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PROJECT RED BOOK

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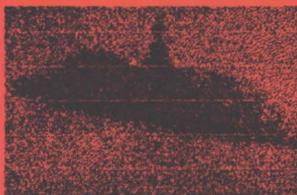
inside this document

AN INTERVIEW WITH LIONEL FANTHORPE
UFO PHOTO HOAXES FINALLY REVEALED
THE *ULTIMATE*, ULTIMATE CONSPIRACY

And much more...

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YUFOS



Vol 5 # 6, December 2001)

CONTENTS

1) AN INTERVIEW WITH THE REVEREND LIONEL FANTHORPE

Dave Baker talks vampires, ghosts and haunted cinemas with the star of Fortean TV

8) NO KIDDING THIS TIME...MY FLYING SAUCER PHOTO IS GENUINE (part 1)

Andy Roberts and David Clark reveal the real, genuine truth about the Steven Darbyshire photograph.

16) AN INTERVIEW WITH TOM BOLLOXINSKI

Dave Baker learns that it is all in a name, while speaking to the New Wave Ufologist about his "Ultimate Conspiracy"

19) FROM AROUND THE WORLD...AND BEYOND!

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"Welcome... to the real world."

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE REVEREND LIONEL FANTHORPE

Lionel Fanthorpe sold his first story *Worlds Without End* to Badger Books (John Spencer and Co Ltd. of Hammersmith) in 1952. Since then he has written and sold well over 250 books as well as numerous, columns, articles and features. He has worked as a journalist, industrial training manager and teacher, and came to Cardiff in 1979 as Head of a Comprehensive High School, which he ran for over ten years, before returning to Show Business. He is currently a radio and TV presenter, as well as a writer and lecturer. His most recent books include: *Thoughts and Prayers for Changing Times*, *Thoughts and Prayers for Stressful Times*, *Mysteries of the Bible* and *Death: The Final Mystery*. He and Patricia are currently working on *The World's Most Mysterious Objects* for Hounslow-Dundurn in Toronto. He is President of ASSAP and BUFORA, Patron of Jumbo Motorcyclists' Charity for Children with Special Needs, Fellow of the Institute of Management and the Royal Society of Arts. He's a member of Equity, Mensa, the Society of Authors, the Ghost Club, the SPR and the Welsh Academi. His main hobbies are weight training, martial arts and riding his big, black Harley Davidson Electra Glide.

DAVE BAKER: Lionel, you list your main hobbies as weight training, martial arts and "riding your big, black Harley Davidson Electra Glide". This is aside from your forays into UFOs and paranormal phenomenon. You're not exactly Derek Nimmo, are you, Lionel?

LIONEL FANTHORPE: Being a non-stipendiary Priest who's done – and still does – numerous other things, I suppose I'm several million light years away from the stereotypical pious and timid cartoon caricature of a nervous 1930s curate. In classical times I'd have been a candidate for the Priesthood at the infamous shrine of Diana where you got the job by killing the previous incumbent in single combat ("The Priest who slays the Slayer – and shall himself be slain.") I'd also fit comfortably into the Templar warrior-priest category – or a macho version of Robin Hood's pal, Friar Tuck.

How long have you been interested in paranormal and fortaean events?

As long as I can recall – certainly since the forties while I was still at school.

How are you treated, or looked upon by the Church for your studies into the paranormal? Have you ever had any clashes with Church authorities, or parishioners?

I suspect there may be a modicum of suspicion and disapproval from some ultra-respectable, cautious traditionalists and a few fundamentalists. It very rarely reaches me, and it certainly never bothers me when it does. Being a non-stipendiary volunteer has great advantages: if you don't live in a Church House or draw a Church salary, there aren't many threats or sanctions the authorities can level at you. If they ever decided to try to throw me out, I'd simply carry on regardless as an independent, non-denominational Priest. The great virtues in life are not clerical humility and obedience but self-respect and fearless independence.

I recently wrote to a local Parish magazine, *Grenoside News*, offering an article, or even a series of articles on local legends, superstitions, ghost stories, big cat sightings etc, with the suggestion that readers could send me (and the magazine) any of their own stories and experiences. The vicar turned down my offer, as "articles of this nature are not the policy of a parish magazine". I must admit that I was hardly surprised, but I was disappointed. Bearing in mind your own faith, can you understand this?

I'm sorry to hear of their reaction, and I certainly can't understand it. This is all God's universe, and the mysterious phenomena He's put there for us to investigate are some of the most intriguing and exciting things in it. A

good ghost story, or a poltergeist in the Vicarage, makes far more interesting reading than details of the money raised for the new belfry curtains at Mrs Snooks' Coffee Morning.

So you've read *Grenoside News* then! Seriously though, do you find that your faith makes you more open to the idea of extraterrestrials, ghosts, and other paranormal events?

As a Christian Priest, I certainly believe in Christ's Resurrection and the everlasting and abundant life He brings for us all. This may imply that survival of bodily death indicates the possibility of contacting some of the survivors! But as an objective, scientific investigator, I separate what I acknowledge as an act of simple faith (something we *choose* to believe in) from things which the evidence points towards. Christian faith is rational and logical, but it can't be proved in the way that a quadratic equation can be proved. A belief in God and an invisible, spiritual world probably inclines the mind towards an investigation of other paranormal phenomena, but scientific rigor is essential during investigations of the anomalous. Because I'm aware that I'd like it to be true makes me extra cautious about evidence.

Bearing this in mind, do you still search for a scientific answer to these phenomena?

Yes, indeed. Science is one of the roads along which we search for ultimate Truth and Knowledge, and God is, above all, a God of Truth and Knowledge. A clear, honest, scientific approach to the universe must be far more acceptable to God than blind, unreasoning, fundamentalist faith. I believe that it is God's plan and purpose that all His creation – including us – should come to know Him and love Him and enjoy fellowship with Him and one another for a joyous eternity. But He wants us to come voluntarily and rationally. Love cannot be coerced.

Are you an active, "in-the-field" investigator, or are you more of a researcher?

In the field whenever possible. Patricia and I have made first hand, on site investigations at Glozel, Rennes-le-Château, Oak Island Nova Scotia, Woolpit in Suffolk where the Green Children were seen in medieval times, Wroxham Broad with its reported time-slips, the Chase-Elliot Vault on Barbados, Croglin Grange of vampire fame, Woodchester Manor – and many other places. We are also keen researchers and analysts of older data.

It's an impressive list. Can you remember your first investigation?

In Norfolk some time in the fifties. Dr Geoff Nelson and I ran the Norfolk Society for the Investigation of Psychic Phenomena in those days, and our first case was a poltergeist in a country cottage in a Norfolk village. It didn't perform while we there, but the occupier was a good, sensible and honest witness and something strange had certainly happened there according to her reliable accounts.

And what was the last, or your current case?

We're currently working on the mysteries of labyrinths and mazes, and the weird old Phaistos disc. We've just got back from Crete. I'll be lecturing on these topics at the next Fortean "UnConvention" in 2002.

Which case has left you the most baffled for a rational explanation?

There's no really satisfactory explanation for the moving coffins in the Chase Elliot vault at Oistin's, Christchurch, Barbados. Some of the lead coffins weighed nearly a ton and were moved around by some unknown force – even when the vault was sealed and the floor sanded.

Have you ever had to radically change your opinion on a case due to further evidence?

Croglin Grange and its so-called vampire was such a case. The original account was given by one of the Fisher family to Augustus Hare and recorded in his book *The Story of my Life*. He was apparently at a wedding at the time (towards the end of the 19th century) where one of the Hare girls in Augustus's family was

being married to a Fisher from Croglin Low Hall, otherwise known as Croglin Grange. In account one – and I rather wonder whether both Augustus and the Fisher narrator had been at the champagne for a while – the Fishers moved to London because of business interests there and failed to sell the Grange. They finally let it on a seven year lease to a family named Cranswell: two brothers (Edward and Michael) and their sister, Amelia.

Something – later referred to as a vampire got in through Amelia's ground floor bedroom window and attacked her. She failed to unlock the bedroom door in time so her brothers couldn't get in to help her. The attacker bit her face and throat savagely and then retreated when the boys finally broke in the door.

Amelia was ill for some days, and the family went to Switzerland so that she could convalesce for a few days. While there, they bought two matched pistols and a supply of ammunition -- all in a case. It is significant that this Swiss lead was tinged with a distinctive green colour, unlike normal British pistol lead.

