

A CAA spokeswoman said: "The captain reported seeing an unnatural bright light below his aircraft while flying at 28,000ft. The area below him was illuminated for about 10 seconds by incandescent light and it was certainly not a light from another plane.

"Three other aircraft saw it moving at a high speed or static. However, air traffic control were informed and they confirmed that there were no other planes in the vicinity.

"Then, five minutes later, there was a brief radar return from a spot 75 miles away. We believe there was no danger involved."

The Luton-based 96-seater plane was flying company executives from Linkoping, Sweden, to Humberside airport. A spokesman for Debonair, which runs cut-price flights throughout Europe, said chief executive Franco Mancassola had been informed that a "great red light in the sky" had been spotted near one of the company's planes.

At one stage, the report says, the object came to an abrupt halt before accelerating past the airliner at thousands of miles an hour.

A CAA source says the object was tracked by a military radar station in Yorkshire after it entered UK air space.

A spokesman for the 6,000 member British Pilots Association said: "We get reports of this nature from our members but they are few and far between.

"In the past 10 years or so I would say there have been around six cases of UFO's being sighted.

"Many pilots are reluctant to make such claims because it tends to lay them open to ridicule. So when they do go as far as making a report we do expect it to be given credence." A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence insisted there were no military aircraft in the area adding: "We saw nothing."

Source: Daily Mirror newspaper [UK]
Publish Date: Wednesday 28th April 1999

Jet Crew tell of close encounter with UFO A passenger jet's crew have reported a close encounter with an unidentified flying object. They said that they noticed an "incandescent" light below their Debonair BAe 146 as it headed over the North Sea from Sweden to Humberside.

Then, they added, a long cylindrical silver-coloured object the size of a battleship flew alongside. The British plane's shocked captain saw what seemed to be rows of square portholes on the UFO before it vanished at "enormous speed".

The crew told the Defence Ministry about their sighting. An RAF radar station tracked the object, which was seen from three other planes.

[UK 2]*****

uk.ufo.nw says: an occasional report of interest

Source: Daily Mail newspaper
Publish Date: Monday 1st March 1999

Cyber terrorist strikes

By Steven Morris and Peter Rose

Police are hunting a computer hacker who is alleged to have targeted military bases and tried to blackmail defence chiefs.

The infiltrator is said to have attempted to gain control of a military communications satellite and altered its course, prompting alarmed officials to notify Tony Blair [UK Prime Minister].

This is alleged to have been followed by a threat to continue interfering with the satellite unless a large amount of money - possibly 3 millions pounds [sterling] was handed over.

It is also possible that attempts have been made to break into the Government's high security listening post, GCHQ in Cheltenham,

Gloucestershire, and other British installations abroad. Police refused to go into details yesterday, because of the very sensitive nature of the allegations.

A Scotland Yard spokesman would only say: "We can confirm that officers from the Metropolitan Fraud Squad are investigating allegations of a hacker believed to be targeting several different international sites, some of which may include military installations."

It is understood that a team comprising the most experienced and skilled members of the squad's Computer Crime Unit has been told to trace the origin of the attacks.

One source said: "This is being seen as a very big and very important investigation.

"The officers involved have been told that discretion is crucial."

Officially, the Ministry of Defence was denying the Sunday newspaper report that one of its four military satellites, which give crucial intelligence during actions such as the bombing raids on Iraq, had been infiltrated.

A spokesman also denied that any of its military installations had been attacked - but could not explain why a police investigation had been launched.

One analyst said: "It is no surprise at all that the MoD would deny this.

"It is hugely embarrassing and, of course, very worrying."

Hacking has become a massive concern for the Armed Forces because experts agree that the first move of an aggressor would be to attack defence computers.

When British hackers broke into U.S. defence systems as the two nations prepared to attack Iraq last year, the CIA feared that the cyber spies were agents of Saddam Hussein.

Thousands of attempts to crack military secrets over a frantic two week period were described as the 'most organised and systematic computer attack we have ever suffered'.

The latest claims have echoes of frightening films such as The Net, about a plot to infiltrate U.S. defence systems, and War Games, in which a teenage hacker almost starts World War III.

