.). But what Mr Rimmer fails to point out is the belief that this race were the original rulers of the Earth but, by some terrible force were driven underground, where they wait and plot the downfall of the human race. This belief can even be seen in the driving of Adam and Eve from Eden.

Perhaps the most startling piece of evidence for an 'elder race' is the strange discovery by the Doheny Expedition in 1924 of a cave drawing depicting a tyrannosaurus rex. Simple tests show the drawing to be millions of years older than man. Hardly less astounding are the nail and gold thread found in England in 1844. The nail, found embedded in solid stone at Kingoodie quarry, is 50 million years older than homo sapiens. The gold thread was also found in solid rock at Rutherford Mills. Coincidentally, it is roughly the same age as the nail and dates from the Paleocene age. Not convincing enough? Then how about the human skeleton in an eleven-million-year-old coal seam discovered in Italy in 1958? Dr Morris K. Jessup's famous "intelligently worked piece of meteoric steel" found in tertiary coal beds, which is 33 million years old?

Meaningless erratics? Hardly. They form concrete proof that a culture existed on Earth long before man's supposed advent-- a race of humans like ourselves. Looking at our own progress in the past 15 years it is obvious that this 'elder race' is, if still in existence, incredibly advanced. It is also clear that at one time this race had an empire that spanned the world since, as has been said, the legends of fairy existence are worldwide.

That supposition is borne out by the worldwide existence of similar stone structures which could not have been built by the primitive cultures they were ascribed to. (Indeed, in many cases they could not be built by our own modern civilization!)

The perfect example of these structures is the pyramid, which can be seen in Egypt, South America and, to a lesser extent, the South Sea islands, with their maraes.

An examination of racial memory and folklore tends to suggest that there occurred sometime in Earth's history a great cataclysm which all but destroyed civilization. In fact, in view of the evidence and folk belief from the Bible to the Popol-Vuh it is stupid to deny that such an event did occur and not only decimated the ancient race and sent them scuttling to subterranean safety, but destroyed their two main seats of power, Atlantis and Lemuria. What this cataclysm was I will not venture to say, but I believe that it either made the surface uninhabitable to the elder race, or that prolonged subterranean living has had this effect.

Bearing these facts in mind it is natural to suppose, when confronted with a superhuman intelligence (the UFOs), that they are the lost race of Atlantis and Lemuria and that they are trying to take back their ancient home. Their purpose in our skies is to, firstly, examine our military installations, water supplies and cities in preparation for a surprise attack and, secondly, to procure healthy human specimens for experimentation.

Naturally the vast body of lore on vanishing people arouses curiosity but who would ever suspect that these people are to serve in sexual experiments to produce a hybrid race capable of life on the surface? Occasionally some of the truth slips out as in the Villas Boas and Barney Hill incidents, but these are dismissed by surface men as tales told by cranks and maniacs.

Sometimes surface men aid in the plot willingly. One remembers the narrative told by Hermann Rauschning (see Steiger's "New UFO Breakthrough") of Hitler's plan to produce mutants: "He is here! The New Man is living amongst us now! Isn't that enough for you? I will tell you a secret. I have seen the New Man. He is intrepid and cruel. I was afraid of him," said the ecstatic Fuehrer. Rauschning tells how Hitler woke up at nights screaming that "He" had risen from his UNDERGROUND home to attack him.

How long this plot has been going on we cannot say (though it is hinted at in Genesis,6), but UFO activity has stepped up sharply since 1946. The subterraneans seem to have been filled with a sense of the urgency of their mission. This may be because they have seen a threat in mankind's discovery of atomic power, but it may also be in part due to the increased activities of a group of decidedly pro-human subterraneans bent on trying to show us the Sword of Damocles hanging over us. One of the biggest moves of these benignant troglodytes may be seen in the mysterious Allende affair. An important hint can be seen in the enigmatic "Happy Easter" on a parcel posted in August. When Christ was reborn at Easter He combined the attributes of the astral and the corporeal body to the best possible advantage.

This is the intention of the troglodytes; to produce a race of homo superior, after which the use of the human race will be at an end and the invasion will begin.

Ufologists, as Ray Palmer has noted, must try to find proof not only of the reality of UFOs, but also of their underground origin and it is my belief that such proof is there to be found and we must find it before the day of invasion comes. Yours faithfully, Alan O'Toole, 4 St John's Terrace, Bootle 20, Lancs.

