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### The Max Burns BUFORA Lecture - A Review

From: David Clarke <[crazydiamonds@compuserve.com](mailto:crazydiamonds@compuserve.com)>  
Date: Fri, 11 Jun 1999 14:52:39 -0400  
Fwd Date: Fri, 11 Jun 1999 16:09:41 -0400  
Subject: The Max Burns BUFORA Lecture - A Review

Remember the "Sheffield Incident"?

For some time now we have been waiting with baited breath for the appearance of Max Burns on the hard fought platform he had won in the name of free speech on the BUFORA lecture platform in London.

For more than two years now Max has promised us major new revelations about his claims that an ET Triangle or what is now known as an "FT" (no, not Fortean Times, 'flying triangle' silly!) was engaged in a hostile encounter with a UFO over the Peak District - leading to what Max claims was the loss of an Tornado F3 interceptor and the deaths of at least one of its crew.

I made a decision not to comment further on the case some months ago, having posted my 20,000 word report and conclusions on the Internet, unless some new evidence was forthcoming.

Henceforth I waited....and waited... and waited.

Trumpeted by its BUFORA promoters as the opportunity to answer to all the critics, and the event at which - wait for it - the "scientific evidence" to back up Max's amazing and earth shattering claims would finally be revealed.... it promised a lot.

But what did we get?

Well around 35 people turned up to hear Max's history-making claims at a prime venue in central London, and not one member of the Press! All this despite BUFORA's Malcolm Robinson faxing half the capital's press and even handing out leaflets to tourists in central London.

Who knows, perhaps a D-Notice had been served on the entire UK Press and even tourists too, it being such a fantastic case and all.

Max Burns himself appeared in his best Burtons suit, fresh from having made a miraculous recovery from a particularly nasty bout of food poisoning which, two weeks earlier, had prevented his appearance before a Crown Court Judge in Sheffield just minutes before his trial was due to go ahead.

Odd that isn't it, seeing as Burns had repeatedly stated that nothing would prevent his appearance before a BUFORA audience on

June 5 - not even an appearance before a jury, it seems.

What did we learn from the lecture? Precisely naff all, seeing as most of it seemed to be a rip-off from material written by "another researcher" who must remain nameless (guess who?) interspersed with long passages read directly from Max's own completely discredited Sheffield "Flying Triangle" incident report.

Of particular amusement were a series of bizarre and fantastic claims which I will now deal with point by point, illustrating once again how vivid Max's imagination really is and how shoddy his research has been: (not to mention how gullible anyone in the audience must be who took this nonsense as approximate to any kind of fact)

MAX CLAIM 1: That one of two RAF Spokesman extensively quoted in my Howden Report does not exist (ergo I have made him up). The evidence for this assertion?

"Jerry Anderson (of an Essex UFO group) has assured me that he had searched all the MOD lists and assures me one of the people named does not exist."

THE FACTS: The two people named are RAF Public Relations Officer Allan Patterson and Flight Lieutenant Tom Rounds. Both most certainly do exist and are both at this very moment serving in Kosovo with Britain's K4 group. Patterson is a Senior Civilian Press Officer with the Defence Exports Services Organisation, Whitehall, while Flt Lieut Rounds is the senior Press Officer on the RAF Press Desk at Whitehall. Both can be contacted directly on the Main MOD switchboard when they return, just dial 0171 218 3253 ask for RAF Press Desk Patterson left the RAF Press desk for a new job elsewhere in the MOD at the end of 98. But then any investigator who had regular contact with the RAF, as I do, and had done a good job on this case would know these facts? Apparently not, but it makes a good conspiracy story doesn't it?

Pity about the facts! Either way, I'm sure Allan will be amused to hear he doesn't exist next time I phone him.

MAX CLAIM 2: Max now claims the Tornado F3 destroyed by ET/UFO action over the Peak was an Italian NATO aircraft, and that it came from RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire. Burns bases his conclusion on a third-hand source who told another researcher he saw six Tornados leaving the base at 20.45. These aircraft were undoubtedly scrambled to pursue a UFO, despite the fact there was a low-flying operation underway that night - so he claims. By a bizarre twisting of the facts and figures, Max works out that two of these aircraft did not return. He then told the audience he had in fact written to RAF Coningsby asking to see a copy of the entire flight log for the night of March 24, 1997 and stating his conviction that one of their Tornado aircraft had crashed in the Peaks on that night!