They also come two years after London music student Richard Pryce was fined 1,200 pounds sterling after being convicted of breaking into Pentagon defence computers when he was only 16 as a 'prank'.

It was initially thought that a spy ring was trying to steal secrets.

Pryce also hacked into the computer of a Korean atomic research institute.

The Americans were then in delicate negotiations with the North Koreans and were terrified of an 'aggressive act' because it appeared the hacking had originated from a U.S. air base.

[UK 3]*****

uk.ufo.nw says: an occasional technology report

Source: News Of The World
Publish Date: Sunday 14th March 1999

Video sends pics to the brain

Totally blind people are boldly going to see again thanks to astonishing Star Trek style gadgetry.

Hollywood science fiction is coming true with a sensational system that will send images to the brain from a video camera mounted on a pair of spectacles - just like on screen in Star Trek: The Next Generation.

In the plot, blind Starship Enterprise engineer Geordi La Forge uses

this method to restore his own sight.

And in real life, US boffins at Baltimore's John Hopkins Wilmer Eye Institute hope their breakthrough will cure almost half a million sufferers in Europe and America in five to ten years. Already 15 guinea-pig patients are seeing crude images and letters using the technology.

One of the first successes, 71 year old Harold Churchey, said: "To see light after 15 years was wonderful. "It was blue and it was just as if someone had switched it on. It was great. And they showed me the letter H, for Harold. I had trouble seeing the bottom at first, so I thought it was the letter U. But it was clear."

The revolutionary technique only works in victims of a condition called retinitis pigmentosa.

Pioneer

This destroys the retina - the light sensitive area at the back of the eyeball that acts much like a film in a camera.

When their system is developed pioneer doctors Eugene de Juan and Mark Humayun will kit patients out with visor like spectacles containing a mini video camera.

Then they will surgically implant a tiny, sealed electronic microchip just like those for home computers, in the damaged retina tissue.

There it will pick up electronic video signals beamed from the camera.

The chip will then do what the retina now can't do, and transmit the information about light, dark and colours as electrical impulses to the brain. There they are decoded into pictures as normal.

A spokesman for John Hopkins University told us: "As with all medical progress we urge caution, and we don't want to hold out false hope. But we believe that extensive progress is being made. It's an engineering project, just like going to the moon," he said. "With time and money, you can get there."

Watch this space!

[UK 4]*****

Source: The Guardian Newspaper - London
Publish Date: 9th February 1999

UK Bookmakers Taking Plenty Of Bets On Armageddon

By Helen Carter Would you put a bet on the end of the world? It might seem like a dodgy wager, since no matter what the odds, it could never possibly be honoured.

But every week dozens of punters are placing bets on Armageddon, possibly inspired by the Millennium and the feeling of doom surrounding it.

A survey of 1,001 adults found that 59 per cent think they have more chance of experiencing the end of the world than winning the National Lottery.

Most (33 per cent) think the end will be caused by a world war, followed by global warming (26 per cent) and collision with an asteroid (15 per cent.)

Bookmakers William Hill are offering odds over whether the end of the world is nigh.

They are offering 100,000,000-1 against civilisation being destroyed by mass suicide. But when it comes to destruction by alien life forms, the odds shorten to 500,000-1. Floods (100,000-1), asteroids (50,000-1), famine (25,000-1), and war (1,000-1) are all covered.

Graham Sharpe, media relations manager at William Hill, said many people placed very specific bets about when the world would end. "One man placed =A31 on a 1,000,000-1 bet on the world ending on August 11, 1999, at 12.50pm, while we gave another odds of 6,666,666-1 that it would end at 6pm on the sixth day of the sixth month this year.

"I would estimate that we would get at least half a dozen of these bets every week."

John Mason, vice-president of the British Astronomical Association, said: "Public concern about an asteroid hitting the earth is understandable but it is highly unlikely that we will see it in our lifetime."

"An asteroid like the one which led to the extinction of dinosaurs hits earth only every 50 to 100 million years."

Stories of a similar widespread panic as the last millennium approached are exaggerated, according to Eric Christiansen, lecturer in medieval Europe and Baltic countries at Oxford University. He said: "This was something dreamed up at the end of the 19th century."