From Mr PETER ROGERSON

Dear Mr Harney,

Your editorial in the March/April edition is certainly thought provoking and represents an increasing body of opinion among ufologists. The last point mentioned, that there is a possible connection between UFOs and psychical phenomena is well worth following up and the work of Keel and Jerome Clark, for instance, would indicate that some connection does indeed exist.

The main stumbling block to research along these lines is probably the high percentage of believers in Spiritualism among UFO researchers, particularly at 'grass roots' level, which means that a preconceived interpretation of psychical phenomena (i.e. as 'spirits' etc.) exists in ufological circles. In this context I personally hope that the words 'ether', 'astral' and 'vibrations' would cease to appear for all time in the pages of UFO magazines and books.

Among the ideas worth examining are the possibility that hauntings, for example, may be highly localized flap areas, that the various UFOs, airships, phantom ships, ghost cars, apparitions and mystery animals may be hallucinations generated as a subconscious attempt to rationalize a totally indefinable and incomprehensible stimulus. Attention should be paid to ~~the~~ such events as the whole range of controversial phenomena in the period September 1904 to September 1905, reports of elementals etc., and hypnotic mists in ghost lore. One should examine cases such as the young couple who experienced paralysis as footsteps paced outside their lonely Devon farmhouse, or the French ghost story disturbingly similar to the Fatima case; the woman who vanished from a lone family group on the Yorkshire moors only to reappear a few minutes later in a dazed condition; and the bones found in the cellar of a Bruges (Belgium) boarding house after poltergeist disturbances and foul stench there, a few years before the First World War.

In reference to John Rimmer's article in the January/February edition, some interpretations of some traditional stories might suggest that there are UFO bases under Peel and Rushen Castles, in the Isle of Man. Perhaps there is something significant in the legends of unnamed horrors in castle vaults, of mystery rooms

such as that of Glamis.

In reference to the Men in Black reports I would add two points:

1. Following the assassination of President Kennedy a similar series of photo stealings and witness intimidations took place as has happened after UFO reports. Perhaps Lucius Farish's disclosure about Fred Crisman and the Garrison Enquiry (which was far from the joke affair it was regarded as by the U.K. press and had reached far more terrible and disturbing conclusions than were reported over here; see "The Garrison Enquiry" and "Who Killed Kennedy", by Joachim Joesten) has some relevance here.

2. There were rumours at the BUFORA Northern Conference in October 1968, at Manchester, that Roy Winstanley had been silenced as a result of an experience similar to that of Mr Leathley-Andrew, of Coventry. It is impossible to determine whether there is any truth in these rumours or not.

I would emphasize that I do not have any definite beliefs in any of the above topics, but consider them possibilities worthy of discussion.

Yours faithfully, Peter Rogerson, 8 Braddon Avenue, Urmston, nr Manchester, M31 1UE.

LOCAL UFO REPORTS

Warrington, Lancashire

June 12, 1969

0130 BST

The following report appeared in the Sunday Mirror on June 15:

Constable Sydney Edwards, 28, stood in the early morning darkness by his patrol car, watching a light moving across the sky. Calmly he reported over his radio: "It's travelling north, flickering like a star." Then: "It's stopped! Vanished!"

And another statistic was added to the growing list of UFOs--unidentified flying objects--baffling world scientists. This time no doubt can hardly be cast by the sceptics. The light was seen by three men trained to observe with complete integrity.

The first was retired police inspector Alan Machin, 51, who put out an "alert" at 1.30 a.m. last Thursday. He was checking his greenhouse door in the garden at Farrington Road, Winwick, near Warrington, Lancs. He said: "I saw this light--and thought it was an aircraft on fire. Then I realised there was no sound." He rushed inside to fetch his wife to witness it--then he telephoned Warrington police. Moments later the couple saw the mystery light complete a U-shaped course and vanish.

Patrol cars were alerted to watch--and Constable Edwards, a keen astronomer, saw the unidentified light. In another part of Warrington, (Orford), Constable Michael Conduct, 21, watched it and said: "I saw it stop and vanish."

Constable Edwards firmly ruled out meteorites and satellites. He said: "I saw a meteorite pass over at 2.5 a.m. The light certainly wasn't one. We spot satellites passing over, but it was not one of those either."

Mr Machin, now a chief security officer, put the height of the mystery object at about 1,500 ft.

