

[UK 8]*****

Source: Sunday Times
Publish Date: 22nd November 1998
From: Roger Pate <r.pate@pindar.co.uk>

Alien Life Forms may be inside Earth

Author: Steve Farrar, Science Correspondent

LIFE FORMS so alien that scientists may simply not have recognised evidence of their existence could inhabit the Earth, according to a leading scientist.

Dr Tom Gold, emeritus professor of astronomy at Cornell University in America, believes that organisms based on silicon - completely unrelated to all the carbon-based life man has encountered so far - may live at great depths.

In a forthcoming book he will suggest that scientists should take the possibility more seriously. Gold, who is a member of the Royal Society, previously predicted that vast amounts of more conventional bacteria live miles down within the Earth's crust. Scientists initially dismissed the idea, but many now agree with him.

"So long as nobody suspects there could be silicon-based life, we may just not be clever enough to identify it", he said last week.

Rocks bearing signs of silicon-based organisms may already be sitting in laboratories, he believes, with their significance overlooked.

Every known living organism, from bacteria to mankind, is based on the chemistry of carbon, which forms the complex molecules such as DNA that are central to our existence. Scientists believe that if extraterrestrial life is found, the chances are that it, too, will be carbon-based.

Silicon has many chemical similarities to carbon, prompting scholars and science fiction writers to dream up new life forms. Huge "space slugs" that can swallow space ships appear in the film *The Empire Strikes Back*; in an episode of *Star Trek* a rock-like alien attacked Captain Kirk's crew; and killer parasites based on silicon surfaced in the *X-Files* when scientists explored the interior of a volcano.

Gold's life forms, if they exist, would most likely be micro-organisms capable of withstanding enormous pressures and temperatures, living in tiny pores inside rock deep within the Earth's crust. They could draw energy from dissolved gases and surrounding minerals.

Gold's ideas, which centre on an alternative explanation for oil and mineral deposits, will be published in his book, *The Deep Hot Biosphere*, in January.

"It is speculative but logical that there could be a large biochemical system very deep down which works better at high temperatures and pressures" he said.

Others are sceptical. Dr Harold Klein, who headed the Viking lander project team that searched for signs of life on Mars in the 1970's, pointed out that silicon was far inferior to carbon at forming the complex polymers crucial for life.

"I personally doubt the idea of silicon-based life. If we do find organisms far down inside the Earth, I'd bet they'd be carbon-based", he said.

Nevertheless, he urges future missions to Mars to carry an instrument to test for non-carbon-based organisms - just in case.

It is possible that the chemistry of silicon is altered sufficiently by the great temperatures and pressures deep in the Earth to make it more suited to forming complex molecules, according to David Noever, a research scientist at Nasa's new Astrobiology Institute.

He said some scientists at the American space agency were treating the idea of silicon-based organisms seriously, particularly with a view to searching for extraterrestrial life.

"It's almost naive to assume all life must be carbon-based; I could possibly make good cases for life based on both silicon and phosphorus",

he said.

Silicon is used by some carbon-based single-cell organisms called diatoms to form protective shells, according to Dr David Williams, a diatom researcher at the Natural History Museum in London. But diatoms are still fundamentally carbon-based.

However, bizarre organisms have been found in recent years deep in the Earth's crust. Steve Jones, professor of genetics at University College London, said; "There's an unknown universe down there that has already produced organisms with metabolisms so strange that, by comparison, man and mushrooms are almost identical, so God knows what else they'll find".

Microbes have been found living on the ocean floor at depths and temperatures where life was previously thought unsustainable.

Without knowing what silicon-based life forms might be like, said Dr Harry Elderfield, an earth scientist at Cambridge University, it is almost impossible to predict how scientists could even test for them.

Yet Gold has been described by Stephen Jay Gould, president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, as one of the most iconoclastic scientists - but one who is often right.

[UK 9]*****

Source: Nidderdale Herald [Yorkshire, England]
Publish Date: 20th November 1998
From: "gerry" <ed@farshore.force9.co.uk>

'Space link' role for Menwith

THE US communications base at RAF Menwith Hill will be at the forefront of a system which provides early warnings of ballistic missile launches anywhere on earth.

Two new radomes - the prominent golf balls - are to be built on the site, having a direct link with American infra-red eyes in space.

