

IS IT A BIRD? IS IT A PLANE?

No, it's an unidentified flying object, you idiot, and welcome to the first ever international UFO conference in Australia. Entitled 'The UFO Mystery', the conference, held in September, featured seven speakers (three from overseas) each of whom discussed his/her speciality. Speakers explored the nature of such diverse topics as time and space, crop circles, abductions and various other UFO phenomena with even a few ETs (extra-terrestrials for those of you not au fait with the lingo) thrown in for good measure.

Before I continue, I'd like you all to be aware of the immense courage required in actually attending a conference of this nature. Friends, so-called, snigger behind one's back, dinner parties fall silent as if one had just revealed a propensity for axing one's grandmother and presenting said person stuffed with sage and onion for dinner. I may as well have. Hoary academics shook their heads gravely, I had crossed the floor,

gravely, I had crossed the floor, become a lost cause, a shingle short. Had I become a sensitive, New Age, over-the-top, post 80s lollipop? What can I say? I did it because it was there.

So were lots of others. The Sebel Townhouse function room was packed with, well, people, I think. I dressed carefully for the first day's lectures. I thought Darlinghurst black appropriate. I didn't want to draw any attention to myself or attract whatever unearthly types I was sure would be present. I didn't have to worry however as everyone appeared grossly conventional to the point of innocuousness. However I wasn't convinced. I was sure there were some disguised aliens checking me out, no doubt partial to lean, feral, black-attired humanoids to add to their outer space collection. My eyes scoured the rows, only to meet six hundred pairs of other eyes. We were all playing the same game. Pick the Alien.

Australian Bill Chalker, author of 'The Australian UFO Experience' discussed ground marks and other physical evidence. One of the main problems he outlined in exploring UFO

outlined in exploring UFO phenomena was that many sightings consisted of only verbal evidence when physical evidence was what was needed more so when verbal testimony was generally overlooked or denied.

Some cases lend themselves more easily to physical evidence. A detailed investigation was conducted in Provence, France in 1981 which confirmed sightings of a structured object landing from land marks and from vegetation exposed to considerable gamma radiation and electro-magnetic fields. French intelligence has since become involved in the intrigue and is carrying out tests and simulating experiments.

The Australian experience is less encouraging in its official investigative efforts. Bill Chalker is the first civilian researcher to gain direct access to files of The Royal Australian Air Force which he discovered are not especially illuminating, the RAAF running a poor second to the investigative talents of the C.I.A. (which does not stand for the Catering Institute of

Australia as someone in the

Australia as someone in the audience proclaimed). Chalker has been re-examining several well known Australian cases including the Tully 'saucer nests' (Queensland, 1966) the Deddington melted road tar (Tasmania, 1987), the Dingle Beach truck driver and disappearing witnesses (i.e. they absconded without leaving a forwarding address) and the 1988 Mundrabilla black dust in the car case more commonly known as the famous Nullarbor incident.

Australian Anthony Drew has been researching UFOs for the last fifteen years investigating world grid patterns and UFO activity. Geometrically linked locations such as the Bermuda Triangle off Florida and the Devil's Sea south of Japan, which are noted for mysterious disappearances, may be located along laylines or meridians that act as acupuncture points for the world. Positions on these laylines were given different names by different cultures but a common belief was shared of their being link-up points of creativity and energy. Amazonian folklore tells of its hypothetical centre of Amazonian women. Likewise Egypt's beginnings near the

Egypt's beginnings near the pyramids goes back to a cultural basis. Australian locations on grid lines where unexplained phenomena have occurred include military posts that appear to have a natural power environmentally such as Pine Gap. Alice Springs, Woomera. Bass Strait and certain Aboriginal sacred sites also link up to laylines and planetary grid patterns.

Jerome Clark, editor of the American magazine 'International UFO Reporter' discussed officialdom and UFOs, questioning government

activity in practising disinformation and cover-up. Much of Clark's theme was anecdotal, possibly from necessity, however there is only so much rumour and hearsay a person can take. Some of the airforce stories were more than interesting, although the audience became confused by the inclusion of both American comedian Jackie Gleason

and Nixon apparently working together in various top secret projects. Urban myth or reality? At this point I don't care. If extra-terrestrials get their kicks by playing hide and seek and

playing hide-and seek and frightening the living daylights out of little earthlings so be it. What I want to know is do they suffer from P.M.T. If so, they may as well stay where they are as they are of no earthly good to us.

How is the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence going? asks Brian O'Leary, ex-Nasa astronaut on Apollo team 1967-68. O'Leary comes well documented. He is the author of the books, 'Space 1999' and 'Exploring Inner and Outer Space' and was professor of space sciences and physics at Princeton. He has served on the congressional staffs and as advisor to presidential candidates. In 1989 he addressed the Japanese Diet (parliament) calling for a joint US-Soviet-Japanese mission to Mars.

(However an intelligence source has just recently revealed that the Apollo team didn't actually go anywhere at all but just pretended to. Apparently it was all done with mirrors.) One waits for O'Leary's lecture with some trepidation, expecting to be confounded by the man's brilliance on quantum physics. However his powers of communication more than equal

communication more than equal his qualifications. He is neither patronising nor excessively facile. He sees science, knowledge, reduced to a system - a box, left-brained, engineered, materialistic, deterministic. Transcendental sciences have no place in this box, and by virtue no place in society. The paradigm needs to be expanded to a whole new science. A new science which embraces the new

reality to include the transcendental experience, the paranormal. O'Leary showed slides of NASA satellite photographs revealing mysterious shapes on Mars. One called 'The Face on Mars' was described as a possible artefact of extra-terrestrials in the press release. However O'Leary left me with an impression of grand ennui on this topic, an appetite jaded by over-zealous ET bounty hunters. He did mention that photos from Viking ten years later rendered the face in all three dimensions and in 1992 a trip to Mars is planned with a new high resolution camera which will reveal more information. 'It was possible', he added flatly, 'it was a monument.' O'Leary is obviously happier discussing the meaning of

happier discussing the meaning of 'consciousness' and the relationship between length, time and mass, and its distortion the closer to light it gets, transcending reality. The seminar was worth attending just to hear O'Leary speak as he is a natural communicator.

Jenny Randles, author of fourteen UFO books has had the dubious honour of lecturing to the British parliament on UFOs which might have woken it up. Unfortunately Jenny Randles crop circles theory came a cropper (sorry) shortly after her visit here when two rather geriatric ex-art students gleefully admitted on British television to the debauched hobby of creating these curious circles in their spare time. Apparently they have been trudging the length and breadth of England for years in weather fair and foul drawing perfect circles wherever they could find a spot. I suppose these two old codgers managed a quick migration to Australia in the off-season to put their authentic stamp on our paddocks. . Frankly, I'm putting my money on little green men, a

my money on little green men, a far more credible proposition.

A bizarre but well organised seminar, although I was disappointed that no holographic UFOs were darting around the foyer as promised and the robotic alien was suffering from a touch of rheumatism by the look of it. I only wish I could show you the photo of an alleged 'alien' snapped by a British policeman but I am unable to reproduce it due to copyright laws. Suffice it to say that it lost something in the translation. Well, space-cases, if that wasn't enough for you, why not join The First International Crop Circle Tour, leaving soon, by contacting (02) 977 1654.

That's all I have to say, so

Fly me to the moon and let me swing upon a star,

And ride upon a moonbeam from Jupiter to Mars.....

In other words

Bon Voyage

UFO FEATURE



