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BUFORA WATCH: BUFORA Sacks Editor for Silence

From: Mike Wootten <mike@woottenm.freemove.co.uk>
 Date: Thu, 10 Jun 1999 10:50:10 GMT
 Fwd Date: Thu, 10 Jun 1999 09:28:47 -0400
 Subject: BUFORA WATCH: BUFORA Sacks Editor for Silence

 BUFORA WATCH: BUFORA Sacks Editor for Silence

Over the past 18 months we have presented the ongoing story of how a once highly respected and objective UFO Research organisation has declined into a shadow of its former self.

In that time, most of the active members of BUFORA have resigned, disgusted with the behaviour of the management. Two years ago BUFORA had a growing membership of over 1000 across the UK and abroad. Unfortunately, two thirds of the membership have left the Association, leaving it financially threadbare and impotent in completing objective research and investigation - activities that the Association should be all about.

Now, BUFORA are following the path of popularist ufology, doing anything to attract gullible new members.

In the latest turn of events, the BUFORA Council have effectively sacked their magazine editor, Robert Moore, to stop him publishing a controversial editorial denouncing the Association for its support of Max Burns and his 'research' of the Sheffield UFO Crash - a crash that never was.

We now publish his editorial that BUFORA management tried to stop you from seeing in full along with the letter Robert received from Chairman Steve Gamble.

The editorial speaks volumes of how BUFORA is managed...

 The "Max Burns Lecture Controversy".

Most readers will be aware of the so-called March 24th 1997 Howden Moors event (termed elsewhere "The Sheffield Incident"). Issues "5", "6" & "7" of the BUFORA BULLETIN recounted the detailed investigation into this occurrence conducted by long-term BUFORA member and Accredited Investigator Dr. David Clarke.

Also equally prominent over the past few years (and much more widely promoted throughout the UFO community) have been the findings of British UFO researcher Max Burns in relation to this

incident; in particular his claim that it was instigated by the UFO-related crash of a Tornado aircraft. On other occasions it has also been proposed that the Howden Moors event was generated by the crash of an experimental man-made "flying triangle"...or even that of an extraterrestrial spacecraft!

However, rather than merely respect the negative verdict arrived at by others investigating this case - conclusions that are firmly based on meticulous and objective research - anyone questioning the validity of Burns' interpretation of the Howden Moors event have been subjected to severe protracted criticism (both on the Internet and elsewhere).

As you will have noticed from the lecture programme printed in last issue's BUFORA BULLETIN, Max Burns has been given an official BUFORA platform to present his somewhat unique interpretation of this case. This is despite the fact that a number of prominent BUFORA council members and other association officers - namely Gloria Dixon, David Clarke and myself - have openly been against this. However (despite our wishes) official BUFORA Lecture Organiser Malcolm Robinson, with little consultation on his part, invited Burns to present his findings in a lecture to BUFORA's membership scheduled for the 5th June 1999.

A (very) short time prior to the details of BUFORA's lecture programme being published, news of the planned Burns' presentation "leaked out" (translation - was discussed with other officers of the association such as BUFORA's press secretary David Clarke)! As a result of this, Malcolm Robinson sent out an e-mail to various BUFORA officers pointedly inferring that there was a "mole" active within BUFORA!

Both myself and others found the usage of such extreme terminology simply incredible! In the 15 years I have been a member of the association the content and speakers of BUFORA's London lectures have never been confidential.... at least to my knowledge!

However, it later turned out that this (so-called) "mole" was none other than Gloria Dixon, who - like myself and others - was under the impression that the lecture programme contents was not a state secret! The fact that details of this forthcoming lecture had also been posted on the Internet forum UFO UpDates by Max Burns himself (a site easily accessible to millions throughout the world) is obviously a fact unworthy of any note.

No moles at work here, obviously.....

At the very least, this "mole" remark does a grave disservice to Gloria Dixon, who has worked tirelessly for four years as the association's Director Of Investigations (often under very difficult conditions).

Whilst none of us are against "freedom of speech" (despite inferences from some parties that those against BUFORA providing an official platform for Burns' were comparable to fascists or Stalin-era commissars for adopting this stance), we do feel the association as a whole should reflect the values and ethos of the NIC.

Sadly, both myself and others feel that much of the current lecture programme falls short of this. Why are there seemingly two Ufology's being presented within BUFORA; i.e the objective, sober and logical approach of the NIC and the "populist" approach, as embodied by the lecture programme?

