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'Blather' - Occam the Barber

From: daev <daev@fringeware.com> [Dave Walsh]
Date: Thu, 05 Feb 1998 12:43:34 +0000
Fwd Date: Thu, 05 Feb 1998 09:52:23 -0500
Subject: 'Blather' - Occam the Barber

An excerpt, including a review of Devereux & Brookesmith's
'UFOs and Ufology'.

daev

NUA BLATHER NUA BLATHER NUA BLATHER
Weekly free email of Dogma Destruction,
Forteana and High Weirdness

By Daev Walsh Email: blather@nua.ie
Web: <http://www.nua.ie/blather/>

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OCCAM THE BARBER

Veteran Blatherphants may recall an issue of Blather from October 1997, titled 'Passports for Aliens' [at]:

<http://www.nua.ie/blather/archives/issue1no22.html>

where I told of claims by various people concerning an alleged crash of an extraterrestrial craft in Co. Roscommon, Ireland. The supposed crash was said to have taken place in May 1996.

I won't go as far as to revisit the entire tale here, but for those readers who may be unfamiliar with it, check out the original article

<http://www.nua.ie/blather/archives/issue1no22.html>

See also 'Watching the Skywatchers'

<http://www.nua.ie/blather/archives/issue1no27.html>

where I mention the sudden interest that the ICUFOS

<http://freespace.virgin.net/ic.ufos/>

were showing in the Curlew mountains area of Roscommon.

In short, there were rumours of a crash, the subsequent cordoning off of a large area of countryside by the army followed a great flocking to the scene by unnamed politicians, diplomats and U.S military personnel. I was not alone in putting forward the theory that that the downed bird was no less than a warplane on an unofficial military flyover. 'UFO Reality' magazine criticised Blather for this theory

<http://www.nua.ie/blather/archives/issue1no30.html>

pointing out that if the alleged incident was a NATO cock-up, then surely the public would have been told. UFO Reality don't seem to realise that Ireland is not a member of NATO.

So why am I blathering on about all this yet again? On Tuesday 27th January 1998, I received a phonecall from an acquaintance of mine, who informed me that he has possession of some 35 documents of correspondence with various Irish governmental bodies. These documents contain information regarding the 'Roscommon Crash'. I shall refrain from mentioning my source just yet, not because I doubt their veracity -- it is a reliable source -- but because Blather has not yet laid eyes on these documents. The Blather Joint Chiefs of Staff shall be discussing them next week, hopefully giving me cause to explore them in more detail.

So what do the documents say?

Apparently they mention the crash of a Swedish Airforce Saab Gripen MkII, killing both *test pilots* on board. The fighter was flying from Knock Airport in Co. Mayo, on an easterly course. The area was cordoned off, the Gardai (police) were asked to keep away, and the wreckage was retrieved. In previous reports, mentions of U.S. military personnel wandering about rural Ireland were mentioned, and the *new* version tells us that these chaps were in for the kill -- they were eager to get their hands on *something* that the Gripen was carrying.

Even if this is an accurate account of the alleged events, it still raises a multitude of questions, necessitating a possible trip to Occam's Barbershop. What was a Saab Gripen doing over Ireland? Why was it flown by test pilots? Why were the U.S. military so interested, and why were they allowed to get involved?

Some background, and some answers. . .

Ireland, in case anyone is under any alternative illusions, is a neutral republic. Sweden too, is a neutral, if rather well armed nation. Neither are members of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). As the Swedish airforce are no strangers to Irish airspace, through airshows and the like, why should there be such secrecy about a crash?

A joint venture between Saab and British Aerospace, the Gripen

<http://www.gripen.saab.se/>

is billed by its manufacturers as being the 'first fourth multi-role generation fighter in service'. Although developmental work began in 1982, it only ended in December 1996. Many are now in service, and it is becoming a constituent part of Sweden's defence forces. The two seater version 'has been developed for combat use as well as for both conversion and tactical training', and is not expected to be used in service until some time this year.

The Gripen carries state of the art avionics, including the 'air-to-air Tactical Information Data Link System (TIDLS), which permits real-time exchange of data both within and between cooperating tactical units.' Is the U.S Air Force desperate to get their hands on this? Surely, with amicable relations that Sweden would have with the U.S., and the relationship between Saab and British Aerospace promoting industrial resource sharing with the U.K., a close ally of the U.S., would there *need* to be American military personnel hanging about in Co. Roscommon?

More next week (hopefully).

UFOS AND UFOLOGY

It was with some hesitation that I chose to purchase Paul Devereux and Peter Brookesmith's 'UFOS & Ufology'. I had read Bob Rickard's review in Fortean Times 106, where he gave it an 'Excellent' rating, and I have deep respect for both authors - I've cited Devereux's endeavours in Blather before. But when I went to pay IEP20 for their new publication, I was a little taken aback. I held in my hand a 'coffee table' sized tome, with an almost abstract rendition of 'extra-terrestrial' in front of a saucer. 'Potboiler', I muttered, and left it down. Eventually,

after a few minutes thumbing through the pages, pacing and beard stroking, I was away with a copy under my arm.

Apparently you shouldn't judge a book by its cover. I didn't - I bought 'UFOs & Ufology' on the strength of the authors' previous work. However, I hope that people do buy this book because of its cover - because if they buy it hoping for yet another reassurance of the reality of flying saucers and alien visitation, perhaps they might actually learn something.

The authors trace UFOs from their earliest historical mentions, discussing their meanings in different cultures, right up to describing how and why 'flying saucers' suddenly made news in 1947, put forward their own theories, and still have room to explore the various hypothesis outside their own ideas. Any Roswell believer who doesn't have questions raised for them by the chapter on *that* alleged incident needs a boot in the ear. The tenuous links between crop circles and UFOs is explained, and the abductionists, such as John Mack and Budd Hopkins are heavily criticised, but not without well expressed reasons. Devereux's own field -- earthlight research -- is clearly explained, as is its relationship to the overall UFO phenomenon. While the authors pull no punches, they are not dismissive either. They never debunk the idea of extraterrestrial life, yet do a damn fine job of explaining why there is yet little evidence to support it.

Probably the best overview of the UFO phenomenon that money can buy.

UFOs and Ufology
Paul Devereux and Peter Brookesmith
Blandford 1997
ISBN 0-7137-2657-1

Dave (daev) Walsh
30th January 1998

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