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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Nick Pope's Weird World (April issue)

From: Georgina Bruni <[georgina@easynet.co.uk](mailto:georgina@easynet.co.uk)>  
Date: Sat, 06 May 2000 02:29:03 +0100  
Fwd Date: Sat, 06 May 2000 08:57:04 -0400  
Subject: Nick Pope's Weird World (April issue)

Nick Pope's Weird World (APRIL ISSUE)  
[www.hotgossip.co.uk](http://www.hotgossip.co.uk)

Welcome to April's column, bringing you the latest news, the most current views and the hottest gossip from the world of UFOs and the paranormal.

#### Believers And Sceptics

Just because I support the idea that some UFOs are extraterrestrial doesn't make this a column for believers only. Those of you who are regular readers will know that I often publicise theories that run counter to my own beliefs, and that I try to give this column balance. Where sceptical research is solid or interesting it's as likely to be featured here as anything pushed by those who support the Extraterrestrial Hypothesis. Similarly, believers won't get an easy ride just because I'm a believer too. If they put forward ludicrous claims I'll say so, calling it how I see it. I've been accused of knocking the sceptics, but again, those who have followed this column for a while will know I've knocked more than a few believers. Like most serious ufologists I welcome good research and innovative ideas whoever puts it forward. If sceptics think I'm being hard on them, it's probably because I think they've moved from scepticism into something more destructive. As the latest Whitehall soundbite reminds us:

"Scepticism is healthy; cynicism is corrosive."

#### Did Meteors Bring Life To Earth?

The idea that life on Earth was seeded by organic material brought here by comets is not new, but has been given a recent boost by new research done by scientists from the University of Berkeley. Scientists have long been interested in the so-called "Cambrian explosion" - a period in the Earth's history around 500 million years ago when there was a sudden and spectacular diversification of animal life. New analysis of lunar soil suggests that this period coincided with a time when the moon (and by implication, the Earth) was being hit by increased numbers of comets and meteors. Coincidence? Possibly. But then again, it certainly seems that there might be a connection. Recently there has been much talk of the threat posed to humanity by comets and meteors. How ironic it would be if the thing that we fear could bring about the end of the human race had played a major part in its creation.

## Ball Lightning

Some ufologists believe that ball lightning might explain some of the more mysterious UFO sightings to have occurred over the years. Others point out that the scientific establishment is not corporately convinced that ball lightning exists, and have argued that one shouldn't try to explain one mystery by citing another mystery as the cause. New research might breathe new life into this old debate. John Abrahamson and James Dinniss are chemical engineers at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. In a recent article in the prestigious scientific journal Nature, they suggest that ball lightning might be caused by an ordinary lightning strike. Their theory is that silicon in the ground might liquefy as a result of a lightning strike, and gain enough energy to rise into the air. It's hoped that this new theory might now be tested in a laboratory. That's more difficult than it sounds, but if ball lightning could be created in a laboratory environment, this would be a major step forward.

## The Ghost Orchid

I've been sent some bizarre material that should be of interest to all those with an interest in the paranormal. The Ghost Orchid is a CD devoted to what's known in paranormal circles as Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP). This arises when disembodied voices spontaneously appear on tape. What on earth is going on? Messages from aliens or the spirit world, or accidental recordings of radio broadcasts? Heartless hoaxes or a window on another dimension? Now you can decide for yourself as the best of this material is brought together, together with commentary and theories from the experts. The Ghost Orchid is available from all good record shops. Check out [www.touch.demon.co.uk/ashrip.htm](http://www.touch.demon.co.uk/ashrip.htm) for further details.

## When The Gods came Down

Just published by Hodder and Stoughton at £20 is Alan Alford's latest book, When The Gods Came Down. It's not yet been received for review, but should be of interest to all those intrigued by mysteries of the past and theories about human origins. Move over, von Daniken.

## Tracking The Beast Of Bodmin

Are there really pumas, panthers and other big cats roaming around the English countryside? The Beast of Exmoor · the Surrey Puma · the Beast of Bodmin. These names have entered the popular culture, and have filled many column inches in the local and national press over recent years. Step forward the Royal Air Force, who have just finished a surveillance operation designed to see if the Beast of Bodmin really exists. 2625 Royal Auxiliary Air Force Squadron were on night exercise over the weekend of 18/19 March and were asked to keep a look out for the beast. Nothing was seen, despite the use of night vision goggles, thermal imagers and other sophisticated surveillance equipment. The truth, it seems, is still out there - somewhere.

## NASA UFO Footage

I'm not going to repeat the story at length, as it's been told many times and in many places over the last few weeks. But there are new video tapes doing the rounds that show what are alleged to be downlinks from NASA's own shuttle footage. And guess what you can see on the films? Are they alien spacecraft, ice crystals or something entirely new? The current (March/April 2000) edition of UFO Magazine carries this as its lead story. Samples can be viewed at [www.ufomag.co.uk](http://www.ufomag.co.uk) and a 90 minute video tape can be ordered from the same website. Check it out.

Nick Pope  
London  
April 2000

Nick Pope's three books, Open Skies, Closed Minds, The Uninvited and Operation Thunder Child are available from all good

bookshops. His UK publishers are Simon & Schuster. In America, The Overlook Press publish his books in hardback while Dell Publishing produce paperback editions.

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