The attacker duly returned and made a second approach to Amelia's window. Armed with one of the Swiss pistols, Edward ran immediately to defend her. Michael raced out of the door and shot the attacker in the leg at close range. Whatever it was screamed and limped away. Michael pursued it. It vanished into a nearby vault. He waited outside. His pistol was empty. At last he went for help and returned with his brother and several tough volunteers. They entered the tomb together.

One coffin lay open on a dais. The occupant was partly mummified. It had been dead for decades, but there was fresh red blood on the teeth and on the claw-like remains of the hands.

That was enough for the vampire legend to take wing. Accounts vary, but the thing was apparently taken to the cross-roads, staked in the traditional manner, decapitated, deprived of its wizened limbs and then burnt.

During this grisly process, a green Swiss pistol ball was discovered in one of the legs. Everyone was now convinced that they had found and destroyed a real vampire.

We investigated... Much was wrong. The Church was a good two miles from Croglin Low Hall – and there were no vaults in the

cemetery. The Hall had two or three storeys. Bedrooms were not on the ground floor. Who would have used a single shot pistol when Mr Colt had already made his famous 6-chambered revolvers world famous?

So the story apparently fell apart. Then we talked to Mrs Johnson who was farming from Croglin Low Hall when we called. She showed us architectural corbels which might once have supported a lower roof. Had the upper floors been added? Was the Grange once a single storey building? Then a few yards from the back door she pointed to an area which was impossible to plough because the ruins of an old church were just below the surface. Cromwell's men had damaged it severely. Villagers had later pillaged the stone for their own building projects. There might well have been vaults around it – including the one into which the vampire allegedly vanished.

Further research revealed that the story which had been told to Augustus Hare was one which had been in the Fisher family for centuries – it was not a 19th century adventure – more likely a sixteenth or seventeenth century episode. And now the single shot pistols made sense!

At one of my lectures on the Croglin vampire, a young medical man in the audience put forward an interesting theory. What if the attacker was a perfectly normal human being, but mentally ill? When he came after Amelia on the later occasion, and Michael shot him in the leg, he escaped to his layer in the tomb. While Michael was getting help, the 'vampire' put blood from his leg wound on the face and hands of the mummified corpse – which had been in the vault long before he took it over as a den. He managed to work the pistol ball out of the flesh wound on his leg and thrust that into the leg of the long dead body. Seeing no guard on the door, he then slunk away. "Furthermore," suggested the doctor, "there were no more attacks because the poor devil had infected his open leg wound with gangrene from the corpse. A few days later he died in a ditch a few miles away and was given a nameless pauper's funeral in another Parish."

Readers of Project Red Book may be interested to hear that you have your own publication now. Tell us about *Fanthorpes...*

We aim to bring to our readers: digests of the latest paranormal investigations and experiments, as well as stories and articles.

I'm just the Editorial Consultant and Advisor. My friend Phillip Carr is the Editor, Publisher and Proprietor. I think Phillip is doing a great job with it – but I must admit to a certain prejudice in the magazine's favour! Copies can be ordered from www.fanthorpes.com or from SDA, Bessborough House, Fostall, Hernhill, Faversham, ME1 3 9JG

There is an interesting article in the first issue on Electronic Voice Phenomenon (EVP), a topic we discussed at a recent YUFOS meeting. What is your opinion on this subject? Do you think it is possible to record voices of the dead?

My research and investigations so far lead me to believe that it's both genuine and paranormal. I'd like to spend a lot more time studying it. I think it could well repay in-depth research.

Many readers will no doubt recognise you from the Channel 4 series *Fortean TV*? Did you enjoy making the series?

Yes, I did. It was terrific. There was an excellent technical crew, and the production and direction were superb. I'd love to make hundreds more. Perhaps if enough fans write to Channel 4 begging for a new series, they'll commission one. My favourite pieces were doing the songs with my good friend Alf.

Will we be seeing you on any more TV programmes any time soon?

I'm currently appearing as quizmaster in an HTV series called *Holy Quiz* on Sunday afternoons. I do part of the BBC *SO WEIRD* website called *ASK LIONEL*. I'm on Channel 5 at 8.05 this coming Saturday in *Haunted Britain* and I've got a new series called *Talking Stones* commissioned for HTV next year. I was a guest on the BBC 1 *Heaven and Earth* show on Sunday 25th November and I do a regular radio slot on *Real Radio* which serves South Wales from its Morganstown studio. That's every Sunday morning at 7.30 am – and it's live! The series I presented on *Castles of Horror* (sometimes re-titled *Bloody Towers*) is on Discovery and Horizon. It runs through 20 episodes. I also worked recently as presenter for the DVD promoting *Revelation* That's a

brilliant new film from Romulus that must not be missed. It's out in April 2002.

Which researchers / investigators do you most admire?

Colin Wilson has to be the top man for me, followed by friends like Phil Walton (ASSAP) and Robert Snow (Ghost Club) plus the Spencers.

You are the author of over 250 books - a staggering amount! Tell us about some of these.

The early ones were SF and Supernatural novels and short stories. There are also some religious titles, and many on unsolved mysteries. As soon as Phil Walton completes his rebuilding work on our website www.lionel-fanthorpe.com there'll be a page there with all the currently available titles listed – plus details of where to buy them.

At the ASSAP 20th anniversary meeting in York and in *ASSAP News* you briefly mentioned your exorcism at the "haunted Odeon". Could you give more details of the fascinating case? What was the nature of the entity that was attacking the man? Was it an earthbound human spirit, or even a demonic entity?

This is the case that we filmed for Saturday night's Channel 5 *Haunted Britain* at 8.05 pm. Watch it if you get the chance. The basic story was that a murder had been committed in the cinema in 1945 or '6 when a serviceman returned and slaughtered his wife's boyfriend in the cinema. A young usher was so distressed by the phenomena there that he had to give up his job. When I was there with a gifted medium, Rosie Malone, something appeared to attack the young man again. Rosie was sure she could see evil entities around him. I couldn't. I never can! When I said prayers of exorcism and sprinkled holy water, Rosie said: "They (the negative entities) are terrified. They're retreating fast." There's a photo and an account of it in Spencers' latest Encyclopedia.

Have you ever been scared by anything during an investigation?

Never.

As well as exorcisms and hauntings, you also investigate UFOs. What do you think is the most impressive (unsolved) UFO case?

We were pretty impressed when we visited Roswell, New Mexico. We thought the exhibition centre was challenging and interesting, and we spoke to descendants and friends of witnesses for a BBC radio documentary.

Do you think that some UFOs could be a parapsychological phenomena, i.e. a sort of cosmic poltergeist?

I believe this is a theory that's well worth investigating carefully. There's mileage in the idea that some UFOs are very advanced technological extra-terrestrial space-craft. Trans-dimensional craft are another possibility. Some may even come from different probability tracks. Others may be secret new military flying machines designed and concealed by terrestrial governments. There's enough room in the sky for all those theories to be correct on different occasions.

During your investigations, have you come across any cases that involve links between different types of paranormal phenomena, for example, people with psychic/PK abilities also having UFO and / or abduction experiences?

I'd go a little further than that and suggest that there may be a psychic equivalent of Einstein's Unified Field Theory. Just as all normative science is linked, so all the paranormal and anomalous phenomena may be linked too. Perhaps there isn't really a boundary between the natural, physical sciences and the strange stuff in which we're all interested. I suspect there's a Cosmic Oneness at the back of all phenomena. It's just that with our limited capabilities here, some of the vital links are invisible.

As the current president of the British UFO Research Association (BUFORA), can you tell us a little

about the organisation, and your hopes for it's future?

I believe that there are few things more important than honest, objective scientific investigations of the UFO phenomena. I want to see the organisation going from strength to strength. I'd like to see it linked closely with all the other UFO investigators' groups and for all of us to have the recognition we deserve – from the media and from the Government. UFO research is not trivial, not offbeat and not a joke. There are some incredible mysteries up there waiting to be solved.

You are also President of ASSAP. Can you tell us about some of their work?

