

Landing a robotic vehicle on a comet

A FEARFUL SYMMETRY by D. Lynne Bishop

Part 3

Stop Press

United Kingdom UFO Network are immensely honoured to announce that the following are to be very special guests on our UFO irc channel.

Michael Lindermann: World respected ufologist. Editor of the excellent and very popular CNI News internet magazine. Resident UFO/ET commentator on the nationally syndicated radio program "Sightings On The Radio."

Michael will be answering your questions live in a moderated meeting taking place in late September.

Stanton T. Friedman: Nuclear Phycist and UFO researcher. Original investigator of the Roswell incident. Author of UFO books and over 70 UFO papers. A highly respected investigator.

Stanton will be answering your questions live in a moderated meeting taking place in early October.

All dates are to be finally confirmed. Notification of dates, times and irc channel address will be made widely available through many internet sources.

United Kingdom News

[UK 1]*****

Source: Manchester Evening News
Date: Thursday 16th August 1997
From: Adrian Donnelly <alien4596@geocities.com>

Aliens welcome

A new urban park in Manchester is just out of this world - it features Britain's first parking lot for UFO's.

A landing pad made from ancient cobblestones has been laid at Hulme with some very special visitors in mind.

Developers have even suggested that a giant arch at the gateway to the city will act as a traffic light to guide in alien space craft.

The landing pad has been laid in Zion square at the 3 million pounds [sterling] inner city regeneration area of Hulme and Hulme Park.

Passing aliens could not have a finer place to land, for the heat resistant granite cobbles come from the road which led to the old Rolls Royce factory on the site.

Project director Barbara McLoughlin said: "If ET turns up, we'll make sure he's welcomed."

The idea for a parking lot for UFO's came after a meeting between local families and architects over the development of the 15 acre park. University lecturer and local resident Dave Ellis revealed a study of key lines - thought to be centers of electromagnetic force and with strong sporotual significance - where he and other students of geomantics found they converged at the site entrance.

A spokesman for Manchester City council said: "A new public square has been thoughtfully designed with extra terrestrials in mind.

"The local community were keen to ensure Zion Square would be able to cope with an alien landing and the surface material is extremely resistant and is ideal.

"We've used a highly durable granite recycled from the original Victorian cobblestones that were unearthed on the site."

Ms McLoughlin added: "It may have started in a light hearted way, but the idea has caught the public imagination. Hulme is a very welcoming place - even for those from another world.

"We're not stupid or crazy either, we're listening to what people in the community want."

Architect Neil Swanson, 37 said: "We were happy to consult local people and there's no doubt that granite cobblestones would be among the best material to take intergalactic craft."

Liberal Democrat counsellor Alison Firth said: "Im amazed and lost for words, I simply can't see the point of this."

Work on the park has already started and more down to earth attractions include two football pitches, a promenade, themed gardens, a childrens park and a busking area.

[UK 2]*****

Source: The Sunday Times newspaper
Date: 17th August 1997

Erich von Daniken run over by a rain god

By Stuart Wavell

A British academic team of alien-busters believes it has proved that the mysterious Nazca lines of geometrical shapes in Peru were not runways for extraterrestrial spaceships, as UFO zealots have long proclaimed. But the truth has turned out to be almost as bizarre.

Ever since Erich von Daniken's bestseller Chariots of the Gods claimed in 1968 that the gigantic stylised markings on the Nazca plateau were a giant spaceport, the site has been imprinted on credulous minds as evidence of an interbreeding programme by extraterrestrials.

In December, Dr Tony Spawforth, an archeologist from Newcastle University, led the first expedition to be allowed on to the Nazca lines for decades. The five team members, all world experts from different scientific disciplines, decided to crack the problem by the Sherlock Holmes method: eliminate the impossible and whatever remains must be the truth.

They now believe the bewildering complexity of lines added up to a ritual rain-making machine of awesome dimensions. But for a while there remained a small, unexplained matter: burial chambers of people with extremely long, pointed heads. This apparent confirmation of von Daniken's theory of genetic hanky-panky was the last puzzle to be explained.

The clues to the central mystery were hard to find among the thousands of straight lines, drawn over a 1,000-year period starting in the 4th century BC. Some formed trapezoids, or long triangles, almost seven miles in length, others were drawings of animals, including a pelican, a humming bird, a spider, a killer whale and a 300ft monkey. These images, undetected by pilots who first spotted the geometric lines in 1926, were revealed in the 1950s by Maria Reiche, a German mathematician who was until recently the site's self-appointed guardian.

Spawforth said: "One of the great difficulties was that the area had been systematically pillaged over the centuries by tomb robbers looking for Inca gold. It was a lost civilisation with no writing, and their descendants were ravaged by European diseases after the Spanish conquest."

The team first scrutinised von Daniken's theory. "We had to be fair. Just because it sounded improbable, we couldn't exclude it out of hand," Spawforth said. The first flaw was obvious: some "runways" ran up and down hills, ignoring the flat plain. Even if they had been blasted by spaceship exhausts, as von Daniken later claimed, it seemed illogical.