THE FACTS: I obtained special permission from the base commander to access the flight log for Coningsby earlier this year. The log clearly shows that four Tornados took off and four returned safely to the base at 2125 that night following a routine exercise over the North Sea. The interesting fact is that today I contacted Caroline Hogg, the base Public Relations Officer who deals with all inquiries to Coningsby. Had the base received a letter from one Max Burns asking to access the log, and making a claim about a crashed aircraft?

"Not to my knowledge," she said after recovering from laughter. "And I deal with all members of the public who contact the base." In my presence she searched all correspondence logs since 1997 (the base PRO keeps meticulous records of all letters received) and the only person to have contacted the base about the March 24, 1997, incident was - surprise, surprise, David Clarke. So what are we to make of Max's claim to have contacted the base? He's making very serious claims about the loss of an aircraft and the lives of its crew, and yet he is such a good investigator he has apparently made no effort to even ask those who he claims are directly involved!

Does that not suggest that he doesn't quite believe it himself, not to the extent that he could remove himself from the Internet and actually write a real letter to a real person?

Isn't it far easier just to claim he has done, because he knows all the poor saps listening will just believe what he says without question?

MAX CLAIM 3: That the British MOD have lied to an elected MP, Helen Jackson, when they said in a Parliamentary written answer that the Ministry had received no reports of UFOs on March 24, 1997. As the South Yorkshire Police log contains at least one "UFO" report - the obvious conclusion to Max is that the reply is a lie.

THE FACTS: As Lionel Beer pointed out at the BUFORA Lecture, police reports go to the Home Office, who control the police, not to the MOD. In this particular case, the police classified all the entries in their log as relating to a "suspicious low flying aircraft" incident, NOT as a UFO, therefore there was no reason why they should have been reported to the MOD.

The obvious conclusion is that the MOD did not lie to Jackson, because they did not receive any reports of UFOs, only low-flying aircraft (13 in all, admitted in Parliament).

These facts go straight over the top of Max's head: he just cannot understand the very basic fact that the police never treated the "Sheffield Incident" as a UFO case.

Only Max is responsible for turning this non-case into a fully fledged UFO myth.

MAX CLAIM 4: That Jonathon Dagenhart - the infamous Tornado co-pilot who ejected and was seen on the Peak road covered in "aviation fuel" - had been pressurised by the RAF to retract his story.

THE FACTS: The BUFORA audience - not known for their objectiveness in the first instance - found this yarn particularly hard to swallow, and with good reason. Max's claims about this man - a unfortunate soul who had tried to take his own life that night, but became an unwitting pawn in a UFO believer's fantasy - just do not stand up to scrutiny, and even the hardcore believers were having their doubts. Max desperately tried to justify his claims at the BUFORA lecture by saying if he was not the co-pilot, why had so much pressure been put on him to retract the story?

The facts are that no pressure has ever been placed on Dagenhart. The man went to his superiors at the RAF himself to ask for help when his innocent testimony about a Pakistani-looking man he seen on a road was hijacked by a nutcase and was about to be splashed all over the News of the World.

Wouldn't you be worried, breathless and nearly crying if you found yourself in the same position? And to paraphrase Peter Brooksmith, how many Pakistani pilots/co-pilots are there of RAF Tornados which fly from RAF Coningsby?

I smell something funny here, and it's not aviation fuel.

MAX CLAIM 4: That there is a Government D-Notice in place preventing the entire of the UK Media from running any stories about " the Sheffield Incident." The evidence for this incredible assertion? Well Marc Bell of the Woolwich UFO Centre in London was going on a radio show in the capital to talk about UFOs, and was asked by staff what subject he was going to talk about. Well, the Sheffield Incident of course! Whereupon, he was immediately told under no circumstances was he to discuss that case. THE FACTS: Well come on guys and gals, does this nonsense really merit a reply?

Other than the fact that the chances of any radio journalist in Sheffield, let alone London, having heard of the "Sheffield Incident" (as apart from the real search for a supposed crashed aircraft) are pretty slim.

In fact the D-Notice secretary at the MOD will give any bona fide caller advice on any subject area which falls under any Government restrictions (and this is advice only for editors - not law). I can assure you that Max's lurid fantasies about this case do not fall under this category!

MAX CLAIM 5: That the Bolide meteor explanation for this case "was the original explanation/cover-story" put out by the MOD/Authorities.

THE FACTS: Nowhere have the MOD or RAF ever suggested that a Bolide meteor was responsible for this case. That fact is made perfectly clear in my Howden Moor report, of which Max has a copy. The Bolide explanation was suggested by the British Geological Survey and the Royal Astronomical Society as an explanation for the sonic booms and the lights in the sky seen that night.