I have always believed it was BUFORA's aim to bridge the gap between these two extremes. Instead, it seems to me that we are encouraging those very same negative, stupid and ill-informed attitudes. Therefore, due to this situation, Gloria Dixon (BUFORA's director of investigations), David Clarke (Press Officer) and myself (BUFORA BULLETIN editor) feel that we have no other option than to resign from the association. While we are sorry to leave, we feel we have to make a stand on this issue.

To do otherwise would be to betray the principles that we brought to BUFORA.

Therefore, due to this situation, Gloria Dixon (Director Of Investigations), David Clarke (Press Officer) and myself (BUFORA BULLETIN editor) feel that we have no other option than to resign from the association. While we are sorry to leave, we feel we have to make a stand on this issue.

No, we are not "fascists", "moles", "the Andy Robert's clique", "government agents" or any of the other myriad titles given to us by certain individuals in relation to this matter. We are merely committed Ufologists who feel that this situation forces us to stand up and be counted, for us to show our active support for the rationalist Ufology that has made BUFORA a major force for good within ufology for so long.

Unfortunately, there are many within the British UFO community who want this subject to remain in a conceptual stone age...and will inflict severe verbal punishment, abuse and other penalties on those who dare to think otherwise!

We are sickened with the ideological, hectoring "ETH-true-believers-always-knows-best" attitude of certain members of the British UFO community.

We feel the presentation of this lecture on a BUFORA platform is effectively "spitting in the face" of the impressive and competent investigation conducted by David Clarke and Martin Jeffrey. In regards to the latter, Martin Jeffrey is both sympathetic to the ETH and was a even a former supporter of Burns' interpretation of the Howden Moor event!

A fact that speaks volumes for the evidential basis of the so-called Sheffield whatever-it-was "crash"!

- Farewell -

Sadly - at least for me! - this is will be the last issue of the BULLETIN composed under my editorship. Given my views on the "Sheffield Incident", I feel I have no option other than to show my solidarity with David Clarke and Gloria Dixon (major contributors of this BULLETIN over the past few months - as even this issue will testify!).

Furthermore - on a less controversial note - I have also been finding it difficult to keep up with the demanding publication schedule over the past months; a schedule which leaves me very little time other than to work on the BULLETIN. In the long term, it has proved hard for me to meet it's demanding publication-deadline schedules.

However, I have taken steps to ensure that the BUFORA BULLETIN will enjoy continued support from a active and prolific BUFORA editorial team. What they will make of this BULLETIN I will leave in their hands....

I hope that - at least some of you - have enjoyed the various editions I have produced over the past year.

I wish to formally thank all those who contributed information and articles during the term of my editorship; especially Chris Allan, Malcolm Chamberlin, David Clarke, Richard Conway, Gloria Dixon, Tony Eccles, John Heptonstall, Jimme Holman, Martin Manwaring, Anthony North, Elsie Oakensen, Bob Pratt and Jenny Randles.

And also a "thank you" to all those who sent in letters responding to the contents of this journal.

The Steve (I don't) Gamble Letter

Hello Robert,

Thanks for your message regarding the June Bulletin.

From your message, it appears that the printing out is around half to two-thirds done, but Arnold is unlikely to receive it before the end of the week, then he will be away for several days. To minimise delay, Arnold will run with the issue 11 I have sent him which he has already received, in the hope that he

is able to post it before he goes away.

Don't print out any more of what you have done. Probably the best way forward is for you to let me have what you have done and I will incorporate as much of that as possible into issue 12 and credit both of us as joint editors of that edition.

Sorry to have to bump your issue of the Bulletin, but it is a question of practicality. We are a week behind the posting schedule already, this weekend would bring it to two and if Arnold was not able to do anything for a week that would make us three weeks behind on a six week schedule. The whole system only works if we are able to have the Bulletin hit the doormats at regular intervals. Your work on Bulletin 11 and on the Bulletin over the last year is appreciated and I do feel bad about having to bump your issue 11.

I know at the moment you are unhappy with BUFORA, but I hope that will improve with time. I certainly hope that you will continue to play a role in the research and investigation sections. John Spencer remarked at the last Research meeting on the good work you had done on the BOLIDE project and that he hoped you would continue after you gave up the Bulletin.

Regards,

Steve

Robert had in fact printed and completed issue 11 of the Bulletin before receiving the above spineless email. In our view this is not how you treat people who work hard in their spare time to keep to punishing magazine deadlines. But it has happened so many times. Council are now very good at momentarily silencing people's opinions and stabbing them in the back at the same time.

Now Robert will have nothing to do with BUFORA - along with majority of researchers in the UK.

We suggest you do the same...

BUFORA Watch

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