In fact, the Nazca lines are quite shallow, delineated by the contrast between the exposed yellow desert soil and the surrounding brown surface stones. While poring over hundreds of aerial photographs, the team was arrested by one trapezoid containing neat piles of stones.

"We were terribly excited, because here was absolute proof it was not a take-off track for a flying saucer, but was constructed, revealing the method of construction," Chris Mann said. Mann, producer of BBC 1's Ancient Voices series, convened the expedition for the programme Flightpath to the Gods on BBC 1 this Thursday.

They found more evidence refuting UFOs: straight lines were not unique to Nazca, indeed they were a common feature in Peru and appeared to have some ritual significance.

The expedition found half the answer among the surviving debris of Nazca culture. The ancients were shamanistic: pottery images of vomiting figures recalled the hallucinogenic trances of jungle medicine men, who enter the world of the spirits in dream "flights" to combat illness.

So Piers Vitebsky, an authority on shamanism from the Scott Polar Institute in Cambridge, set off into the Peruvian rainforest to interview an Amerindian shaman. To the team's astonishment, the latter instantly recognised the Nazca drawings as animal "helpers", each valued for its characteristics.

The shaman's "flights" explained the psychedelic design of the Nazca figures, intended to be seen from the sky.

The religious significance of the lines was confirmed when David Browne, an archeologist from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, and an expert on a nearby Nazca temple, noticed that the building was an integral part of a trapezoid design. "That was our break-through," Spawforth recalled.

But what was the compelling motive that had led to the construction of the world's largest works of art? The answer was staring them in the face - drought.

"The area is totally dependent on seasonal rainwater draining from the Andes," said Spawforth. "It is estimated there have been no significant rainfalls on the plain since the last Ice Age."

Many lines pointed to the Andes, the Nazca plain's source of water. All the pieces began to build up a picture of Nazca desperation. Analysis of mountain ice showed a 40-year drought. Pottery recorded warfare and the taking of severed heads, which were offered as sacrifices to the rain gods.

"The Nazca lines appear to be a vast two-dimensional temple to the mountain gods who controlled the flow of water to this parched area. The Nazcas made bigger and bigger trapezoids to beg the gods to send rain," said Spawforth. The lines were not runways but walkways, along which priests would process "like a vast sacred conga". And their pointed heads? The team learnt that the habit of binding infants' skulls between planks had been widespread in South America. But nobody knows why.

[UK 3]*****

From: uk.ufo.nw Dave
Date: August 1997

How easy is it to make a mistake? An amusing story

During August of this year an amusing yet non-the-less important incident happened to me. One sunny morning my wife returned home from shopping. As I was helping her to unload the car I noticed an aircraft flying over. It was at a very high altitude and moving quite fast.

Living where I do in Birmingham (UK) it is not unusual to see high altitude domestic aircraft using these airways. However this one seemed particularly high. I rushed into the house and returned with my binoculars only to find that the aircraft had gone.

There was one solitary fluffy cloud in the sky. I focused the binoculars on it and was amazed to see a white ball of light moving across the cloud. I observed it for about three seconds and I can honestly tell you my blood ran cold. I moved the binoculars away but was unable to see it with the naked eye. I tried again with the binoculars but it had gone. I said to my wife: "you are not going to believe what I have just seen."

I was left alone outside for a few minutes. My mind was in turmoil

as to what to do next. This had never happened to me before. As I stood there contemplating things I noticed a dandelion otherwise lovingly known as a 'fairy' being gently blown through the air by the wind.

It was approximately 40 feet away. I looked at it through the binoculars. It was then that reality suddenly struck me. My UFO had infact been a dandelion blown along by the wind. As I had looked at the cloud the dandelion had flown into my field of view. As it was very close to me it was of course out of focus against the sky, giving the edges a blurred smooth appearance. No wonder I couldn't see it when I looked at the cloud with my naked eye.

So my first UFO sighting was infact identified as a 'fairy' ;-)

It just goes to show how easy it is to make an honest mistake. How many times has this happened to people all over the world? Do you have a short amusing sightings story to tell. It may have happened to you or someone else. Send them into us and we will publish the best. Please (as usual) let us know if you wish to remain anonymous. Send your stories to:

ufo@holodeck.demon.co.uk

Subject heading: An amusing story

[UK 4]*****

From: Steve Yarwood
Source: Unknown UK newspaper (scanned report)
Date: August 1997

UFO leaves couple with 'horrible feeling'...

..after a UFO experience on the road from Hope Cove to Galmpton at 10. 30 last Thursday evening.

The husband and wife, who have asked for their names not to be revealed for fear of being considered cranks, were walking up the road towards Galmpton after playing a game of bowls at Galmpton Village Hall.

They were about 300 yards from their home when from the Bolberry Down direction on their right flashed a tea plate size white object.