ASSAP is a superb investigative organisation. It was a great honour and privilege for me to be invited to succeed the late, great Michael Bentjine, their first President, and to have Patricia's unfailing help and support as ASSAP's First Lady! ASSAP looks carefully and scientifically into all aspects of the paranormal and anomalous. Full details of ASSAP's many current activities from Phil Walton at Phil@flyingwombats.com

What do you think of the possibility of Extraterrestrial life? Are we alone in the Universe?

My first argument for the existence of extra-terrestrial life-forms is the sheer size of the universe. If it isn't infinite, it might as well be when viewed from our human, terrestrial perspective. If only 1 star in 1000 has a planetary system like our Solar System, and if only 1 in 1000 of such systems has a planet capable of sustaining life actually do sustain life, and if only 1 in 1000 of those have intelligent life capable of space technology – then there are still a great many space-bourne aliens zooming around in the universe; some of whom have probably visited our remote ancestors, and others of whom may be visiting us now.

Lionel, share with us your views on these aspects of the paranormal...

UFOs

We can apply the statistical filter to the thousands of reported UFO sightings, and

numerous abductions. If only 1 in 1000 is genuine – especially abduction reports – then there is almost certainly something out there – and it's more than likely to be more intelligent than we are. It's important to recognise that many ancient religious records seem to relate to visitors from space rather than to gods, angels, demons and immortal heroes with supernatural, supernormal powers.

It's also worth considering the possibilities that UFO sightings may be sightings of time-machines, or of trans-dimensional craft. Are UFOs from other probability tracks rather than from another planet in this same physical universe which we occupy?

Ghosts

There are several theories which set out to explain psychic phenomena, particularly phantoms and apparitions.

Pure imagination: the observer has reported something he or she thought was there, but which wasn't there really. The brain is healthy, but the imagination is hyperactive.

A second theory is that there are aberrant physical forces at work in the witness's brain. There may be a brain tumour, an infection such as meningitis, a very high fever, too much alcohol, drug abuse, concussion, a small blood clot... Any or all of these can cause visual and auditory hallucinations as well as hallucinatory tactile sensations.

There is the theory of impressions left in the fabric of old buildings, mines, tombs, castles and ancient manor houses, and it is a plausible one. If technology can deliberately record audio-visual signals with video cameras and microphones, why can't there be similar natural or accidental recordings? What sort of emotional energy or desperate feelings radiated into the earth near the block where young Anne Boleyn was beheaded? Do sights and sounds of the doomed Queen's last moments replay there from time to time when conditions are right and sensitive people are present? It is not beyond the realms of possibility.

There is also the possibility that ghosts are what they are popularly believed to be – the immortal spirits of those who have died on earth and gone to live in the spirit world. As a Christian priest, I have no doubt at all that we survive bodily death and go on to enjoy abundant and eternal life with Christ. But

that's my stance as a priest, not as a scientific investigator. There are numerous recorded instances of contacts with what seem to be ghosts in this sense, and that communication between the ghosts and their human contactees on Earth appeared to be knowing and intelligently interactive- certainly nothing like trying to communicate with a video running on a screen.

Spiritualism, and other psychic phenomena...

Various extremist, fundamentalist religious groups believe that all psychic phenomena are evil and morally wrong and should be avoided at all costs. Clearly, this is not a view with which I can sympathise with in any way. The explanation of psychic phenomena put forward by those whose mind inhabit this restricted paradigm is that demons or evil spirits are responsible for psychic phenomena, and that their objective is to deceive and tempt human beings.

C.S. Lewis's *Screwtape Letters* is very well worth reading in this area. Uncle Screwtape writes a series of advisory epistles to his young demonic nephew, in the course of which he tries to teach the junior demon the most effective methods for tempting his human victims. In attempting to create a rationale for God and the Holy Angels as the vastly superior opponents of Satan and the demons, Lewis sums up by saying, "God wants servants who will eventually become sons and daughters. Satan wants cattle who will eventually become food."

This theory explains psychic phenomena in terms of Lewisian demons using the ouijah board to steer sinners in the direction of hell.

Another theory is concerned with non-human entities which hypothetically inhabit other dimensions or parallel universes. Micheal Moorcock, the science-fiction and fantasy author, had a fascinating fictional concept of a powerful spirit entity which splintered when it reached Earth. So dynamic was this shattering that it interconnected fragments of this weird being were injected into different time-zones. Part of him/her/it lived, say, in prehistoric times. Another splinter lived as a Greek hoplite in 500 B.C. Yet another was perhaps a Roman soldier manning Hadrien's Wall when the Romans abandoned Britain in the fifth century. A further fragment was contemporary with Queen Elizabeth I and the Spanish Armada. The final piece lives inside a person in our own

21st century. In the Moorcock illustration, the pieces can communicate with each other, but may not always understand how, or why, they are doing it.

Translating Moorcock's intriguing fictional illustration into a serious attempt at a theory of ghosts and paranormality, we look for ways of explaining anomalous psychic sights, sounds, and tactile sensations in terms of tenuously interconnected, time-scattered components of a huge, dynamic entity.

There is also the theory that if other very advanced life-forms from distant parts of the universe have evolved past homo-sapiens, then it is possible that they have evolved into pure spirit: non-physical beings. Such entities would, arguably, experience difficulty in communicating with normal physical beings like us –and this might explain the oddities reported from Victorian séance rooms. One of the charges levelled against spiritualism by sceptics and cynics is that many of the messages supposedly received by mediums are meaningless. If extra-terrestrials are responsible, the obscurity of some messages can be accounted for.

ESP and psychic powers

In dealing with psi factors such as telepathy, telekenesis, OOBÉ's (*out-of-body-experiences*) and teleportation, we are again in the realm of fascinating speculation. From 40 years and more of psychical research and investigation, I am inclined to the view that human mind contains massive –perhaps unlimited –powers. If we can once master the art of science of harnessing these tremendous mental powers and driving them in the direction of our choice, there would be very little or nothing that we could accomplish.

Lionel, it's your birthday soon, but unlike most of us, who might hire out a room above the Dog & Ferret, and make do with the local DJ, you are hosting a convention...tell us about *Reminiscon 50*

It's almost 50 years since I sold my first short story *Worlds Without End* to John Spencer and Co of Hammersmith who were publishing Badger Books Science Fiction and Supernatural Stories at the time. I wrote

approximately 150 books for them in the 1950s and 60s. Patricia and I have been writing together ever since and to date we've got at least 250 titles out. The most recent was *Death: the Final Mystery* and we're currently working on *The World's Most Mysterious Objects* for Hounslow Dundurn Press in Toronto. Ten years ago we held a convention called REMINISCON 40 to celebrate 40 years as an author in print. REMINISCON 50 is the sequel. (*See advertisement elsewhere in this issue –Ed*) Celebrity authors who'll be there include Terry Pratchett, Colin Wilson – and many others. We'd be very grateful indeed for your support and we hope to see lots of friends from your Organisation at REMINISCON 50. We are being very generously helped and supported by the Welsh Academi.

Lionel, thanks immensely for an enjoyable and fascinating interview. Good luck with *Reminiscon 50*, and all your future endeavours.

NO KIDDING THIS TIME...MY FLYING SAUCER PHOTO IS GENUINE! (part one)

UFO photographic hoaxes and the story of Alex Birch and Stephen Darbishire

DAVID CLARKE & ANDY ROBERTS- www.flyingsaucery.com

"There can be no possible doubt that this is a genuine story. Children do not as a rule go round faking photographs."

Leonard Cramp, quoted by Desmond Leslie (*Space, Gravity and the Flying saucer* (1).)

"...how could a young boy of 13 tell a lie? Well I was a tremendous liar, I was brought up in a middle class family who were highly religious and I learnt to lie from the age of one! In retrospect, I think was merely a pawn for other people's needs, and I just fitted the bill."

Stephen Darbishire, February 2001 (2)

Whenever ufologists turn their attention to the subject of hoaxing within their subject the fundamental gulf between sceptics and believers is brought sharply into focus. Those who choose to invest belief in the ETH and other exotic explanations for the UFO phenomenon tend towards the simplistic party line that, yes, hoaxes exist, but they are few and far between and have little effect on 'serious ufology'. Sceptics and more open-minded students of flying saucery are a little more realistic.

It's perfectly true that as a percentage of investigated UFO cases, *known* hoaxes represent a tiny fraction. But simple bean counting misses the point entirely. UFO hoaxes *may* be small in number but those which exist have had a massive impact upon the subject, and have been far reaching in their influence.