It is not a scenario ever suggested by the MOD - and Max knows this is the case.

So why perpetuate lies?

MAX CLAIM 6: That the first sonic boom recorded by the BGS in the Sheffield area that night at 2152 "was the Tornado jet exploding" after being "zapped" by the UFO, and that the second boom at 2206 was caused by the UFO escaping from the area after the foul deed!

THE FACTS: Utter nonsense. The British Geological Survey had stated on the record and unequivocally that both sonic events recorded that night were caused by sonic booms - that is, air blasts caused by objects breaking the speed of sound - NOT by a ground impact or an aircraft exploding in mid-air. Senior seismologist Glenn Ford has stated the only possible cause of these events was a military aircraft breaching the sound barrier, possibly while performing a mid-air turn over land.

As we know there was a covert, low-flying exercise over the Peak shortly before these two events, it seems more than likely this was indeed the cause. Naughty pilots, not hostile ETs I'm afraid!

MAX CLAIM 7 (don't worry, this is the last one). That the 141 civilian mountain rescue teams scrambled to search the Howden Moors that night "were told to concentrate on an area four miles away" from the site of the "real" crash which was being quietly covered up by Blue Beret types in a military land-rover.

This information came from the wife of the gamekeeper at Strines, who told Max her husband was stopped from going onto his land by the police and had an offer of helping them with the search turned down.

Basically, Max is saying that over a hundred highly trained and highly experienced Mountain Rescue personnel, from seven separate teams, all of whom are civilians who have not signed the Official Secrets Act, were deliberately sent to the wrong area of the moor to conduct a fruitless search while the Military Industrial Complex removed the evidence of aliens under their very nose?

THE FACTS: Max has never contacted the MRS Team involved during the two years he claims he has put into this investigation.

In my book that would have been the very first place to start - as it should any investigator worth his or her salt!

If he had done, as I have, he would have found there was no possible way the MRS could have been "sent" to wrong area of moor, simply because it was the MRS who were organising the search - NOT the police!

It was the civilian mountain rescue members who decided, based upon the bearings taken from the witnesses who saw the low-flying plane, to search almost 50 square miles of moor. They directed the pilots of the two helicopters (police and RAF) from the ground and from the air throughout and thoroughly searched all the possible areas that an aircraft could have crashed.

MRS Team Leader that night Mike France has said there was no possible way his experienced men could have missed the wreckage of a Tornado jet or any other aircraft.

As for suggestions that they had been sent to search the wrong moor etc he responded:

"Utter rubbish, the gamekeeper's wife does not know what she is talking about. We had at least 50 to 60 men searching the Strines Moor area from early on - all was thoroughly searched and we found nothing."

As a measure of how reliable the gamekeepers' wives testimony is, she also claimed in her statement to Max that the land was "privately owned by a former Whitehall man with links to the SAS". In fact, Strines forest is owned by Steven Hastings, a former Tory MP who is married to the daughter of the Earl Fitzwilliam.

As for her husband Mick not being allowed to take part in the search, he actually went out in a police landrover with PC Mick Hague to help the initial search of the moors, and is quoted as saying so on the Granada TV documentary on the case screened earlier this year! So much for that load of nonsense!!

So - time and time again, Max's wild claims about this case do not stand up to any kind of scrutiny. One lie follows another, and it appears that he is completely incapable of saying anything which is remotely accurate.

Nothing new has been presented at the BUFORA lecture - just the same old rubbish.

His investigation of what he calls "the Sheffield Flying Triangle Incident" has been completely discredited in every detail, and yet still he cannot bring himself to accept this was not a UFO case.

BUFORA, and in particular its current crop of suits, have encouraged this farago of nonsense despite having the true facts at their disposal, and have brought nothing but ridicule and shame upon a once respectable association as a result, losing their Press Officer, Director of Investigations and Journal Editor in the process.

But, as always, Max has to have some new evidence that is always tantalisingly within his grasp.

Lets hope it can answer these basic questions I asked two years ago and ask again: 1. What is the name of the Tornado pilot who died as a result of ET action? 2. From what base did the plane fly? 3. Name one witness who saw an FT shoot down a pursuing Tornado that night.

Methinks we will still be waiting for an answer from Max in the year 2097 if we live that long. Meanwhile, check out the true facts about this classic case of misidentification and mythology in the making on:

[http://www.pufori.org/articles/howden\\_moor/index\\_nf.htm](http://www.pufori.org/articles/howden_moor/index_nf.htm)

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