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Introduction

When I first discussed the idea of compiling an encyclopedia with BUFORA, the British UFO Research Association, principally its chairman, Steve Gamble, and President, Major Sir Patrick Wall, I had little idea of the difficult task that would be facing me. I knew that for reasons of space I would be forced to select from the available material; not everything could be included.

That turned out to be probably the hardest part of the job. After twenty years of personal research in this subject - more than ten as a director of BUFORA - I thought I knew the scope of the material fairly well, but when I started compiling and classifying it the sheer weight of it surprised even me.

Nearly forty-five years have passed since the start of the modern era of UFOs, when in 1947 Kenneth Arnold sighted a formation of objects over Mount Rainier in Washington State, USA. In that time tens - perhaps hundreds - of thousands of people have reported seeing UFOs in just about every shape and size; thousands have reported entity sightings of humanoids and creatures; hundreds, probably going into thousands, have reported abductions - frightening stories of kidnap and manipulation by non-humans. Even to have tried to include all of the cases on all of the files in the world (actually an impossible task) would have left no room for adequate description.

The story does not stop there, however; it is the belief of most people working in this field that there is more unreported than reported. Everyone I know in this 'business' tells of experiencing what has happened to me time and time again; wherever I go to talk about the subject, a radio show, a local UFO group meeting, to address an astronomical society in a university, to lecture to businessmen in the local Rotary Club, or wherever else, one or two people will, usually with some embarrassment, take me aside and tell me: 'I saw something very strange once . . .'. When you ask if they reported it to anyone the answer is almost always the same: 'No, I didn't know how to.

Usually the report is of a distant light or disc sighting, of which so many are received that, frankly, there is little that can be done once time has passed other than to throw it into the database in case it should help correlate another known sighting. Occasionally, however, there are surprises. At a local meeting of the Round Table where I was a guest speaker, I was taken aside by one man early in the evening, before I had lectured. He was plainly embarrassed. He told me that he had seen something once, but that he hadn't reported it because he didn't know who to report it to, and he felt people might laugh at him, and so on. He was a well-dressed, well-educated man, obviously a successful career person, and clearly genuinely embarrassed by having to discuss this with me. I had seen this reaction in many sober and strait-laced people before; often they do not know just how common these experiences are. However, in this case I was astonished. The man went on to describe, with full memory recall, an extraordinary entity encounter and 'abduction' that had happened some twenty years earlier, and which he never reported, or even apparently discussed with his family.

It is a case where the witness has asked me not to use any of the material in my talks or books, and certainly never to mention his name - I always comply with such requests and can say nothing here of the details, but it was very evident that just talking to me about it had relieved an enormous pressure that he had allowed to build up over the years - all because this subject is taboo in so many conventional circles. To reiterate the point I was making: we firmly believe that

more goes unreported than reported; the subject is now so vast that it can never be fully catalogued, even if all the evidence was fully known.

This gives me the opportunity to make another very important point: it is a common supposition that those reporting UFOs and abductions are attention-seekers, or 'in it for the money'. Nothing could be farther from the truth. There will of course be cases of both, just as there will be hoaxes for a variety of reasons, but what is not often appreciated by the public is that the vast majority - we believe anything up to 70 per cent - of all reports are never placed on public record in books or magazines. They remain pure tools of research; held in secret by researchers for comparative and analytical purposes. The people reporting them make very clear that they do not want any publicity at all, they never seek to make money from their claims, they often won't discuss their sightings with even close family members. These are sincere, trustworthy people, often agitated and genuinely embarrassed by their experiences. They would not be doubted if they gave evidence in a court of law as witnesses to a road accident, why should they automatically be doubted when they testify to the existence of UFOs~

All of this proves beyond a doubt that the UFO phenomenon is real. I am not making any claims here as to what it really is; certainly I am not suggesting that it has to do with the visiting of our planet by alien creatures - by far the most popular interpretation. The UFO phenomenon, it seems to me, is about people: the things they see, and think they see, the things they experience, the things they fear. Not only do hundreds of thousands of people see strange things they cannot identify, they also feel so moved by them that they seek out - albeit sometimes decades later - someone to tell their story to.

I find it senseless and blinkered that conventional scientists refuse to examine this data. Even if every UFO report ever filed was a deliberate hoax (an absurd assumption), then surely that in itself would be enormously valuable material for study by sociologists or psychologists. Even if every report was accepted as 'real' and then explained as resulting from a natural weather or atmospheric phenomenon, then surely that would be an impressive body of evidence for meteorologists to study. And if only a handful remain unexplained and may represent some experience alien to humanity (whether originating from the Earth itself or elsewhere), isn't there an enquiring mind in the science establishment somewhere who wants to examine that!

I chose as my overall criterion for compiling this encyclopedia the aim that the reader should receive a complete and representative overview of the subject. I have taken cases from the forty-five years since the first UFO sighting; I have gone back farther even across the centuries, prior to 1947 to get the historical perspective; I have listed all of the major cases, and a cross-section of the rest, from the mundane 'I saw a light and it went away again' to the exotic 'I saw a light and ended up inside it'. I have tried to seek out a representative sample of the personalities involved over the years; military personnel by the plane- and boatload, police in their droves, politicians and a cast of thousands of others. Sometimes the selection has had to be random. Three similar reports from three police officers may be represented here by one typical report; the others were left out.

