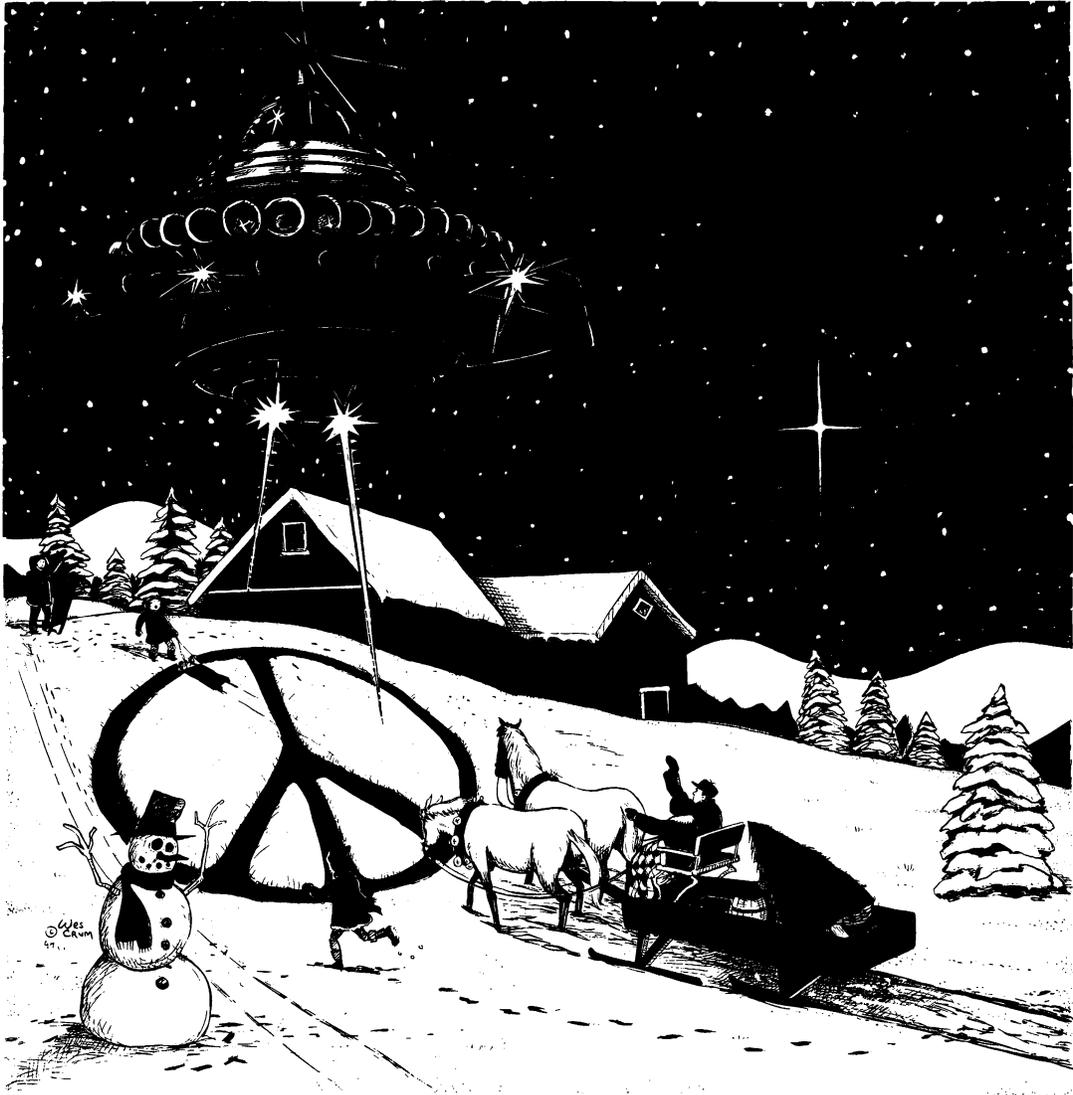


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*Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year*

REPORT ON SPACE ACTIVITY IN ZIMBABWE

African UFO reports are intermingled among those of meteorites and incoming satellite debris.

