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MORE ON THOSE SAUCERS . . .

by Kevin Kell

The prediction that hasn't become reality

Last year was the 50th anniversary of Kenneth Arnold's famous sighting of nine crescent-shaped objects over the Cascade mountains in the United States northwest, a sighting which inaugurated the era of the flying saucer. Since then there have been many thousands of dif-



icult-to-explain sightings both in the air and on the ground.

At first it was widely believed that these were sightings of secret aircraft of some kind either belonging to the United States (which some certainly were, and this was a time when new shapes and means of propulsion were being experimented with) or the Soviet Union (which was much less likely in the West, though the Soviet Union did have - and continues to have - UFOs of its own).

Flying saucers burst upon the world when the cold war was hotting up; a time when deep anxiety lay hidden beneath the confident surface of the increasing prosperity of the post-war West.

By the early fifties the idea became established that flying saucers were extraterrestrial craft, either sightseeing or on a mission to warn us of the stupidity of our nuclear ways. This was aided by the publication of sensational books like *Behind the Flying Saucers* by Frank Scully.

Films such as *The Day The Earth Stood Still* and *It Came From Outer Space*

used this idea for dramatic effect, and helped to fit it in the popular imagination.

Today the whole subject of flying saucers is linked in the minds of most people with extraterrestrial invaders; the oft asked question, "Do you believe in flying saucers?" really means "Do you believe that flying saucers are spaceships visiting us from other worlds?"

There are, however, a number of arguments against the extraterrestrial hypothesis as ufologists have called it.

First is the sheer number of sightings - even allowing for the fact that many are misinterpretations of perfectly ordinary phenomena such as aircraft, car headlights, Venus etc (or less ordinary phenomena such as ball lightning and large meteors).

We are finding out just how difficult and consuming of resources interplanetary travel is.

When man entered the space age in the late fifties many confidently predicted that space travel - with a permanent base on the moon - would be a reality by the year 2000.

This has not happened; apart from the Apollo programme man has not got beyond a low Earth orbit, and is not likely to do so for many years to come.

Are we really so interesting that a seemingly large number of extraterrestrial civilisations would spend so much time and effort getting here just to frighten children and old ladies and generally to behave in an enigmatic way?

Secondly, the saucers themselves frequently do not appear as solid objects at all, and the great majority of photographs which purport to show solid objects (like the

famous "Thing" photograph taken at Warminster) have either been exposed as hoaxes or are strongly suspected of being so; or else they are of ordinary objects taken in unusual conditions.

UFOs are often described as seeming without weight; they frequently appear to break up and disintegrate; many seem complex, intersecting light patterns; and some which seem metallic are described as flexible as if they were made out of foil.

The shapes are bewildering as well; the flying saucer form common in the early fifties is now rare, and the triangular form, once rare, is now common.

Egg shapes, spheres, various geometric forms and amorphous blobs are also reported. Sometimes there are antennae and other protrusions.

Indeed an early explanation - and one which Kenneth Arnold himself came to favour - was that they are strange, tenuous living things which inhabit the atmosphere, and which only become visible in certain conditions.

Third is the almost total lack of physical evidence. As already stated, many well-known photographs of UFOs are now known to have other explanations.

The well-known film of an orange ball of light moving steadily across the horizon taken at Cuddington on the Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire border in January 1973, and which is still commonly shown on television in programmes about UFOs, was almost certainly a ball of blazing aviation fuel released by a stricken F-111

aircraft which later crashed.

When flying saucers land, they frequently leave no mark at all, or else only shallow indentations and areas of flattened grass.

The Charlton crater reported in a Wiltshire field in July 1963 was one of the most substantial physical traces ever claimed, and that was just eight feet in diameter and four inches deep; and there were no witness reports of it actually being formed.

Flying saucers low above water are frequently reported as disturbing its surface, and they also disturb foliage - like a strong and very localised wind - if they are near trees.

Sometimes pieces of metal and other artifacts are found near witnessed UFO sites, but their composition is never unusual.

In one of the most bizarre cases ever reported, Joe Simonton, a 60-year-old chicken farmer of Eagle River, Wisconsin, U.S.A., reported that a silvery object descended into his yard at around 11am on April 18, 1961.

A hatch opened and Mr Simonton noticed three dark skinned men of fully human appearance inside.

One of the men produced a silvery jug, and seemed to indicate that he wanted water. The farmer obliged, took the jug and returned with it full of water.

He then noticed that one of the men appeared to be making cookies on some sort of appliance. This man promptly gave four of the

cookies to Mr Simonton, and the machine took off at a 45 degree angle, causing pine trees near its path to bend and sway.

Mr Simonton ate one of the cookies and found that it tasted like cardboard. Two were independently analysed and found to be made of perfectly terrestrial corn and wheat flour, but no salt.

Fourth is the bewildering variety of humanoid seen either in association with landed saucers or in isolation; sometimes (like those reported by Mr Simonton) they are fully human; sometimes they are smaller with unhuman characteristics like webbed feet, scaly skin, large pointed ears or large eyes; sometimes they are large, silver suited giants; sometimes they are robot like, or seemingly made up of triangles, or large and hairy, or roughly man-shaped areas of illumination, or jelly-like blobs.

They sometimes speak in an unknown tongue, or they produce mechanical squeaks and twitters (like, I suppose, a fax machine when you dial one by mistake), or they bark like animals, or communicate telepathically, or frequently they communicate fluently in the language of the witness.

But what they say is sometimes even stranger; in 1965 in Venezuela two beings seven to eight feet tall with long yellow hair and protruding eyes were asked, "Are there any human beings like you living amongst us?", and the answer was, "Yes, 2,417,805".

During the 1954 French wave (from August to October when there were many sightings reported all over that country, including many of occupants) a witness met a disc shaped object, who

repeated several times in a metallic voice "La verite est refusee aux constipes" (truth is denied to the constipated), and "Ce que vous spelliez can-



cer vient des dents" (what you call cancer comes from the teeth).

What is also disconcerting is that many of the "ufonauts" seem suspiciously like the goblins, fairies and little people of mythology and folklore.

Fifth is the fact that flying saucer type phenomena are seen in certain places year after year, and rarely or never in others. These "window areas" frequently coincide with areas of geological faulting.

As I mentioned before, Radnor and the Shropshire border is an area with few reports, just as it has few geological faults except the Church Stretton fault which runs diagonally across from Bucknell, through Presteigne, and along Hereford.

The only widely publicised report from Radnor that I can find took place in November 1976 when Mr Michael Bufton was driving a lorry from Rhayader to Shotton steel works.

At 4.15pm he was driving through Marteg, just outside Rhayader, when he noticed a cigar shaped object with what appeared flames coming out of the rear, over his vehicle.

He stopped and saw the object move off rapidly over Elan Valley.

If anyone knows anything about this incident I would be pleased to hear from you.