Hoaxes are rarely just standard UFO reports. They are invariably photographic or document based. This makes them an easily displayable, marketable media commodity. Whereas a single witness sighting of a brightly lit UFO may only get, at best, a few column inches in a newspaper, a UFO hoax photograph, such as that created by Gordon Faulkner during the 1965 Warminster flap, will receive national media coverage. In turn this sort of exposure can add a stamp of validity (however specious)

on to a hitherto disparate collection of UFO reports, turning local a flap into a national phenomenon. And so the cycle continues.

Listing and discussing known hoaxes would be tedious. The information is available in the literature for those who wish to seek it out. Most of you will already be familiar with it and how hoaxes like Gulf Breeze, MJ-12 etc have affected the subject. One small part of our research in recent years has focused upon those suspected hoaxes that had a huge impact upon the media and UFOlogy but, more importantly, have continued to influence the witness/perpetrator. We all too often forget that *people* lie at the centre of the UFO mystery and what happens to individuals who are thrust into the public eye, and how their views about their alleged experience/s change and mutate over the years, is often forgotten or overlooked.

The cases under discussion here exemplify the problem in that they are in the borderlands, being neither 100% proven hoaxes or unequivocally from 'out there' but continue to exert a deep influence upon the public perception of UFO mythology. The Alex Birch and Stephen Darbishire photographs are classic UFO photographs, much written about and much speculated upon. Both these cases impacted hard on British ufology. As we will see they impacted even harder on those involved with them. They also give an important insight into the nature of hoaxing and into the heart of early British UFOlogy.

UFO cases come and go, witness names and case details used like happy family cards to justify one theory or to trump another. Classic cases are repeated by rote, the humanity ripped out of them to satisfy UFOlogical obsessions and facts. It's the frequent cry in internet forums such as UFOupdates that sceptics don't take witness testimony seriously, but how many of these smug internet key-clickers take the trouble to track down witnesses to classic cases and or try to make sense of their stories? We did. Whether there is any sense, whether

their stories are true or false only you can decide.

THE STEPHEN DARBISHIRE PHOTOGRAPH

Flying saucers arrived in the British Isles in the late summer of 1950, when two popular weekend newspapers, the *Sunday Dispatch* and the *Sunday Express*, launched a major media promotion campaign. Both papers competed to serialise the seminal books by Major Donald Keyhoe *Flying Saucers are Real*, Frank Scully's *Behind the Flying Saucers* and Gerald Heard's *Riddle of the Flying Saucers*. Behind the scenes, the editor of the *Sunday Dispatch*, Charles Eade, was quietly encouraged to promote 'flying saucer' stories by his friend Lord Mountbatten whom he had served as Press officer during the Second World War (3). Mountbatten, who was at that time a personal believer in the ET origin of the saucers, felt the subject should be taken seriously and wanted to make the public aware of the "evidence." The *Sunday Dispatch* played an influential role in creating the first real flying saucer invasion of Britain. The popular newspaper featured saucer sightings prominently on page 1 on a number of occasions throughout the early 1950s much to the chagrin of its rivals, but Eade took great pains to protect the source for his original story that he claimed in October 1950 was "bigger than the Atom Bomb wars." Partly as a result of this first tabloid-style hype, the *Dispatch's* circulation rose from a mere 700,000 copies in the late 40s to 2,400,000 when Eade left the editor's seat in 1957. (4)

The flying saucers had arrived and the ground was prepared for ever more bizarre and incredible stories. By the autumn of 1953 when George Adamski's book with Desmond Leslie, *Flying Saucers have Landed* was first published in Britain, the public were already primed to accept the incredible (5). It was an era of rapid technological progress and great optimism that mankind would soon be taking steps into outer space. As a result, the British public eagerly lapped up the stories describing military jets outpaced by saucers and puzzled over the photographs taken by a humble American farmer, Paul Trent, allegedly showing a flying disc (again featured on pg 1 of the *Sunday Dispatch*). The next logical step was a story claiming a flying saucer had landed, followed by the first photograph taken in the British Isles. Both events were to follow in the space of little more than 18 months.

"...It had to happen. It has happened. A flying saucer has landed – in the United States!"

This was how science editor Maurice Goldsmith opened the story published in the October 3, 1953 edition of the popular London-based magazine *Illustrated*. Entitled "Happy Landings from Outer Space" the article featured a half-page b/w reproduction of the classic 'bottle cooler' photograph taken by US contactee George Adamski at Palomar Gardens, California, on December 13, 1952. The photo it was said, depicted a flying saucer "Scout Ship" 35 feet in diameter, complete with three portholes and three "landing spheres."

Also featured in the magazine were photographs of 'six flying saucers' and a cigar-shaped 'Mother Ship' taken on March 5, 1951 and an artist's impression of the 'man from Venus' Adamski claimed to have met near at Desert Centre, Arizona, in November the following year. Goldsmith adopted a tongue-in-cheek stance throughout his extended review of the book and concluded dryly: "...unfortunately, Adamski's logic is poor and I am prepared to wager that if ever I see life from Venus it will not look anything like me, or Mr Adamski or the being he encountered." (6)

Many thousands of people read the article in *Illustrated*, and the follow-ups that appeared in the national newspapers during the winter of 1953-54. Adamski's photographs and claims were transmitted across the world, and the exciting story of visitors from other planets were the very stuff of schoolboy fantasy. So widespread were the stories that news of the arrival of the flying saucers reached Little Arrow farm at Torver, in the beautiful surroundings of the English Lake District, during the winter of 1953-54. Little Arrow was the home of Dr S.B. Darbishire, a GP who had retired to run a small farm in the fells below Coniston Old Man (2,575 ft). He had a son, Stephen, then aged 13, an intelligent, creative boy who had displayed a talent for art that he would eventually develop into a career as an adult.

Dr Darbishire had been brought up as a Quaker and his son Stephen says he had "a good sense of humour and a very inquiring mind; he would accept nothing, questioned everything he was told and loved excitement." More excitement than many people experience in a lifetime was soon to follow. Within six months of the publication of Adamski's book, Stephen

became the *first* person in England to take photographs of a 'flying saucer' hovering near the Old Man.

The story began – as in so many other UFO photo cases – as a result of what Stephen describes as “an accident” of history. On the morning of February 15, 1954, Stephen – then a pupil at Ulverston Grammar School – and his eight-year old cousin Adrian Meyer set off for an expedition on the slopes of the fell below the Old Man armed with an “old fashioned” Kodak box camera recently purchased by his father. To this day, Stephen maintains that at this point he knew “absolutely nothing” about the subject of flying saucers. According to Desmond Leslie’s account the youngster experienced “a nagging persistent restlessness” that fateful morning, as if something was urging him that he must go up the hill behind his home “...he could not tell why; he merely knew he had to.” (7)

The pair planned to take pictures of birds and other wildlife in a small hill valley on the slopes below the Old Man. Stephen immediately raises doubts about the reality status of the photographs he obtained when, today, he recalls how: “...my cousin and I had been fooling around taking pictures...[doing] trick photography and lots of other exciting things with it, double images, ghosts, jumping off rooftops and that sort of thing...”

What happened next is a little “out of focus” – as were the photographs that resulted from this encounter with ‘the unknown.’ According to the story told by the boys in 1954 it was Adrian who first drew Stephen’s attention to something odd in the sky in the direction of the mountain. The older boy was at that moment looking in the opposite direction, towards Lake Coniston when Adrian thumped him on the back and exclaimed: ‘Look, what on earth’s that?’ pointing to the sky above Dow Crag. The ‘object’, according to the first published account (in the *Lancashire Evening Post*, Preston, February 18, 1954) had a silvery, glassy appearance, shining “like aluminium in the sunlight.” It glided towards them from the direction of Coniston, descending until it disappeared behind a piece of high ground, once again coming into view again a few seconds later. It approached within 400 yards of two startled boys, travelling at tremendous speed, and then stopped suddenly and hovered, noiselessly, in the sky.