Air Traffic Control centres at Ringway Airport, Manchester and at Preston were equally baffled. The only aircraft in their territory was flying as far away as Lichfield, Staffs. A Defence Ministry spokesman said yesterday: "This incident was reported to us. In all such cases we note times and details to see if we can make any explanation."

Birkenhead, Cheshire

June 15, 1969

2340 BST

Reports of this incident appeared in the Liverpool Daily Post and the Liverpool Echo on June 15. The Echo report reads:

A mysterious disc-shaped object over the Fender, Birkenhead, last night startled a security officer and his guard dog. Mr Neil Piper, aged 37, was patrolling a Birkenhead

Corporation housing estate in Noctorum Lane when he heard a swishing sound overhead, similar to the hum of a generator.

"I looked up and saw a disc-shaped object, silvery and glowing," said Mr Piper, of 66 Fender View Road, Moreton. "It was not travelling very fast, and looked about the size of a dinner plate, although I could not tell what height it was flying at. It came over from the direction of the Woodchurch housing estate and then passed over Moreton. Even the dog cowered down and was scared and yelping."

Birkenhead Police, Liverpool Airport and Liverpool Meteorological Office said they have received no other reports of the object and could not account for it.

On June 28, John Harney and John Rimmer visited Mr Piper's home to enquire about the sighting. We were directed to the housing estate in Noctorum Lane where Mr Piper was on duty. Unfortunately our search of the estate proved fruitless and we had to return to our homes without seeing him. It is interesting to note however, that alongside Noctorum Lane there is a railway, and alongside the railway are high tension power lines. From the description given in the newspaper, it seems that if the object was fairly close, it was probably following the power lines. To date, we have not been able to obtain any further information about this report.

THE NATURE OF THE UFO PHENOMENON DICTATES THE OFFICIAL ATTITUDE
OF SCEPTICISM

by John Harney

Summary

Many interesting UFO reports are followed by incidents which serve to create confusion in the minds of witnesses and investigators. These incidents are often of such a nature as to bring ufology into popular disrepute. In some cases the confusing incidents can reasonably be ascribed to official obfuscation. Other cases are rather more difficult to explain when investigated with sufficient thoroughness. Some investigators conjecture that the powers behind the UFOs engineer the confusing incidents to hide from us the true nature of their activities. In this article we describe and discuss some British cases and consider the reasons for official attitudes to the UFO problem.

The Wardle Sighting

On February 15, 1957, a UFO event occurred at Wardle, near Rochdale, Lancashire. (1) At 10 p.m. that evening, Gwynneth Fitton was walking along a lonely lane near her home when: "There above her up the hillside and only a few feet from the ground was a strange, circular object which gave off a weird and bright white glow. Below the object was a second, but smaller, sphere which constantly changed colour from white to red."

Gwynneth dashed into her home and called her mother, who went outside and saw the object gliding towards the top of the house. The object is said to have reached a point only a few yards from where the mother and daughter stood, remained stationary for a short time and then gradually lost height. It then began to climb slowly and to move away, finally disappearing over a hill. The sighting lasted for fifteen minutes. The object was viewed at the same time, from a different position, by another group of witnesses. An account of the sighting was published in a local newspaper, the Rochdale Observer, on February 23.

The following week the Observer reported that Mr J.A. Leavey, M.P. for the Heywood and Royton Division, had visited Wardle and interviewed the witnesses. Mr Leavey was sufficiently impressed by their stories to table a question in the House of

Commons.

A week later the same newspaper published a long report which put forward two explanations, plus an incident which appeared to be a deliberate attempt to create confusion about the affair. A Mr Neil Robinson claimed that on four separate occasions he released a toy balloon filled with hydrogen, with a pen-torch battery and bulb attached. He told what the Rochdale Observer reporter who interviewed him described as "a strange tale." After several unsuccessful attempts, he finally succeeded in making hydrogen. Eventually he "somehow managed" to inflate a balloon with the gas. The implication was, of course, that one of these lighted, toy balloons was responsible for the UFO reports.

The other "explanation" was the discovery of a Meteorological Office radio-sonde on the moors near Wardle. The sonde was said to have been found in a place where, according to the reports, the UFO must have passed nearly overhead. The newspaper report pointed out that the sonde was perfectly dry and unmarked, although it was found almost two weeks after the sighting, during which time there had been considerable snowfalls.