It came to a sudden stop in their path and instantly switched off.

The woman gave her description: "it came to us at such speed. It was like a shooting star, only much closer to earth. There were no flashing lights or anything like that, just a simple white disk."

"When the object stopped in front of us it was as if a light went out. It was a strange, strange feeling, like we were still being watched.

"I didn't say anything because I thought it might just be me who saw it, but then my husband shouted "what the heck was that?"

"I think he was more affected by it than me. He can't stop talking about it.

"It has left us both with a horrible feeling, especially as we are beginning to think we were the only people who saw it."

She reckoned the whole incident lasted only about a second.

[UK 5]*****

From: uk.ufo.nw Dave

Spider Web lights

A colleague who lives over Pershore, Eversham way told me that the weekend of 9th and 10 August this year there were reports on Radio Wyvern and local papers of spider web? type lights seen in the sky.

The local police said that they'd had quite a few reports of the sighting. They contacted the MoD (Ministry Of Defence) who said that there were no aircraft in the area at that time.

Do any of our readers have further information on this sighting? If so

please send it in.

[UK 6]*****

From: "Phil Light" <phil.light@ukonline.co.uk>
Source: The following articles are taken from 'Curiosities of Science'
by John Timbs, 7th Edition. Published by Crosby Lockwood and Son
MDCCCXC (1890) Cost: 2 shillings 6d

IS THE PLANET MARS INHABITED?

The opponents of the doctrine of the Plurality of Worlds allow that a greater probability exists of Mars being inhabited than in the case of any other planet. His diameter is 4100 miles; and his surface exhibits spots of different hues, -- the seas, according to Sir John Herschel, being green, and the land red. "The variety of the spots," says this astronomer, "may arise from the planet not being destitute of atmosphere and cloud; and what adds greatly to the probability of this, is the appearance of brilliant white spots at its poles, which have been conjectured, with some probability, to be snow, as they disappear when they have been long exposed to the sun, and are greatest when emerging from the long night of their polar winter, the snow-line then extending to about six degrees from the pole." "The length of the day," says Sir David Brewster, "is almost exactly twenty-four hours, -- the same as that on the earth. Continents and oceans and green savannahs have been observed upon Mars, and the snow of his polar regions has been seen to disappear with the heat of summer." We actually see the clouds floating in the atmosphere of Mars, and there is the appearance of land and water on his disc. In a sketch of this planet, as seen in the pure atmosphere of Calcutta by Mr. Grant, it appears, to use his words, "actually as a little world," and as the earth would appear at a distance with its seas and continents of different shades. As the diameter of Mars is only about one half that of our half, the weight of bodies will be about one half what it would be if they were placed upon our globe.

FOR WHAT PURPOSE WERE THE STARS CREATED?

Surely now (says Sir John Herschel) to illuminate our night, which an additional moon of the thousandth part of the size of our own world would do much better; nor to sparkle as a pageant void of meaning and reality, and bewilder us among vain conjectures. Useful, it is true, they are to man as points of exact and permanent reference; but he must have studied astronomy to little purpose, who can suppose man to be the only object of his Creator's care, or who does not see in the vast and wonderful apparatus around us provision for other races of animated being. The planets derive their light from the sun; but that cannot be the case with the stars. These doubtless, then, are themselves suns; and may perhaps, each in its sphere, be the presiding centre round which other planets, or bodies of which we can form no conception from any analogy offered by our own system, are circulating.*

*This eloquent advocacy of the doctrine of "More Worlds than One" (referred to at p. 56) is from the author's valuable Outlines of Astronomy.

[UK 7]*****

From: crow@crowman.demon.co.uk (Raine & Crow)
Date: Saturday 12th July 1997

Chris Arnold and Bentwaters

uk.ufo.nw says: We believe that Chris Arnold (below) wrote to Raine & Crow (uk.ufo.nw staff members) after reading a Bentwaters report on their home page. Chris Arnolds letters has now been placed into the hands of Michael Lindermann of CNI News for further investigation.

We ask that if anyone out there has any information on Chris Arnold and/or his involvement with the Bentwaters case please mail us at the usual address: ufo@holodeck.demon.co.uk

Chris Arnold's e-mail address currently withheld.

Date: Sun, 06 Jul 97

Howdy, Just wanted to say that as a participant in the alleged RAF Woodbridge UFO incident in 1980, I just wanted to advise you that

you've been well and truly snookered by Halt and his buddies. They have no clue.

Chris Arnold

Hi Chris,

Are you telling me that you were actually a participant in the alleged RAF Woodbridge UFO incident in 1980? What did you participate in? I have had quite a few people email me and claim this, but as yet none have come up with any evidence that would substantiate their claims. Would you please tell me why I have been well and truly snookered by Halt and his buddies, I wonder if you will claim Warren was not there at that time? I would be very interested indeed to hear your evidence and look forward to some real info from you.

All the very best..Crow & Raine

-[continued in part 2]-

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