Stephen told a reporter they could *clearly* see every detail: “The object was glistening and it

was a silvery milky colour. You could tell the outline of it very plainly indeed and see portholes along the upper part, and a thing which looked like a hatch on top. There were three bumps underneath and the centre of the underneath part was of a darker colour. I took the first picture when it was moving very slowly about three or four hundred yards away and then it disappeared from my view as there was some undergrowth in the way. When it came into sight again I took another picture but then it suddenly went up into the sky in a great swish. As it went upwards it tilted and I could see the underneath side more clearly. There was some sort of whistling sound as it went up which I think was the wind.” (8)

Immediately the boys ran down to Little Arrow farm where they found Dr Darbishire and the family watching TV, oblivious to the events unfolding outside. Stephen recalls how the two excited youngsters rushed into the farmhouse and blurted out how they “had seen something strange...I think I used the words ‘a flying saucer’ and of course everyone fell about laughing and said ‘oh yes, Stephen, you’ve been up to your tricks again.’” Stephen’s father, according to Desmond Leslie, “frankly did not believe it” but made his son sit down and write a statement and make a sketch of what he had seen within half an hour of the sighting taking place.

Stephen quickly produced some remarkable and accomplished pencil sketches of a classic Adamski ‘flying saucer’ *before* his two photographs were reproduced in celluloid. They consisted of two detailed drawings of a “Scout Ship,” complete with turret, three portholes and landing gear, almost but not exactly identical to those which had appeared in the magazine *Illustrated* during October 1953. Other sketches depict the craft at different angles, possibly showing its method of departure. In longhand beneath the drawings appear the words: “*Drawing by Stephen Darbishire, aged 13 years, of what he saw, done before the two photographs of the flying saucer had been developed.*” (9)

Dr Darbishire delivered the film for development to a lab in Coniston village while Stephen was away, staying with his godmother. When the film was returned the retired GP could not believe his eyes. For the final two frames on the film *did* show a fuzzy, saucer-shaped object apparently suspended above a grassy hillock. Although out of focus, in the best picture it is possible to pick out what appear to be ‘dark portholes’ and three

'landing domes' as described by Stephen at the time.

Stephen recalled: "When I came back my father greeted me off the bus at 8 o'clock in the morning and said 'right, come on inside.' He was very agitated and he said I've got so and so from the *Daily Express* and someone from the *Daily Mail* arriving in half an hour. Before I knew it we had half the world's press on the doorstep." What happened next, as they say, is history. Stephen's story and a reproduction of the clearest photograph, the first in the sequence, was published on page 1 of the Preston-based *Lancashire Evening Post*. Within days photos of Stephen, Adrian and the 'flying saucer' had appeared in the national Press. On February 26, 1954, the *Lancashire Evening Post* became the first British newspaper to reproduce Darbishire's sketches and photograph alongside those of the Venusian "Scout Ship" taken by Adamski, having obtained special permission from "the leading British expert on the subject," Desmond Leslie. Al Griffin of the *Post* noted how "...we are assured... that Stephen had never seen the Adamski pictures" when he produced the sketch. What the paper described as "space travel enthusiasts, flying saucer fans, scientists, scoffers and sceptics" were all left to draw their own conclusions.

During the media frenzy that followed publication of the photographs, Stephen's written statement was overlooked. The original, or what is purported to be the original, was reproduced in Leonard Cramp's book *Space, Gravity and the Flying Saucer* and poses a number of questions. Most important is the sentence that reads: "...Adrian and I were down in a small hill valley so the rising in foreground of photo is due to the position we were in. Some grass is shown under the saucer.[my emphasis]" If these words really were committed to paper within half an hour of the experience as claimed and therefore some days before the photographs were developed, how could Stephen know what, if anything, was depicted on the negatives that were, at that point, still inside his father's camera? Sadly, no one other than the editor of *Flying Saucer News* felt it necessary to ask this very relevant question at the time. (10)

Equally of interest are Stephen's words describing the point immediately after the photo was taken: "...just as I had finished the flying saucer (which I now thought it must be) shot off up into the clouds..." A curious turn

of phrase for a boy who claimed he had "no knowledge" of flying saucers! Desmond Leslie, who travelled to Coniston on February 23 and was a guest of the Darbishire family for two days, soon dismissed the possibility that Stephen had faked the photographs. During his stay "Stephen never once contradicted himself [or] made a remark or inadvertent slip suggestive of a hoax," wrote Leslie who was at that time promoting *Flying Saucers Have Landed*. He saw young Stephen's photographs as corroborative evidence of Adamski's outlandish claims. Leslie notes that Stephen did not make any slip-ups when questioned by four hardened journalists and a crew from BBC TV. The boy's father maintained that he too had cross-examined both Stephen and Adrian thoroughly before deciding to "go public" with the photographs. He said they stuck by their story even when warned about the trouble they could be in if the story was a hoax. He was convinced they were not lying.

But the most suspicious statement of all is hidden within Leslie's attempt to persuade readers that Stephen had never read his book *Flying Saucers Have Landed* or even a abridged version of Adamski's claims: "...he [Stephen Darbishire] admitted he had seen the photograph of the Adamski saucer as published in *Illustrated* on 30th September [sic] 1953." (11)

If Leslie's account is accurate then Stephen clearly *had* seen Adamski's Scout Ship photo, published four months before his own photographs showing a similar "craft" were taken. Indeed, how else could the youngster have produced such an accurate pencil drawing of an "Scout Ship" complete with three portholes and landing gear? Clearly this left just two stark alternatives: either Stephen had seen an identical Venusian Scout Ship as described by George Adamski, or he had reproduced the photograph he had seen in *Illustrated* and somehow transferred this to celluloid.

Perhaps realising the problems this admission created for the story Leslie claimed that Stephen maintained "although this saucer picture [published in *Illustrated*] had shown a saucer with three portholes in a row, the one had seen had four in a row." In the drawing he produced immediately after the sighting Stephen drew only three portholes, "but as the saucer went away it turned slightly so that a fourth porthole came into view." For Leslie that was evidence enough, for he knew that in

one of the unpublished Adamski photos four portholes in a row are clearly shown.

“He [Stephen Darbishire] did not know this!” exclaimed Leslie with obvious glee. “This, on top of the other evidence, fully convinced me that Stephen was not only telling the truth but also that he had seen the same saucer (or an identical model) as Adamski.” (12)

In the heady days of 1954, these problems seemed irrelevant. Through accident or design Stephen Darbishire became a national celebrity overnight. His pictures were flashed around the world, and before February was out the inhabitants of Little Arrow farm had been introduced to what today Stephen calls “the world of sympathetic magic...modern magic” Desmond Leslie was just the first “flying saucer believer” to visit Coniston to experience the vibes of the ‘Space visitors.’ Leslie lost no time in proclaiming Stephen’s photo as “the second of the Adamski type to be photographed in the world” and told the local newspaper: “I am satisfied that Stephen saw what he says he saw...this visit or contact has been expected for some time.” (13)

Before the March was out Stephen had been invited to a saucer-spotters convention in London where delegates scrutinised blurry enlargements of his photograph. He recalls how “it all got rather hysterical and one chap leapt up and said he could see a face in a porthole.”

It was during this visit to London in March 1954, that Stephen and his father were secreted into a car and driven to Buckingham Palace to meet one of the Duke of Edinburgh’s private secretaries. It was claimed the invitation came from the Palace via Desmond Leslie who had contacts at ‘the highest level.’ In fact, the *Sunday Dispatch* got wind of the meeting soon afterwards and reported how Prince Philip had read about Stephen’s sighting in the newspapers “and wanted to know more.” (14)

The Royal Equerry, RAF Squadron Leader Sir Peter Horsley was at that time involved in his own “saucer” study with the blessing of the Duke, and “the Darbishire boys” became the latest in a series of saucer-spotters who were invited to his office to discuss their sightings. In his autobiography, Horsley says he was “impressed by their story and truthfulness” and notes Dr Darbishire “was not relishing the publicity and notoriety the family were receiving from the newspapers.” Horsley sent a report of the meeting to the Duke, who was

in Australia at the time, and asked a professional photographer, Wallace Heaton, to examine the negatives. His conclusion said, in summary: “Yes, they could have been faked but they were so good it would have cost quite a lot of money.” This left the RAF veteran puzzled: how could an ordinary farming family find the money to finance an elaborate hoax and even if they had, what was their motivation? “Was there a wider conspiracy?” he mused. (15)

Stephen Darbishire’s visit to Buckingham Palace was just the beginning of a series of adventures which led him and his family further and deeper into the bizarre world of the ‘flying saucer cult.’ Visitors called in at the Darbishire family home without invitation, and letters arrived by the sackful including one from none other than Lord Dowding, the Battle of Britain hero – another highly placed saucer believer at that time. In 1959 Stephen was introduced by Desmond Leslie to George Adamski at a meeting held in London during the contactee’s lecture tour of Britain and Europe. Stephen, who was by then attending art school, remained “unimpressed” by the contactee who he dismissed as “mad, mad as a hatter...somewhere else altogether.” It was at this stage, Stephen told us in 2001, that he asked himself: “How can I be involved in this, how can I actually be sitting here with these people?”