The report then dealt with an observation by Mr Fitton, whose wife and daughter were the principal witnesses to the UFO event:

"Mrs Fitton's husband is beginning to feel uneasy about the whole business and he is wondering if someone is trying to fool someone else. On Tuesday night, the day that Mr Tony Leavey, M.P., tabled a question to the Secretary of State for Air about the Wardle "saucer," Mr Fitton saw a commercial-type aircraft flying over Wardle following the course of the weird object which has caused so much discussion. The aircraft flashed unusually large coloured lights as it travelled overhead--lights much larger than normal aircraft lights--and the following morning Mr Kershaw found his "unusual object" (the radio-sonde) lying beneath the path the plane had taken. Coincidence--or is someone playing games?..."

On March 9, the Rochdale Observer published three letters from readers who had also seen the UFO on February 15. Their descriptions agreed with those in the other reports.

On March 20, the answer given in the House of Commons to Mr Leavey's question was to the effect that all the witnesses had seen a pair of hydrogen-filled toy balloons, illuminated with a torch bulb, the device having been devised and launched by Mr Neil Robinson.

An Air Ministry investigator is said to have visited Wardle on April 17. (2) He called on several witnesses and questioned them, and asked them to keep his visit quiet.

This affair seems like a probable case of official obfuscation. Obviously the Air Ministry would hardly be keen to admit that they had no idea as to what the object might have been, especially as the Wardle sighting was by no means the only indication of UFO activity in Britain at that time.

It is certainly odd that an aircraft carrying unusual coloured lights should happen to fly over Wardle on the same day that Mr Leavey tabled his question in the House of Commons. It is odder still that the aircraft should just happen to follow the route of the UFO. And the finding of the radio-sonde equipment the following day strongly suggests that it was deliberately dropped by the aircraft. Perhaps it was thought that the aircraft, the radio-sonde, or both, could be used in framing superficially convincing explanations, in case the toy balloon explanation should fail.

The balloon explanation, as originally described in the Rochdale Observer, was not at all compatible with the sighting reports. Mr Robinson described "a balloon", to which a battery and bulb was attached. However, when the sighting was "explained" in the House of Commons, the device had somehow acquired an extra balloon. It was also mentioned that Mr Robinson worked in a laundry. At least one newspaper took the hint: the headline read: "FLYING SAUCER WASHED UP FROM LAUNDRY."

The Scoriton Mystery

This case is very different from the foregoing one. There is no need to summarize it here, as the results of a very detailed investigation carried out by BUFORA members Eileen Buckle and Norman Oliver have been published in book form. (3) What emerges very clearly from the book is the fact that the more thought and effort the investigators put into their attempts to unravel the mystery, the more mysterious everything became. Nothing could be proved one way or the other. Certainly in this case there is no possibility of the confusing incidents having been cooked up by the authorities in order to discredit serious UFO research. The confusion was either created by the subconscious minds of the investigators, or by some unknown external agency. Tempting though it is to suppose that Miss Buckle and Mr Oliver had let their imaginations run away with them, it should be noted that their experiences tie in with those of many other people who become--voluntarily or otherwise--involved with the UFO mystery. It is also interesting to note that while their strange experiences are generally similar to many American cases described by John Keel and others, the "style" of them is somewhat different (quite apart from any differences in styles of writing), being apparently adapted to suit the personalities and preconceptions of the people involved. This lends support to Keel's statement that the UFO phenomenon is frequently "reflective".(4)

The West Malling Incident

The official chicanery employed to discredit the Wardle sighting probably had the West Malling incident of 1953 as its precedent. On November 3, 1953, the crew of a jet fighter saw a UFO and made a report of the incident when they landed at their base at West Malling, Kent. It was afterwards revealed that later that day a UFO had been tracked on a radar set which was being tested at Lee Green, Kent. (5) Because of the experience and qualifications of the witnesses and their descriptions of the object, their reports were taken very seriously and a question was asked in the House of Commons on November 24, 1953. The explanation given by Mr Birch, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Defence, was that two meteorological balloons were observed at different times on November 3. The question also included a reference to a dome-shaped UFO seen over Norwich. However, this report was very detailed and could not be explained away as a balloon. (6) So Mr Birch brushed it off by saying that he was "not closely in touch with the Norwich Astronomical Society which had reported dome-shaped objects emitting lights from their domes being observed at night," this being followed by the inevitable (Laughter.). More (Laughter.), indeed (Loud laughter.), followed when an Honourable Member asked if the Minister would agree that "this story of flying saucers is all ballooney?" The Minister readily agreed that this appreciation was "very nearly correct." (Laughter.)