Armed Forces Minister Mr Doug Henderson said the work will begin in November 1999 and is due to be completed in February 2000.

However, the move has brought criticism from the Menwith Hill peace campaigners who say the base has now been moved to "a totally different level."

A spokeswoman for the protest group said: "We are appalled and outraged, but it is not a surprise. It was a major target as a command and communication centre, but its new role makes it even more important.

"This is another huge reason why Menwith Hill should not be here and why at the very least it should be accountable."

A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence confirmed that the infra-red tracking project will go ahead and should be operational by the millennium.

[UK 10]*****

From: "Peter Laurie" <peter@abbotsbury.co.uk>
Sighting Date: 7th November 1998
Sighting Location: Abbotsbury in Dorset, roughly 50 deg 40 min N, 2 deg 40 min W, at 6pm GMT 7

Saw an odd satellite recently. About 6pm, clear night, passing through Cassiopaea, a *line* of lights. The line was quite straight and had 4/5 evenly spaced lights with a last one about half the distance. While we watched the lights faded and went out, presumably because the thing dipped into the earth's shadow while we watched. It was moving at the sort of speed one associates with visible satellites.

Since we were standing in about 50 North and the time was 1hr 40 min after sunset it was possible to calculate that the thing was about 200 miles high. Two of the stars of the central triangle of Cassiopaea point north and the thing was travelling just to the west of this line. These stars are 4 deg 24 min apart (measured by plastic sextant) and the length of the thing was about 1/4 - 1/2 the distance

between them (hard to tell exactly because it was moving so fast). This implies that the line was 2 - 4 miles long. Which seems quite a big satellite.

The height and polar orbit make it look like a reconnaissance device. Maybe (as Ben suggests) the length is because it is a synthetic aperture radar. With a length of miles, it ought to resolve peanuts!

Any ideas what it was?

[UK 11]

Source: North Devon Journal
Publish Date: November 20 1998
From: "gerry" <ed@farshore.force9.co.uk>

UFO sightings 'extraordinary'

A NORTH DEVON man could have had an "encounter of the second kind" when he witnessed strange flashing lights in the sky, an expert believes.

Father and son Paul and Lee Holloway, of Rose Court, Bradworthy, spotted the lights in the Monday [Nov 16] morning sky while driving towards Bideford at about 6.35am.

"I saw something flashing in the sky like an aeroplane," Lee said. "It moved from one direction to the other, we kept on driving then from behind there was a massive flash of light, right across the whole sky."

"On the left hand side flashing lights came on and off, there was nothing there, then they were back to a different place then the other, swapping positions," Lee added.

He compared the flash to lightning, but said it was several times brighter, and lasted five or six seconds. From being behind their car the lights went directly over them before disappearing. British UFO Research Association regional investigator Doug Cooper described this as a UFO sighting and added: "Lee is bordering on the classic encounter kind of experience. "It's an encounter of the second kind -- an object -- rather than alien beings." But Lee was not the only one to see something strange in the sky that morning. Pauline Smith witnessed a phenomenon while driving along the North Devon link road between South Molton and Tiverton. "I was driving up the link road at about 6.15am and it lasted for about half an hour. I saw two objects in the sky, about 5,000ft up. "They were equidistant from the moon and I think they had identical flashing lights. They were both lined up with each other. "They disappeared and came back. I think I saw one of them drop vertically but I couldn't swear to it. Then one of them threw out a beam of light," she said. There is no apparent astronomical or meteorological explanation for what Pauline, of Sunnyside, Woolsery, saw. The armed forces deny any flight movement over North Devon that morning. While this was happening, Pauline said: "I felt that time sort of took on a different meaning, I felt light-headed, nauseous and very disorientated. "I remember thinking something weird is going on here," she said. Mr Cooper said: "It's a typical UFO sighting -- what it was, I've got no idea. The symptoms Pauline described are again typical of a sighting and known to ufologists as the 'Oz Factor,' -- named after the Wizard of Oz when Dorothy was in Oz -- the 'in between' land. "When you see something which is not known to you, it feels as if everything around you has stopped and you're in no man's land. It's the mind trying to cope with what it's seen" He said a similar version of the Oz Factor was experienced by troops in the First World War while they were waiting to go over the top. Their concentration was so great their minds blocked out everything else. Mr Cooper added: "Both Lee and Pauline have experienced something quite extraordinary."