The teenager was by now feeling increasingly that he was pawn in other people’s games, that the photo was no longer his property “...all I was being used for was an instrument of verification.” As a result he decided the best way out was to put the word around that his photos were in fact fakes so he could go back to living a normal life. In a letter sent to UFO author Timothy Good in 1986 Stephen told how “...in desperation I ... said it was a fake.” (16) But as Alex Birch and others who followed in Stephen’s footsteps were later to find, the “hoax” declaration did not bring an end to the notoriety – rather the opposite: “I was counter-attacked, accused of working with the ‘Dark Powers’...or patronisingly ‘understood’ for following orders from some secret government department.”

While Stephen remained “detached” from the strange characters and even stranger beliefs that surrounded his experience, he found the biggest impact of all was upon the lives of his parents. Following the experiences of 1954, Dr Darbishire underwent what his son described as “a mid-life crisis.” The visitors and attention

his family received from the flying saucer movement opened up a whole new world of possibilities and Darbshire senior became drawn into the world of the occult, collecting a huge library of books on a range of esoteric subjects. The workshop at his farm became a laboratory where he constructed strange machines that utilised revolving lights to detect the human aura and effect alternative cures. Similarly, Stephen's mother was also profoundly affected by the experience and became more interested in the spiritual world.

In 2001 Stephen Darbshire – the artist – prefers to play down the significance of his best known piece of work, growing weary after almost half a century of tiresome questions. Yet the central mystery that eluded Sir Peter Horsley remains: just how could a young boy, who claimed he “knew absolutely nothing about flying saucers” manage to “create” one of most mysterious photographs in the history of the subject? And if it wasn't faked, then what exactly did the photograph depict? “An object,” was the simple but ambiguous answer Stephen Darbshire gave when this question was asked in 2001. What is not in dispute is that Stephen shared his father's inquisitive nature and creative talents – and clearly his sense of humour too, an attribute also associated with another influential personality entwined within this story, Desmond Leslie.

Interviewed in 2001 Darbshire continues to maintain he had never seen Adamski's photos when he produced his drawings and photographs, contradicting his own statement to Leslie in 1954 that he had indeed seen the pictures that appeared in *Illustrated*, the year previously.

How likely was it that the 13-year-old living in the early 50s had never heard of “flying saucers”? Not very likely, it seems. A survey of newspapers published in Cumbria during 1953-54 revealed an earlier saucer sighting, pre-dating Darbshire's experience, made by three Coniston schoolboys who claimed to have seen a saucer pass over the village as they waited for a bus. Another sighting followed at the village of Askam. (17) Surely a boy with such inquiring mind as Stephen Darbshire had would have heard about these sightings, if not in a newspaper then on the local grapevine, along with the stories about flying saucers widely published in the national media? Stephen was in fact quoted in the *London News Chronicle* as claiming a second sighting, just five days after the photograph was taken, of “a cigar-shaped object, again near Old Man”

and added “since then I have studied reports of flying saucers and believe in them.” (18) Was it entirely coincidental that the second sighting was of a cigar-shaped craft – of the ‘Mother Ship’ type photographed by Adamski and published alongside the ‘Scout Ship’ pictures in that widely-read issue of *Illustrated*?

Wherever the inspiration for those sketches came from, what can be said about the photographs themselves? Very little, because according to Darbshire both the negatives and all the surviving prints were “stolen” or “borrowed” and never returned. Although Stephen remained convinced he had correctly focussed upon “Infinity” before the saucer had appeared, the “object” depicted in both photographs is out of focus. The explanation for this curious anomaly suggested at the time was that “the bellows of his small camera were not fully extended.” This theory was disproved when Desmond Leslie experimented with the camera at the place where the photographs were taken, taking a number of exposures using different combinations of shutter speeds and bellow settings. The results suggested the camera *was* in fact correctly focussed, but Leslie suggested that Stephen had altered the shutter setting by mistake during the excitement of the moment.

The reproduction of the photo featured in most UFO books is in fact the first picture taken as the youngster spun around when alerted to the saucer's presence by his young cousin. In the second photo, rarely published in the UFO literature, the ‘craft’ appears partly distorted on its right-hand side, as if the craft's angles are ‘slewed round.’ It was an effect that a writer in *Flying Saucer News* explained as being the result of UFOs' ability to change shape “prior to warping into hyperspace, or another dimension.” (20) This peculiar feature has since been seized upon by Timothy Good as evidence to support the authenticity of the notorious Silver Spring film taken by George Adamski in 1965. In the film the ‘Scout Ship’ displays a similar distortion of its dimensions. (21) On the contrary, there is no good reason why Adamski could have not been aware of Darbshire's second photo. Darbshire met Adamski in London during 1959 – six years before the Silver Spring film was produced – and would certainly have been shown both photographs taken by the youngster in the presence of his host, Desmond Leslie.

Despite the underlying doubts, believers in the Space People were overjoyed when aeronautical engineer and Saunders-Roe

hovercraft designer Leonard Cramp used a method he called "orthographic projection" to demonstrate that the objects depicted in the Darbishire and Adamski photographs were proportionally identical. (22) This should not be so surprising if the "object" photographed by Stephen Darbishire was based upon the photograph of the Scout Ship he had seen in *Illustrated* and so faithfully reproduced in his pencil sketches just half an hour following his "sighting."

So what was the "object"? During the writing of his best-selling *Above Top Secret* author Timothy Good approached Stephen and asked if the experience was genuine. Stephen, then 46 and back living in his native Cumbria, would say only: "It happened a long time ago, and I do not wish to be drawn into the labyrinth again." (23)

Today he continues to distance himself from the flying saucer buffs who staked so much of their belief system in the authenticity of those two photographs. After almost half a century Stephen's original account of the Adamski "Scout Ship" with portholes and turret has been replaced by a description more fitting the preoccupations of the 21st century. "By the time I took the second photo it had gone," Stephen said. "There was nothing dramatic like people at windows or anything...it looked like a cloud to me and when it first happened I thought 'that's a funny shaped cloud.'" The original glistening, translucent metal had become a "preternatural light." (24)

And what of Adrian Meyer, who despite being the first to see the UFO, faded into the background and never received the attention of his elder cousin? Could he provide the key to what really happened that cold February afternoon in 1954? "I met him recently for the first time in many years," Stephen told us candidly. "He wasn't involved in it really. He just sort of 'blinked twice.' He doesn't remember anything about it and probably thinks we made it all up. He just said 'that was a load of baloney, wasn't it?'"

The other major player in the Darbishire photo case, Desmond Leslie, passed away in February 2001. His obituary described his extraordinary life as rivalling "any fiction by Nancy Mitford or Anthony Powell, with overtones of a Fifties sci-fi movie, and a little Weimar decadance thrown in." (25) One of his final notes, faxed to Stephen Darbishire, read: "Dear Stephen, how lovely to hear from you again; you know it's extraordinary that there

are still people taking pictures of the old flying saucers...where can they find those 1930s lampshades from, I thought they had all gone out of production." Stephen said of him: "You never knew with Desmond. He appeared to believe completely, but he also had a great sense of humour."