The cross-referencing is designed for a particular purpose. There may be a case with three witnesses, generally known by the location of the event, and the reader may find that I have cross-referenced only one or two of the witnesses' names to the main entry. The criterion chosen was to take the names by which the case is often found in UFO literature to allow for follow-up reading; if the second or third witnesses' names are not used in this way then there seemed no point in 'over-referencing' the entries. The same is true of the many official committees that have been set up by government agencies across the world. I have cross-referenced or briefly referred to those names by which the committees are sometimes known; other names will have been omitted.

The criterion was balance and if I have succeeded readers of this book should appreciate the sheer range of this subject over the years, the routine cases and the bizarre, the humour and the terror.

Most importantly, they will appreciate its mystery.

Anyone inspired by this book to follow up their reading will not be short of material. It is worth remembering that many of the entries herein, often just a paragraph or two in length, have been the subject of whole books - it is a complex subject.

I have tried not to impose any personal opinions on the data, but the nature of the subject sometimes makes that difficult. There were also times when I could not resist a comment or two; some of the 'explanations' offered for early sightings by the United States Air Force are simply asking for it! One pilot weaved around the skies 'dog-fighting' a UFO in full view of the personnel of the control tower only to be told he had seen a weather balloon. Another case that turned up on a radar screen was explained as the Planet Jupiter (generally a bit outside the range of the average common-or-garden radar).

BUFORA has been invaluable in providing all sorts of help in putting this data together, whether in the form of library material, leads to follow up, or people to help with particular research tasks; my thanks are extended to the very many people who have helped, and particularly Arnold West, Steve Gamble, Lionel Beer, Jenny Randles and Bob Digby.

None of the above, or anyone else, is responsible for the selection of data included, and certainly not for my comments or opinions where they have crept in; I alone must take responsibility for both. Although I work for BUFORA, that organisation is similarly not responsible for any views expressed. Indeed, BUFORA has no corporate view to express as a matter of Association policy; it remains open to all theories and welcomes all serious research without bias.

The pages of this encyclopedia should prove one thing, if nothing else - the subject deserves to be taken seriously, whatever it turns out to represent. Just take a look at the number of policemen listed who have witnessed UFOs, often at alarmingly close proximity (and on occasion from inside!), and remember they are only a representative sample. Look at the number of military personnel, of civilian pilots, of respected public figures, of astronomers and so on who are listed. Remember that they, too, are only a sample. Consider the people who have lost their jobs, been vilified by the community, even suffered physical violence as a result of their reporting of UFO-related sightings; consider that they could not deny the truth even to the extent of protecting themselves by 'holding back', and surely there is impressive evidence here for something.

It would be inconceivable personally to have verified all of the cases listed here. I have used material from my own files, of course, but the vast majority of the book is compiled from other sources. I have checked what information I can and I have tried to use only reputable sources - this is no collection of tabloid press stories! Even so, errors will no doubt have crept in - I apologise in advance for them. The reference list at the back gives a great many of the sources I have used, but certain authors have proved invaluable: Cynthia Hind, Jenny Randles, Hilary Evans, John Keel, Major Donald Keyhoe, Budd Hopkins, J. Allen Hynek, John Rimmer, Paris Flammonde, Ralph and Judy Blum, Charles Hickson, William Moore. I would especially mention Timothy Good, whose book *Above Top Secret* is a very well-researched and documented summary of the 'official' attitude to UFOs. Timothy Good has done ufology a great service by putting this wealth of material on public record.

I thank also those psychiatrists, psychologists, scientists and others who have helped many researchers such as myself over the years but who wish to remain anonymous; we would not be able responsibly to do what we do without them. I hope that one day peer pressure will lift and allow them to take credit for their work by name.

I thank the investigators and the researchers of the past forty-five years - even to have included all their names would have taken most of this encyclopedia, so long is the list. One or two whose influence on the subject has been in some way special are included. No slight to those not mentioned is intended. One of the most uplifting aspects of this work is the fact that so many people give so much of their time for little or no reward. It is a subject that has brought people from across the world together in a very special way.

And most of all, I thank the witnesses who have come forward to give us the information that is this subject. There have been many who have shrugged and walked away from their sighting or experience; there have been some for whom it was the greatest and most beneficial experience of their lives; and there have been many, like one man who comes to mind, who poured gallons of tears on to my shoulder and cried: 'I just wish more than anything that this had never happened to me. Please make it go away.'

I can't make it go away, and I wouldn't if I could because it may represent something beneficial that we have yet to comprehend, but I hope that I can make it better understood and that this book is a successful part of that process.

ABOUT BUFORA

The British Unidentified Flying Object Research Association (BUFORA) is dedicated to the scientific investigation of UFO phenomena, and stresses the importance of an objective approach. It has two interlinked roles of research and investigation, as well as activities of an educational nature. Details of BUFORA's aims are given in its entry in this encyclopedia.

BUFORA publishes a bi-monthly journal, *UFO Times*, which covers current developments, research activities, noteworthy investigations and discussions of broader issues. In addition, BUFORA publishes case histories, science papers and pamphlets on specific subjects.

BUFORA holds lectures, normally on the first Saturday of the month (apart from a summer break), which provide an open forum for lively discussion and debate. In addition, BUFORA sponsors international conferences periodically; the 1991 Sheffield conference currently being organised has attracted delegations from every continent.

Membership of BUFORA is open to any person with a genuine and non-cultist interest in UFO research and who supports the general aims of the Association. Application forms and details of publications are available from: BUFORA Ltd, 16 Southway, Burgess Hill, Sussex, RH15 9ST

Those wishing to report sightings and experiences should also use this address; reports will be sent to the appropriate investigator or researcher for follow-up. BUFORA operates a 24-hour UFOCALL information line on: 0898 121886 (special charge rates apply).