As in the Wardle case, the newspapers took the hint and produced headlines such as: "ALL BALLOONEY."

The Police "Hoax" at Bacup

During the famous Autumn flap of 1967, an interesting sighting at Bacup, Lancashire, was reported in the press, but received little attention from ufologists. The incident took place right at the apparent peak of the flap, in the early morning of October 27. Constable Brian Earnshaw was on duty at Bacup police station. He is said to have heard crackling noises on the station's radio. He went outside at 4.10 a.m. to examine the aerial and said that he saw a cigar-shaped UFO hovering 250 feet above the station. In his report to police headquarters he said: "It was approximately 50 feet long and 10 feet in diameter. There were portholes along the side, but no visible signs of propulsion. The ship appeared to be metallic and gave off a bright glow. There was a low whirring sound coming from it." Two ~~ka~~ other policemen, Colin Donahoe and

Malcolm Reader, also said that they watched the object for several minutes. It then rose vertically and disappeared. (7)

This report went through the "usual channels" and was investigated by County police headquarters at Preston. The Ministry of Defence also made enquiries. Eventually, on January 15, 1968, a police spokesman explained the incident as "a hoax between colleagues that went wrong." But when approached by the press, one of the constables (not named) said: "All three of us stand by the report. We definitely saw the object we described, but I can make no comment about the incident." (8)

One puzzling question which springs to mind is--why did the police consider it necessary to issue a statement almost three months after the event, when most people could be presumed to have forgotten about it? It seems to me that the most likely explanation may be that it aroused the curiosity of a newspaper reporter, who was determined to follow up the story. It was certainly worth following up, as there were three witnesses--policemen--people who could have nothing to gain and could jeopardize their chances of promotion by fabricating fantastic stories. By January the flap was dying down, but was still going quite strong. Under the circumstances an admission that the policemen's story was accepted as true but could not be explained was unthinkable and the authorities--no doubt with great reluctance--branded them as liars. There was no alternative, as their report was so clear and unequivocal and could not plausibly be explained away, as could the usual "lights in the sky" stories.

Reasons for Official Attitudes to UFO Reports

There is little point in complaining about official obfuscation and playing down of UFO reports, because the official attitude is dictated by the very nature of the phenomenon itself. Let us take landing and contact reports, for instance. If these reports are taken at their face value, they suggest that witnesses have encountered space ships from other planets and their crews. Many ufologists have accepted this theory, but have encountered great difficulties in trying to explain why, when the "spacemen" speak to witnesses, they invariably talk a lot of nonsense. Some people have tried to get round this problem by simply refusing to consider contact reports. However, it has by now been pretty firmly established that most of these reports are just as "real" as those of UFOs tracked by radar in the sense that the witnesses genuinely believe that they have had "contact" experiences.

Thus, a thorough, honest and objective report on a UFO flap would include everything from military radar plots to landing reports and, perhaps, contact reports, if any should come to light. If the Ministry of Defence, say, carried out such an investigation their report could not be publicly approved by the Government. The fantastic details it would inevitably contain would be unacceptable to too many people. Also, the civil servants and service officers involved in UFO investigations are hardly likely to be unaware of the fact that the prospects of finding any sort of rational explanation for the whole UFO phenomenon are at present pretty dim. Another point Government UFO experts must be aware of is that official ridicule cannot compete with the sort of absurdity which is evidently an inherent part of the total UFO phenomenon. As Aime Michel has written: "Some cases....are veritable festivals of absurdity." (9)

According to the Condon Report: "Only about 12% of those persons who have seen flying objects they cannot identify actually report the sighting." (10) The editor of a UFO magazine has so far catalogued 721 reports for 1967 in the U.K. alone. As is well known, most of these reports occurred in the last three months of 1967 (11), so if the UFOs were made officially respectable, there would be a danger of police and military authorities being overwhelmed with UFO reports during a flap.

Conclusions

The official attitudes of governments and other authorities towards UFO reports may be irritating and frustrating to many ufologists and witnesses, but they are inevitable and must be accepted, under present social and scientific circumstances. An advantage of this situation is that many significant UFO reports can be quietly investigated by people who are seriously interested in the subject, free from the "circus" atmosphere generated by reports which receive much credence and publicity.