Echoing Alex Birch – soon to follow in his footsteps – and many others caught up in the UFO labyrinth through accident or design, Stephen summed up his feelings of that time:

"It was a one-off experience that lasted 30 seconds but the repercussions are still reverberating.... I don't have any idea about its significance, except that it was one of these things that happen out of the blue that you are caught up in. It's just a type of accident."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1) Leslie, quoted in Cramp, Leonard. *Space, Gravity and the Flying Saucer*. London: Werner Laurie, 1957, p. 173.
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- 3) Lord Mountbatten biography
- 4) *Sunday Dispatch* (London), 14 April 1957
- 5) Adamski, George and Leslie, Desmond. *Flying Saucers Have Landed*. London:----, 1953.
- 6) *Illustrated* (London), 3 October 1953
- 7) Leslie, in Cramp, op. Cit., p. 13
- 8) *Lancashire Evening Post* (Preston), 18 February 1954
- 9) *Illustrated* (1954)
- 10) *Flying Saucer News*
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- 13) *Lancashire Evening Post* (Preston), 24 February 1954
- 14) *Sunday Dispatch* (London), 24 March 1954
- 15) Horsley, Sir Peter. *Sounds from Another Room*. London: Leo Cooper, 1997, p. 180.
- 16) Good, Timothy. *Above Top Secret*. London:1987, p.
- 17) *Lancashire Evening Post* (Preston), 19 February 1954

- 18) *News Chronicle* (London), 22 March 1954
- 19) Leslie, in Cramp, op. cit., p. 15-16
- 20) Flying Saucer News
- 21) Zinsstag, Lou and Good, Timothy. George Adamski: *The Untold Story*.
- 22) See Cramp, *Space, Gravity and the Flying Saucer*; Zinsstag & Good, *George Adamski: The Untold Story* and *Flying Saucer Review* vol 10/1 (January-February 1964), 13-14.
- 23) Good, *Above Top Secret*, p.
- 24) Interview with Stephen Darbishire by Peter Hough and Dr Harry Hudson, 1993 (?), by courtesy of Peter Hough. The authors wish to make it clear that the views expressed in this article are not shared by Hough or Hudson.
- 25) Desmond Leslie obituary, *The Independent*, February 2001.

NEXT MEETING

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CHRISTMAS EXCLUSIVE!!!!

AN INTERVIEW WITH TOM BOLLOXINSKI

Tom Bolloxinski is the newest of the New Wave of American ufologists. He is the author of the soon to be published book *The Ultimate Conspiracy* and has appeared on many TV programmes, usually produced by Bob Kiviat. He lives in New York with his iguana, Poppet.

DAVE BAKER: Tom, you are a well-known face in the USA, having appeared on numerous paranormal-based TV programmes, such as Fox TV's *World's Scariest UFO Videos Finally Revealed* and *When Nordics Turn Bad*, and even the talk-show circuit. But you are less well-known over here...

TOM BOLLOXINSKI: Sure, but I am working on remedying that. I've appeared at a couple of Quest Conferences, and I was once interviewed by Mike Morris on *Calendar News*.

I also hear that you are in hush-hush negotiations with a UK television station...

That's right. I've been working with Channel 5...they're your biggest channel right?

Err...

Yeah, and we're hoping it will be a kind of paranormal pot pourri, a mix of chat-show, investigations, and me. We've pencilled in a title already, *Talkin' Bolloxinski*...

How did you become involved in the UFO scene?

Well, you know something dude, I like to think that I didn't so much become involved in UFOs...*they* became involved in *me*.

You mainly came to prominence through your infamous "Ultimate Conspiracy"...

Yeah, that's right. The total focus of my work, and in fact my life now, concentrates on what I indeed call the "Ultimate Conspiracy" Now this is huge. Mind-numbingly huge. This

conspiracy is so large, that a normal human mind can scarcely comprehend it.

How large?

Well, if you imagine a normal, immense-sized conspiracy such as back-engineered craft retrieved from the Roswell Crash and covered up by the US Government ever since as being, say, Callista Flockhart, well *this* conspiracy would be Marlon Brando....it's *that* big.

So tell us about it, Tom...

Well, where the conspiracy that I have unearthed differs from those discovered by others, such as Stan, or Nick, or...or the other Nick, is the documentation. I've visited twenty-six archives and thirty-two records offices, and more private libraries than you can shake a stick at, and what I found is devastating...

Documents? Files?...you must have spent a fortune in photocopying...

I'll tell you how much, buddy. Nada. Zilch. Zeero dollars...

I don't understand...

...because there was *nothing* to photocopy. *Nothing*. I could not find one goddamn piece of evidence to support my theory at all...

So-

Because *everything* had already been removed. Surely the greatest evidence of all.

Oh...

You see, Dave, I've always been a little - shall we say- sceptical, of the conclusions and work of my peers. All those whistle-blowers, "Deep Throats", insiders and so-called "unknown soldiers"...we never get any names, never are

shown any proof that these guys even exist. Which, let's face it, they probably don't. Because, you know what? If something so secret, so *huge*, so world-shatteringly devastating to the human psyche was *really* true...nobody would dare to talk about it. Especially to a goddamn ufologist, whose gonna write about it in a best-selling book, with "Alien" somewhere in the title. No, if there *really* was that kind of conspiracy, it could only remain a conspiracy if no-one...and I mean *no-one* talked about it. *Ever!*

But-

Listen, people probably *have* tried! Lord help us, they have probably tried! But do you think that *They* would let them? Anyone who *was* willing to talk, -and I have suspicions that *some* people have been more than willing - would be instantly terminated with extreme prejudice, by Black Ops groups like Raspberry Berets or somebody.

Wouldn't there be a trail of dead bodies though?

You would think so, wouldn't you? But *They* can avoid all that...Have you seen that bit in *Capricorn One* where Hal Holbrook makes that NASA console-jockey disappear? Utterly, disappear, like so he never existed?

Yeah...

Well they can do that.

You seem to be prying into sinister territory...have you ever been threatened for your work?

Yes, yes I have. Only last week, I was due to talk at a BUFORA lecture, and I had popped into the local Somerfield's to buy some potato chips. Oh, and a sausage roll....You Brits sure can make those sausage rolls! Perhaps I could get somebody to ship them over to the States for me and...Anyway, I was stood perusing the potato chip shelf, wondering whether to get Salt 'n' vinegar, or maybe be a little adventurous and go for prawn, when this guy *dressed as a Somerfield's worker*, went by really close to me, pushing a big trolley of cans of beans, and he said to me, quite distinctly "Watch your back, mate.." Then he vanished into the store-room and I never saw him again...

Right...have you ever been followed, or had your telephone tapped?

I'm being followed *all the time*, man. All the time.

Really? You've seen people tailing you?

Well I haven't actually *seen* anybody. But that's the goddamn point, isn't it? These Black- Ops boys are good, *real* good. So good that I *don't* see them following me. If I *did* see them they'd be pretty damn crappy at their job, wouldn't they? But they're there...always there. Then there's the Black Helicopters...

Have you seen them?

Yup, they're up there, watching...listening. Only, they're clever, see. They *know* that I *know* what Black Helicopters are. So, these clever bastards have found a way round it, trying to trick me, and disguised them.

What do you mean?

Well, they are no longer black! They've camouflaged them, got them painted up to look like other things. Police helicopters, or coast guard, or little joy-ride things. Or "CBS Eye in the Sky" sumbitches. But you *see*, *really*, they're *black*. Y'know?

Some researchers report that their houses have been searched...

Oh yeah! They just love going through my stuff. They regularly break into my home, when I'm away.

How do you know?

By their very professionalism. I mean I was once burgled, and they left a real mess behind, drawers emptied, cupboards ransacked, pillowcases strewn all over the goddamned floor. And one of the bastards took a dump where my wide-screen TV used to be.

And you think that this was Black-Ops guys?

Oh no! This was some gang-bangers from the 'hood looking to score money for some crack. Did the entire block before the cops nabbed 'em. But sure, yeah, the Black-Ops guys do my

place once, maybe twice a week. And you know how I know?

No...

By the very fact that *I can't tell*. I get home, and you know what I find? Everything *exactly as I left it!* No mess, no signs of a break-in, nothing touched...proof positive that they must have been there.

Tom, cut to the chase. Tell us what you think is behind the Ultimate Conspiracy...

Where to start...It all goes back to the first crash/retrieval, Tunguska. Bits of the UFO that crashed there were picked up by simple farmers and sold to the Russian Tsars. On one section of cross-beam was a scrap of alien blood, all that was left of the pilots of the craft. Some time later, a Russian medium began channeling messages from a light being from the Pleides, Lord Artheron the Shiny. He taught the medium how to recreate this DNA to grow a hybrid being...the man we would later know as Rasputin! Which was why he was so hard to kill, by the way.

Anyway, when Hitler began to receive messages from Lord Artheron's direct opposite, a Grey Being, via not a medium but through a ouijah board bought through his obsession with the occult, he ordered his Nazi stormtroopers – actually homunculi and djinns-to steal the technology from Moscow during WW2.