"But fear of the end of the world is regular through every generation. In 1927, thousands gathered in Weymouth expecting it to end."

[UK 5]*****

From: "Michael Doherty" <ronaislg@iol.ie>
Location: County Donegal
Sighting Date: Friday 12th March 1999

Cigar shaped sighting

My name is Ronan Doherty. I am nearly 16 years of age, and I live in the townland of Galwilly in the district of Glentogher near the town of Carndonagh in the peninsula of Inishowen in County Donegal.

Last night at about 20.45hrs there was a clear sky. I saw an object a few miles away at about aeroplane height, perhaps less, NW from our house. I am used to seeing planes since they cross from Scotland to the States over us.

The first time I saw it was for about a minute or two, it was stationary. Its shape was long and cigar shaped, with two big white lights one at each end. There was a dim red light in the middle and a white light flashing alternatively at four different places around. It made no noise at all.

I went back into the house and out again a minute later. In that time it had moved about 10 miles in a NW direction and was again stationary, but a good deal smaller. It stayed there for 5 minutes. After this time it moved off very quickly, vanishing from sight in about 3 seconds.

About a couple of months ago in roughly the same area but moving in a NE direction, I saw another strange object. It did not look like a plane and was making no noise whatsoever. I saw it for about 10 minutes.

Another strange happening took place at about 6.30am on Christmas morning 1998 while I was jogging in this area. I saw about eight very bright white flashes in the N direction, lighting up the whole sky. I looked and listened for news reports of something happening at that time to explain it, but the only confirmation came from a friend lying awake in his home in Derry and whose window faces N. He too saw very bright flashes at the same time. From my home to his is about 20 miles by road, 13 directly.

The only reason I am contacting you is to pass on this information. I am not claiming it is a UFO; I can't explain what I saw.

[UK 6]*****

Source: This Is London
Publish Date: 18th April 1999
From: Bernhard Nahrgang <bernhard.nahrgang@ob.kamp.net>

Scottish Hotel Offers UFO-Spotting Weekends

Tourists are being offered out-of-this-world weekend breaks at which they can indulge in UFO-spotting.

The sci-fi themed weekends are being planned for later this year in Falkirk, Scotland, where there have been more than 350 UFO sightings

reported since 1992.

Organisers of the weekends, at the Comfort Inn, Falkirk, are expecting to welcome UFO-spotters from as far away at Japan and Australia.

Falkirk is near the small town of Bonnybridge - where many inhabitants are said to claim to have seen an unidentified flying object.

Visitors on the UFO weekends - on September 24-26 and November 19-21 - will be taken to the "Bonnybridge Triangle", the scene of sightings, and will also meet Falkirk councillor and UFO expert Billy Buchanan.

Mr Buchanan has spent six years trying to convince the Ministry of Defence that it should investigate the strange sightings in the area, and has set up a pressure group called The Lights of Bonnybridge.

The weekends, which include a night of skywatching complete with a midnight picnic, will cost =A3180 per person.

World News

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[W 1]*****

Source: MSNBC

Publish Date: 12th March 1999

Search for E.T. springs forward

By Alan Boyle

Scientists are taking their decades-long quest to find signals from alien civilizations to its higher level yet, with new software and a renewed search campaign. Within just a few weeks, the effort could involve more than 250,000 people - arguably forming the biggest scientific team in history.

THE FIRST EXTRAVAGANZA is a double-header at the world's largest telescope, beginning Monday: In a repeat of last September's first dual campaign, both receivers on the 1,000-foot Arecibo radio telescope in Puerto Rico will be used simultaneously in the search for extraterrestrial intelligence, known as SETI.

So far, there have been no confirmed broadcasts from E.T., and it's unlikely that the new SETI initiatives will crack the case. But you never know: "It's always possible that we'll establish contact with E.T. in the next couple of weeks," said Seth Shostak, an astronomer at the SETI Institute.

Dan Werthimer, principal investigator for Project Serendip, said he expects the search to yield success after another 20 to 50 years.

"I'm optimistic that we will eventually make contact with other civilizations, probably in our lifetimes," he said.