[UK 12]

Source: Express and Star (UK)
Publish Date: 16th November 1998
From: "Lee Edmunds" <Lee.Edmunds@altasystems.co.uk>

UFO Sighting !

(Letters Page)

I was interested to read the letter from David Rose in which he says he saw a UFO on Sunday October 18th because I saw one on the same day at

the same time.

I was travelling with my dad from Sheffield to Wolverhampton at about 1.30pm. We both noticed a strange object in the sky directly in front of us. It was a large rectangular mirror, and it seemed motionless.

Even though we were travelling at 70mph, we didn't seem to get any closer to the object and it's size seemed unaltered.

I would guess that it was somewhere over north Leicestershire, but it was difficult to be certain. After about 15 minutes we lost sight of the object.

It was a very bright sunny day and my dad thinks that it may have been some sort of reflection, but I'm not sure.

The above letter was submitted to the E&S by Jobey Bayliss of Nottingham (aged 12). Hope you can use it. I will try and get a copy of the letter from David Rose mentioned in the letter and forward it to you.

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World News

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[W 1]*****

Source: Washington Associated Press
From: bernhard.nahrgang@ob.kamp.net (Bernhard Nahrgang)

Astronomers record gamma ray light

WASHINGTON (AP) - For the first time, astronomers have recorded visible light from the source of a gamma ray burst, a mysterious deep space eruption more powerful than the energy of 10 million billion stars, researchers report.

The gamma ray burst was detected at 4:47 a.m. EST Saturday and was detected by two orbiting observatories. News of the event was relayed through a network to astronomers. Ground-based telescopes were able to capture optical light from the fading afterglow that followed the 110-second peak of the burst. Gamma ray bursts are common, happening several times a week. But they come and go so swiftly that astronomers have never before been able to link optical observations with the gamma ray detection.

Officials said the stellar eruption originated about 10 billion light years away but was so powerful in visible light that it could have been sighted from the ground with binoculars if, by chance, someone had been looking.

"If the burst had occurred somewhere in our galactic neighborhood, it would have been so bright that night would've turned into day," said Chryssa Kouveliotou of the Universities Space Research Association, a contract science group at the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala.

NASA said that the burst appeared to originate from near the constellation Corona Borealis, visible in the predawn northern sky.

The gamma ray burst phenomenon was discovered in 1967, but the bursts remain mysterious. They occur randomly across the sky several hundred times a year, with the peak of each burst lasting from a few milliseconds to a few minutes. Astronomers do not know their origin or precise cause. Some speculate that bursts originate from black holes. Since gamma rays are invisible to the eye, the eruptions were unknown until the development of gamma ray detectors.

The burst last Saturday was detected by NASA's Compton Gamma Ray Observatory and by the Italian-Dutch satellite BeppoSAX. Both satellite observatories regularly monitor the sky in search of such stellar events. The satellites pinpointed the sky location of the burst, and the data were relayed quickly to other observers. Visible light was then detected by teams from the California Institute of Technology using a telescope at the Mount Palomar Observatory in California and by observers from Washington's Carnegie Institute, using the Keck II telescope in Hawaii.

Based on the measured intensities of the light and the gamma rays, experts estimated energy released from the explosion could have been equal to the energy of 10 million billion stars like the sun - that's

one followed by 16 zeroes. The energy estimate, however, could have been affected by at least two factors, experts said.

Researchers at Cal Tech and Carnegie later determined that a foreground galaxy may have been between Earth and the origin of the gamma ray burst. Gravity from the foreground galaxy could have bent the light from the burst and caused what is known as gravitation lensing. This could cause the light to appear brighter than it actually was, rather as a lens magnifies light.

Also researchers said the energy burst may have been in a beam, like a focused flashlight, instead of going out in all directions, as from an uncovered light bulb. A beamed burst also would appear to be more powerful than a burst that spewed energy in all directions at once.

[W 2]*****

Source: Source: Arizona Star / via The Guardian London
Publish Date: 28th January 1999
From: bernhard.nahrgang@ob.kamp.net (Bernhard Nahrgang)

Latest possibility in search for life is Charon, tiny moon orbiting Pluto

ANAHEIM, Calif. - Charon, the tiny moon discovered 20 years ago orbiting Pluto, is the latest candidate in the search for extraterrestrial life. The little, dim satellite and its barely visible parent planet are at the edge of the solar system, more than 2.6 billion miles from the sun. NASA scientists think one of them may be warm enough for life.