The KGB had already drawn up plans for "flying saucers" using necromancy to raise Rasputin's manitou and raid his alien brain, but the Nazis stole these plans and built prototype flying saucers which they used in the closing months of WW2 – what became known as "Foo-fighters" to we Yanks. Tesla was involved in there somewhere, but that's a bit hazy right now.

Anyway, after Hitler met with a contingent of Greys in his bunker and realised what diabolical fiends he was really dealing with and the Nazi war machine crumbled, the allies stole this power, along with German scientists – some of whom were in reality Nordic / human clone hybrids, in what was known as "Operation Paperclip." Like in *The X-Files*.

The knowledge these Nordic hybrids held was incredible, and they created – with Tesla's

help, I'm sure, a powerful HAAAP death-beam which accidentally brought down a Reticulan scout ship...in Roswell, New Mexico. This was the first time the U.S. had actually got their hands on an intact space ship, and the reverse-engineering work began right away. Which is where we get the transistor, fibre optics, plastic, CDs, and the internet from.

And there were survivors of the crash too, and these little grey dudes became "guests" of a new elite group which had been formed to deal with all this...Majestic 12. But there was internal problems: some of the 12 didn't get on, and split into two factions, one led by Donald Menzel, the other by Tommy Lee-Jones.

The "Good" group, who called themselves the Aviary, then began recruiting remote viewers to try to locate other aliens on earth, while the *other* evil group, the Illuminati, began their own experiments with gene-splicing to create a race of hybrids...but these escaped from Area 51 with the help of Bob Lazarr, who was sympathetic to their cause.

These hybrids then started to create "messages" in the earth, crop-circles, if you will, to attract their long-lost masters back to earth, to take them home. The Greys know that these hybrids cannot survive the journey back to the stars without extra enhancement, and so are busy creating a genetic "soup" in which the hybrids can bathe during the journey home. This "soup" is manufactured deep beneath the earth in bases like Dulce, from cattle tongues, lips and rectums – hence the so-called 'animal mutilations. But they don't always want to be seen, so created slave races to do this; Chupacabras, Mothman, & Sasquatch. And they sometimes use Big Cats to confuse things.

But the Illuminati, who worship a huge Owl God, used the same beam weapon as before to prevent the Space Programme from advancing, in case NASA or the Russians actually met with the Greys. But then one catastrophic blast aimed at a Russian Mars probe did not destroy it, and due to a mind-blast deflection from a member of the Russian Psi-Corps, sent it careening backwards through time...to explode in Tunguska in the year 1909!

Tom, I put it to you that you are an idiot of the highest order.

Okay, Dave, it's a fair cop. Merry Christmas, though, huh?

FROM AROUND THE WORLD...AND BEYOND!!!

UFOs, conspiracies, fortean and paranormal events compiled by Dave Baker

£130M TO FIND ALIENS

(Bob Roberts, Political Correspondent Daily Mirror, 17 November, 2001)

MINISTERS are pumping £130million into the search for alien life.

The cash injection is part of a £380million package revealed yesterday to fund new space research.

Joint European projects will include a search for "signs of life in the solar system and beyond".

Unmanned missions will go to Mars and Titan, a huge moon of Saturn. Probes are also planned to find earth-like planets in other solar systems which could support life.

Science Minister Lord Sainsbury said the £380million would "keep the UK at the leading edge of science and technology in Europe and the world".

Welcoming the new money, space campaigner and Lib-Dem MP Lembit Opik said: "The Government is wise to back this research because of the ground-breaking shift in outlook that finding extra-terrestrial life would cause.

"Even if we only discovered simple single cell life forms, it would prove we are not alone."

The European Space Agency is committed to sending the British-led Beagle 2 Lander to Mars in 2003.

WELSH ROADS IN HAUNTED LIST

(BBC NEWS on line, 17 November, 2001)

Two roads in Wales have been listed in a magazine survey of the UK's top 10 haunted highways.

At Llangennith in the Gower, south Wales, a phantom woman dressed completely in white has been spotted on the main street.

Readers of the *Fortean Times* have also reported seeing another spectral white lady in St Athan in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The report was compiled after over 2,500 people contacted the magazine about ghostly roadside sightings over the last two years.

The sheer number of reports prompted the journalists to produce a league table of roads across Britain.

"We've been inundated with reports of sightings on Britain's roads in the last couple of years, and it's clear that some ghostly sightings are being seen over and over again," said *Fortean Times* editor Bob Rickard.

"Is this our subconscious playing tricks on us, or do we share our environment with ghosts of the dead and various elemental spirits?"

The UK's most haunted road is listed as the A23 between London and Brighton, where ghostly figures include a small girl with no hands or feet, a figure in a white trench coat and a figure in cricketer's clothing.

Elsewhere, a six-foot tall monk has been spotted near Gloucestershire, while phantom vehicles have been seen on the M6 near Birmingham, and phantom hitchhikers have been sighted between Nunney and Frome in Somerset.

US TV CREW CAPTURE EVIDENCE OF PUB GHOST ON FILM

(Anova, 21st November 2001)

A medium says a US television crew has captured video evidence of a ghost which apparently haunts an Edinburgh pub.

The spirit is said to be of a publican who was driven to the verge of bankruptcy when locals boycotted the pub because they believed he tortured children.

American TV series *Understanding the Paranormal* is to broadcast the footage filmed at the Corn Exchange in the Leith area of the city.

Edinburgh-based clairvoyant Frances Ryan was filmed apparently making the first-ever contact with the ghost. Experts believe the session may explain strange occurrences at the

pub.

Staff say they regularly hear the sounds of a young child crying upstairs, while a lounge area is said to have been plagued by flickering lights.

Others says they have been "nudged" when entering or nearing an upstairs room. They also says they've felt a cold blast of air.

Archie Lawrie, secretary of the Scottish Society for Psychical Research, says a three-year-old child may have been kept locked in a cupboard in the room.

Corn Exchange manageress Dianne Somerville told the *Evening News*: "I've heard crying and funny noises from up there and you get lights flickering on and off in the back lounge, but it doesn't worry me, nothing's caused me any harm - yet."

METEOR ROCKS VILLAGE

(*Anova 15 Nov 2001*)

Villagers have fled from their homes as a falling meteor produced a sonic boom as it broke the sound barrier.

Residents in Eyemouth, Scotland, thought it was an earthquake.

The shockwave set off burglar and car alarms. Locals called police but no-one was hurt.

Experts say the meteor caused a sonic boom entering the Earth's atmosphere at several times the speed of sound.

Bennett Simpson, a seismologist with the British Geological Survey Centre, in Edinburgh, said such incidents were often mistaken for earthquakes.

He said: "We have had reports of a number of unusual effects felt in the area. But this was not an earthquake. It is consistent with a meteor entering the Earth's atmosphere. It can be quite frightening."

John Sinclair, from Ayton near to Eyemouth, said he had been watching television when his house was rocked by the boom, reports the *Daily Record*.

"There was a loud thud and then everything began to shake," he said.

"I could hear car alarms going off as well. It was quite frightening. We didn't know what had happened."

The Earth will begin to cut across the orbit of Comet Temple-Tuttle and into a blizzard of meteors later this week.

The shower known as the Leonids, is an annual event but this year Earth will cut across an especially dense part of it. The most spectacular views will be over the Pacific Ocean.

CLUB'S LASERS SPARK UFO ALERT

(*Essex Evening Echo 16 November 2001*)

Worried residents called in police after fearing they were about to have a close encounter with UFOs.

Strange lights spun in circles in the sky over homes in Wickford last night, leaving residents open-mouthed in awe.

But just when people thought they were about to meet beings from another planet, a police probe uncovered the truth.

The spooky lights, which were reflecting off the clouds, came not from out of this world - but from a laser light machine on the roof of a nightclub celebrating its opening.

Alistair Burrell, boss of Fraziers, in London Road, Wickford, said: "I am sorry to disappoint everybody but it really was nothing more than that.

"I think too many people have been watching Independence Day on the TV but I suppose the lights could look a bit like a UFO."

A police spokeswoman said they had had several calls from residents.

Ellen Howard, 65, of Donald Thorn Close, Wickford, said: "I was standing outside watching them and I thought it must be a UFO. It was a bit frightening, I can tell you. But I knew I wasn't imagining it because I am of sound mind."