by Cynthia Hind

It started on Wednesday night, the 14th of September, at approximately 20:50 hours to 21:10, give or take some minutes either side. Hundreds of people from all over Zimbabwe reported a series of bright lights moving across the sky. Professor Euan Nisbet, visiting from Britain, immediately identified same as "a spectacular meteorite shower," and as a lot of the reports sounded like meteorites, I accepted what he had to say. But after receiving about 50 reports, I began to realise that those who saw the lights over man-made Lake Kariba said they were in level flight and when they reached some hills at the side of the lake, rose up to avoid them and then changed direction. Also, as I am MUFON's Continental Coordinator for Africa, I receive the *MUFON UFO Journal* on a monthly basis and this contains a report each issue giving meteorite showers due to appear in the month following publication. There was no mention of any meteor shower during the month of September!

The second speculation as to what this could have been came from one of the South African newspapers and a British paper: they said it was one of the stages of a Russian satellite which went into orbit on the 27th August of this year. This it might well be, although I don't understand the discrepancy of 18 days from lift-off to the jettisoning of whatever it was, but I have had several reports which described a nose cone with three bright lights on it; one in front and two behind and several streamers of light issuing from behind. So this would be a much more likely identification. Many witnesses reported a series of smaller lights either a) surrounding the craft or b) following behind in formation. These smaller bodies numbered anywhere from 9 to 14, depending from which angle they were viewed.

Nearly all the reports said there was no sound, with two exceptions: one reported a quiet vibration, and the other I will refer to later on.

The light was a brilliant white, tinged to an orange-red behind. Some said it was "huge," others, that it was the size of a Boeing Jumbo 747 flying at its normal speed (approx. 625 mph) and that it appeared to be on fire and ready to crash. But then the object levelled out and flew in a straight line at "tree-top level." Those on Lake Kariba (about 100 witnesses) said that when it reached the hills at the side of the lake, it rose to avoid them and changed direction.

Reports from Radio 702 (a commercial radio operating from Johannesburg) stated that the lights were seen above Kempton Park (near to the main Jan Smuts Airport). They then appeared to move over Botswana

and overlapping the borders of Zambia, back into Zimbabwe, over Lake Kariba (around 21:00) to Bulawayo and onto Harare (21:05), passing over many rural areas. Lastly, it reached the Mutare area and over the hills into Mocambique when it seemed to fade from view. I have had no reports from Mocambique or Botswana.

Some people reported that they thought they were meteorites, but most were doubtful of this. Reports came from farm labourers to pilots, the managing director of a large local company, technologists and many fishermen, and visiting tourists on Lake Kariba. Most people were puzzled and some said they had seen meteorites before but nothing like this! One group of workers thought it was Jerry Rawlings, the President of Ghana (who was flying into Zimbabwe on that day) and that all the pyrotechnics were sent out of the plane to impress the people who lived here!

The reported height varied greatly but most referred to "tree-top" level. Some reported a height of 2-3000 ft. (one a pilot report). Some mentioned 2-300 ft. and these came from different parts of the country.

At 21:04, I heard an explosion from my study in central Harare, and some workers in Fort Rixon, near Bulawayo, heard 5 explosions. Prof. Nisbet said these were the meteorites passing through the sound barrier.

Two people viewed the object from directly underneath and said that it had a flat belly and that it was metallic-looking, moving on a straight course. One technician said he could see two engines in front and felt it was a machine of some kind. All objects were seen below scattered cloud level. Apart from this, the night was clear.

Two mothers reported that their children were affected: a 3-year-old child in Beatrice (40 km from Harare) woke and shouted for her mother when the lights went over, saying there was a lion inside or outside her room. She subsequently drew what she saw but I have not yet seen the drawing. An 18-month-old baby woke and could not be settled. She is normally a very quiet and contented child, but kept the family awake all night with her distress.

This is merely an overview of the many reports received and I am still looking into them for more details.