Astronomers believe there have been four possible homes for life in our solar system at some point in history, David DesMarais of the NASA Ames Research Center told the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting. They were Mars, Venus, Jupiter's moon Europa, and now Charon. A NASA team announced two years ago that they thought they had found fossil evidence of life in a meteorite from Mars. The Galileo satellite orbiting the moons of Jupiter has sent back pictures which hint at an ocean under the ice of Europa.

The confirmation that microbial life on Earth could be 3.8 billion years old suggests that life might have had time to form on Venus before it was wiped out by a runaway greenhouse effect. Pluto is so small, faint and far away that it was discovered only 60 years ago.

Charon was not seen until 1978. Although it is 30 times the distance of the Earth from the sun, it could have warmth: The little moon and its twin planet Pluto are only 12,000 miles apart.

[W 3]*****

Source: ABC Online News / Australia
Publish Date: 25th January 1999
From: bernhard.nahrgang@ob.kamp.net (Bernhard Nahrgang)

Marree Man Outline Mystery Deepens

Those responsible for the Marree Man outline in South Australia's far north apparently will not be revealing themselves to the British media this week. While the South Australian Government is playing down the affair, interest from the British media is intensifying.

First there was a suggested link with an Oxford pub, then claims that all would be revealed in a container buried near an ancient carved warrior in Dorset.

Slowly, some would say skillfully, the British press is being reeled into the story along with millions of Britons who have never heard of Marree.

But now a fax, allegedly from the perpetrators, claims the media has misinterpreted recent statements and there will be only the first of a series of clues at the Dorset site. Also, the clues will only hint at the answer - not reveal it.

The South Australian Government has banned public access to the Marree Man outline, but will not waste resources tracking down the perpetrators.

The ploughed outline is regarded by angry local Aborigines as an

insulting and sacrilegious stunt.

[W 4]*****

Source: Associated Press
Publish Date: Thursday 14th January 1999
From: bernhard.nahrgang@ob.kamp.net (Bernhard Nahrgang)

Mrs. Clinton, Kids Dream of Mars

WASHINGTON (AP) - First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and arts officials kicked off planning Thursday for the first permanent station on Mars by some of the schoolkids who may eventually go there.

Youngsters are being asked to think about the year 2030 and a ``Millennium Mars Project.'' So far, only small experimental vehicles have been landed on Mars.

``We will all be reliving, through these young people's imagination, what it means to create a new world,'' Ms. Clinton said during the kickoff at the National Air and Space Museum, part of the Smithsonian Institution.

The idea is to get pupils and high school students working with scientists and technicians on the design for a permanent Mars settlement, according to officials at the National Endowment for the Arts, which is putting \$500,000 into the project.

``Our young citizens will not only imagine what new dance and music and painting will emerge in a community on Mars,'' said NEA Chairman Bill Ivey, ``but they must also consider what our interplanetary pioneers will carry with them. They will need creative minds - imagination and ingenuity - to solve the problems they are certain to encounter as they invent their new world.''

Before her speech, Mrs. Clinton and Donna Shirley, who managed the Mars Pathfinder project, met 15 pupils from Washington's Anne Beers Elementary School.

Sitting under a prototype space suit for visitors to Mars, they talked about work the children have done on how they imagined living conditions would be - based on what has already been discovered about conditions on the planet.

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And Finally!

Dave_UFO says: I had to renew the insurance policy on my car this month. Whilst reading through the policy manual which explains what is covered and what isn't, is the below paragraph.

'What is not covered'

'Loss or damage occasioned by pressure waves caused by aircraft and other aerial devices travelling at sonic or supersonic speeds'

Well that covers a multitude of possibilities don't you think?

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UNITED KINGDOM UFO NETWORK

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NICKNAME: (the name you wish to be known by on channel)

ALTERNATIVE NICKNAME: (incase your first nickname is already being used)

AOL USER: YES/NO

SEND VIA E-MAIL: YES/NO (do you want MIRC sent as an e-mail attachment)

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