PRIME-TIME SCHEDULE

The California-based SETI Institute will use the main radio receivers for Project Phoenix, a targeted search of 1,000 stars considered most likely to show signs of life. After years of observations, Project Phoenix has gotten a third of the way through its list. Over the next two weeks the researchers will resume the slow, methodical progress of monitoring each star for hours at a time.

The project checks about 2 billion separate radio channels for each star. Last September marked Project Phoenix's first two-week session at the Arecibo telescope, and Shostak said the experience taught the researchers a lesson about "life in the big city these days - or should I say, life in the tropics these days."

"There were some chunks of the microwave spectrum there ... where it was just impossible for us to do any meaningful observations," he said, due to the increasing cacophony of telecommunications satellites.

Nevertheless, Arecibo figures into Project Phoenix's strategy for the

next two or three years, Shostak said. The researchers will continue through their list, and by the time they're finished looking at the 1,000 prime targets, a new telescope system known as the LHT may be ready for prime time, he said.

The new system would "speed this thing up by a factor of 1,000 or more," Shostak said.

ALL SETI, ALL THE TIME

Meanwhile, Arecibo's other receiver is being used independently by Project Serendip, conducted by Werthimer's team at the University of California at Berkeley.

Werthimer said the project monitors 167 million channels every second, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. While SETI does a slow, thorough analysis of selected targets, Serendip's "piggyback" receiver can simultaneously do a quick scan of the whole sky for promising blips.

"I like the mix of strategies," Werthimer said.

Werthimer said progress was also being made on yet another strategy in the SETI search: looking for transmissions in the optical spectrum from distant stars, such as bursts of laser light. Scientists at Berkeley, Harvard University and other institutions are scanning the skies for short, brilliant bursts of light as well as steady beams, he said. Berkeley's optical SETI program plans to check 2,500 stars over the next year or two.

"We're really just getting into gear," Werthimer said.

INTERNET TO THE RESCUE

All SETI projects actually rely on computers to do the heavy lifting, and right now, the computers represent the biggest bottleneck.

"Even though Serendip is probably the world's largest supercomputer," Werthimer said, "it still is not able to find the very weak signals, and it doesn't look for a wide variety of signal types."

That's where you and about a quarter-million other computer users can play a part. Over the past four years or so, Werthimer and others have been working on a way to network desktop computers over the Internet for distributed analysis of SETI data. It's analogous to the techniques used to solve encryption puzzles, using tens of thousands of computers.

The software they developed, SETI@home, is designed to work as a screen-saver or a background application. It would download a batch of data from Arecibo, analyze it, then send the results back to Berkeley. SETI professionals would follow up on any promising blips.

In geek-speak, the 300KB batch represents about two minutes of data from a frequency band 10KHz wide. The entire SETI@home project is designed to monitor about 2.5MHz of the radio spectrum - only about half the bandwidth used by one television channel, and a 40th of the bandwidth monitored by Serendip. But that relatively small wedge of bandwidth would be subjected to intense analysis.

About 250,000 people have signed up to receive an e-mail alert when SETI@home is ready for prime time - and the list is growing by about 1,000 addresses a day, Werthimer said.

Werthimer said a company of about 100 beta testers would be expanded to a battalion of 1,000 in the next week or so. The current schedule calls for Windows and Unix versions of the client software in late April or early May, and a Mac version soon afterward.

If 250,000 computer users actually download the software and use it, that would make SETI@home the world's largest experiment in distributed computing, said David McNett, co-founder of Distributed.Net.

"It gets more difficult as the numbers get higher," McNett said. His project, aimed at solving encryption challenges and demonstrating the power of distributed computing, has attracted about 150,000 users during about two years of operation, with 60,000 users currently active.

SETI@home's project director, David Anderson, acknowledges that

there's a question mark about "the ability of our server side - the software and the hardware resources we have - to support the demand of what could potentially be several hundred thousand people banging on the thing at once."

The challenges won't end even when the technical kinks are worked out of the system, McNett said. One of the biggest long-term challenges will be keeping people interested in a search that could take years or decades, with no certain "solution" at the end. That goes for SETI@home in particular - and the SETI search in general.

"The psychological hurdles are actually the hardest ones to reach," McNett said.

-[continued in part 2]-

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