UFO AT RUWA

On Friday, 16 September, at approximately 10:15, sixty-two children from Arian School, a private primary

The little man was dressed in a tight-fitting black suit, according to one observant girl, age 11. He had a long, scrawny neck and huge eyes like rugby balls. He had a pale face with long black hair falling below his shoulders.

school in Ruwa (about 20 km from Harare) were in their playing field for the midmorning break.

Suddenly, they saw three silver balls in the sky over the school. These disappeared with a flash of light and then reappeared elsewhere. This happened three times and then they started to move down towards the school with one of them landing (or hovering) over a section of rough ground made up of trees, thorn bushes, and some brown-grey cut grass with bamboo shoots sticking up out of the ground. The children are not allowed in this area, although it is adjacent to their playing field and is not fenced off, because of snakes, spiders and perhaps other harmful creatures. One can soon disappear from view while walking here, and there is only one very rough track used by tractors in an attempt to clear this area.

There is a line of electricity pylons and according to one boy, the object followed along this line prior to landing. There is also some controversy as to whether the object landed on the ground or simply hovered above it. On Tuesday, 20 September, I went out to the school with a BBC reporter and their television equipment, as well as my son and Gunter Hofer, a young man who builds his own electrical equipment, viz. a Geiger counter, a metal detector and a magnetometer, to try and see if the object left any traces behind.

The headmaster of the school is Mr. Mackie, who was most cooperative, and although he had never been involved with UFOs or a believer in them, said that he believed that the children had seen what they said they saw.

I was able to interview about 10 or 12 of the older children and this was recorded for BBC television. The reports were similar although some children were more observant than others. The consensus of opinion was that an object came down in the area they indicated, about 100 metres from where they were at the edge of the school playing-field. Then a small man (approx. 1 metre in height) appeared on top of the object. He walked a little way across the rough ground, became aware of the children and disappeared. He, or someone very like him, then reappeared back at the object. The object took off very rapidly and disappeared. The little man was dressed in a tight-fitting black suit which was "shiny" according to one observant girl, age 11. He had a long, scrawny neck and huge eyes like rugby balls. He had a pale face with long black hair coming below his shoulders.

I had suggested to Mr. Mackie prior to visiting the school and before the children had been interviewed, that he let the children draw what they had seen and he now has about 30-40 drawings, some of which are very explicit and clear, while others are rather vague. The children's ages vary from five and six to 12 years. I have 22 photocopies of the clearer drawings as Mr. Mackie kindly allowed me to page through the pictures and choose those I wanted. Most of the descriptions are similar, but some of the craft are very obviously "flying saucers" and I could only wonder how many of these children have had access to the media. Others are crude but more or less in this same saucer shape.

The children vary in cultures: there are black, white, coloured and Asian children. One little girl said to me, "I swear by every hair on my head and the whole Bible that I am telling the truth." I could see the pleasure on her face when I told her that I believed her.

The smaller children from five to seven years old were very frightened at the time and ran shouting, "Help me, help me." When the older children asked why they were saying this, the reply was, "He is coming to eat us." I should think this applied more to the black African children who have legends of tokoloshies eating children.

The teachers were in a meeting and did not come out. When I queried the headmaster about this, he said that the children always shouted and yelled during their playtime and no one thought there was anything unusual going on. The only other adult available at the time was one of the mothers who was running the tuck-shop. When the children came to call her, she did not believe them and would not come out: she was not prepared to leave the shop with all the food and money.

Gunter and the men thoroughly examined the ground around where the children had seen the object, but could get no reaction on the Geiger counter or on any other equipment. If the object was hovering perhaps nothing would show. I walked, on my own, along the electricity pylons for quite a way, caught up in thorn bushes, tramping blithely over snake holes and discarding all caution. I found no place where some object could have landed and pressed down the foilage. In fact, I should think the bamboo stumps would have been a deterrent. The day was hot, around 33°C, and I had a long walk through waist-high brush. When I reached home again at about 12:50, I had a headache, my feet ached and I felt disorientated. If you don't hear from me soon, you will know that I did cross the landing site and am probably suffering from a mild dose of radiation!

Ms. Hind is MUFON's Continental Coordinator for Africa. She can be contacted at Box MP 49, Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe, Africa.