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B O O K R E V I E W S

Beyond Condon: Flying Saucer Review Special Issue No.2, edited by Charles Bowen. 12/- (overseas 12/6; US \$1.50-by air \$1.30 extra)

In his editorial, introducing this special issue of FLYING SAUCER REVIEW, Mr Charles Bowen writes that people have speculated for over twenty years that the UFOs are spaceships from other planets. He goes on:

"Yet in twenty-two years not one of the thousands of UFO reports has substantiated this theory unless a handful of the more sensational, but dubious, "contactee" claims can be accepted as substantiation.

"Bedevilled by this stalemate, we at Flying Saucer Review have tentatively paraded, and have suggested, alternative lines of enquiry. These have been no more than interesting speculations, and certainly not dogmatic assertions that herein lies the answer to the UFO mystery."

Accordingly this special issue is devoted to giving us a glimpse of the fascinating work of some of North America's more original and progressive ufologists.

Many of the more conservative "UFO buffs" will be infuriated and "laughing scientists" will have convulsions, when they see that John Keel's contributions to this issue take up no less than 26 of the 72 pages. Others will be delighted: as usual, his writings are heavily documented and utterly fascinating. In an article analysing the flap phenomenon in the United States, Mr Keel draws attention to connections and correlations between UFO activity and psychic phenomena, gives details of his research methods and makes useful suggestions for future studies and investigations. Another article by John Keel, "The Cape May Incident", is an example of the strange and baffling incidents which often come to light in connection with UFO events when the investigator insists on extracting every possible detail from the witnesses.

It is encouraging to see the increasing interest taken in our subject by qualified medical men. Dr Berthold Eric Schwarz presents the results of his psychiatric examinations of witnesses to four spectacular UFO events. He finds them to be mentally normal and comes to the conclusion: "It is felt that the objective details of the reported UFO experiences are essentially real, and neither phantasied nor dereistic." He makes suggestions for further research on the psychological and physiological effects of UFOs.

The other items in this issue are all well worth reading and I feel that many ufologists, on reading it, will finally get the message that our study is definitely not a simple matter of trying to collect enough evidence to convince the authorities that men from other worlds are visiting Earth. The evidence just does not seem to point in that direction. But, in what direction does it point? BEYOND CONDON certainly gives you plenty of material for speculation.

--- John Harney

The Taming of the Thunderbolts, by C. Maxwell Cade and Delphine Davis, Abelard-Schuman. 30/-

This is one of the first books to be written on the little-known subject of ball lightning. The authors discuss in it the science and superstition surrounding this natural phenomenon, and discuss it in such a way as to appeal to the layman, as well as to the more advanced student of physics. Indeed, in their introduction, the authors say that "this is not a textbook or a scientific treatise. It is a book for everyone who is interested in the marvels of nature, the mystery of the unknown, and the strange experiences of his fellow men."

It is only in this century that any serious research has been done on this subject, as, years ago it had been regarded as a supernatural phenomenon and "the weapon of the gods." Even now, there are still some people who refuse to accept its existence, and refer to "collective hallucinations," or "seeing things which aren't there." The authors trace the references to ball lightning through legend and literature--Lucretius, in his "Nature of the Universe", mentioned it over 2,000 years ago--although it is not always clear whether ball lightning is meant or the more usual lightning bolt.

There is a chapter on Benjamin Franklin, the inventor of the lightning conductor, and a list of partially-damaged buildings that shows that when people finally accepted it--there were many protests on religious grounds--they were not altogether successful, as they often set about it in the wrong way.

There are also many eye-witness accounts of the appearance of ball lightning during storms, and doing great damage to property. The authors discuss in great detail the various colours, types, shapes, etc. of lightning balls, and Dr Edmond D. Dewan has compiled several interesting tables referring to a complete survey of all Union Carbide Corporation personnel at Oak Ridge, where 513 reports were obtained from a sample of 15,923 individuals, as to the colour, size, shape etc. of the objects sighted.

In the beginning of a chapter entitled "Fireballs and Flying Saucers" the authors state that they "have been privileged to attend meetings of Flying Saucers societies whose sightings have been discussed, and so-called "contactees" have described their alleged experiences in meeting the pilots of these vessels from outer space." They go on to say that they "cannot accept these experiences at their face value, but, on the other hand, it is difficult to go all the way with Professor Jung and dismiss all UFO sightings as subjective." They believe that after 90% or more of UFOs have been explained away as balloons, motor car headlamps, etc., there is a further eight or nine per cent which can be explained by ball lightning, cometoids and meteorites. They say that the remaining one per cent is also capable of receiving a valid physical explanation, which may be the unmanned space probes of other intelligent races (a not too improbable suggestion, since we have reached this stage of technological attainment ourselves) or possibly

something nearer home.

In "Myths, Marvels and Miracles" many cases are cited in which the victims have died. Apparently, this ball lightning can enter a closed room and burn a body without even singeing the clothing. Another remarkable aspect of this phenomenon is that it can appear from a clear sky.

The authors also have a chapter in which they discuss the ultimate weapon, and also what they describe as "the latest militarists' nightmare, the death ray." In contrast to this, there is a piece on the peaceful uses of Synthetic Thunderbolts.

It is obvious that the authors have gone into this subject very thoroughly, and I found it a well-written and readable book. They remain open-minded about it, and as they say in their introduction: "The main purpose of the authors has been to provide a readable account of thunderbolts in fact and fiction, in legend and laboratory, which is accurate and up to date, but which that mythical person, the man in the street, will find entertaining." I think that they have done this successfully.

----- Elaine D. Wash

NOTES QUOTES & QUERIES

Local Haunts

Recent speculation concerning the relationship between psychic phenomena and UFO activity compels us to pay attention to local reports of ghosts and similar strange occurrences. There have been several such reports in recent months. There was the "levitating lift" in a hotel being demolished at Southport, Lancs. One night last month, motorists phoned the police to report a "ghost" seen walking along the pavement outside the parish church at Chetwynd, Newport, Shropshire, on the A41. (Daily Mail, June 11)

One of the latest reports appeared in the Liverpool Daily Post on July 10, where it was revealed that two young couples had left their homes on a new estate at Winsford, Cheshire, after the two wives had independently claimed to have seen a similar ghost on the same day. Mrs Susan Tomlinson, aged 22, of 285 St John's Gardens, Winsford, said: "I woke up at two o'clock one morning and saw a dark shadowy figure crouching at the end of the bed. I woke my husband John and made him take me and our two young children to my mother's house at once."

Mrs Phyllis Orritt, aged 20, who lives opposite, at 271 St John's Gardens, said: "I was in the sitting room at eight o'clock in the evening and saw a shadowy thing like the top half of a man picked out against the front door. It was on the same day that Mrs Tomlinson saw her ghost, but I did not know that at the time." Mrs Orritt said her house was cold and frightening for two days after, and dogs could not be persuaded to enter. She left with her husband Peter to stay with relatives for a week.

UFOs in Ireland

Because we hear of few Irish UFO reports, most of us tend to assume that there is very little UFO activity there. Mr Martin Feeney, in a letter published in the Irish Press (June 21), informs us: "...the following is a list of places (in Ireland) where UFO sightings occurred during the month of February ('69): Bantry, Mallow, Whitegate, Cohn, Ballinascorthy-Abichill (all in Cork), Mullinabone (Co. Tipperary), Ballyragget (Co. Kilkenny) and Greystones (Co. Wicklow)."

Planet Earth: An Easy Conquest for Hostile Aliens

"The Observer" (June 15) phoned the "key authorities" to find out if we are "prepared for a belligerent planet armed with interplanetary ballistic missiles which might be used in an attack on earth?"

The Russian Embassy replied: "It's a hard question to answer: we've no immediate information or policy. But it's an

interesting question, which will be referred to Major-General Leonid D. Nemtchenko."

The American Embassy:- "There are no plans for fighting an unfriendly planet. But I'm sure that if there was an invasion we'd help defend everybody else, especially if the invasion affected America's safety."

The Chinese Legation replied: "I don't know whether our People's Government would help defend the imperialist countries."

The Ministry of Defence spokesman was fatalistic. He said: "We haven't made any preparations. I think the Americans take such things much more seriously. But if we were attacked from another planet, there's not much you can do about it. After all, they might use atomic rays or something and we couldn't do much against that. In any case, if an attack started, we probably wouldn't know from which planet it actually came. Maybe the Navy could help because they've got Polaris. But they haven't got an anti-anti-anti-missile system. I don't think the Army would be able to help either-- they're more concerned with local matters."

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