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*In Memoriam Robert Moore*

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**Anomaly Editorial Team:**

Editor: Christian Jensen Romer

Editorial Board: Dr. David Sivier, Dr. Becky Smith,  
Robert Moore, Ed Woods.

Proofreaders: Christian Jensen Romer, Dr. David  
Sivier.

Front Cover: Wendy Milner

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*If you want to join the Anomaly team or write for  
Anomaly please contact the team through  
[journal@assap.ac.uk](mailto:journal@assap.ac.uk)*

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**ANOMALY:  
JOURNAL OF RESEARCH INTO THE  
PARANORMAL**

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Correspondence address: [journal@assap.ac.uk](mailto:journal@assap.ac.uk)

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**ANOMALY:  
VOLUME 52 EDITORIAL**

This has been a very different journal in several ways, but not least in being edited and prepared for print entirely twice. It is not the ANOMALY issue I had planned to release; that issue will now be released in November 2023 and includes three papers on the so called “Rougham Mirage” or Vanishing House mystery as well as more on another classic ghost case. We had prepared that journal, had a lovely cover by Wendy, and the copy was ready for the printers, when a delay occasioned by the need to wait for the magazine to be laid out led to a pause. And during that delay something quite unthinkable happened – our dear friend and colleague Robert Moore, Vice Chair of ASSAP was found dead in his home. The cause of death was found to be heart failure.

In the ensuing period of grief and turmoil here I made the decision that two papers by Robert that were due for publication should be brought forward and be published immediately: both had already passed peer review and Robert had made all amendments, and indeed it was only his continuing to revise the text that made me decide to hold them until volume initially. The papers include his Project FoxFire, his definitive piece on the history of British UFOlogy and of considerable interest even to those for whom UFOs are not a major focus; it is also an extremely lengthy piece. I have therefore prepared it for publication but realised that I would have to delay the other papers until such the next issue. This volume is rather UFO heavy: yet Robert himself had interests that covered a wide spectrum of purportedly ‘paranormal phenomena’. I hope this volume proves a lasting tribute to Robert S. Moore, one of the finest minds in our field, gone too soon.

CJ, April 2023



Dedicated to the memory of ASSAP VC Robert Moore,  
1967 – 2023.

## LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

Members' attention is drawn to the library and archives facility offered by ASSAP.

Hundreds of past investigation reports produced by ASSAP members are held in the archives and copies of these (with confidential names and addresses removed) may be obtained by bona-fide researchers upon request to [archives@assap.ac.uk](mailto:archives@assap.ac.uk). A catalogue of the contents of the archive may be downloaded from the Members' page of ASSAP's website.

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A Guidelines document may also be downloaded, explaining exactly how this facility may be utilized.

The above information has been provided by Bill Eyre, the recently appointed Archivist and Librarian. You can contact Bill on [library@assap.ac.uk](mailto:library@assap.ac.uk)

# Project Foxfire: “Seven Phases” of the British UFO Experience, 1290 - Today.

Robert Moore

## Abstract

*While defining UFOs through detailing their reported (alleged?) attributes is useful, the nuance of “the UFO sighting experience” is lost. This paper presents a listing of sighting accounts, selected by various criteria. Some relate to famous incidents; others are notable due their causation and/or attributes. It employs a chronologically arranged overview of accounts from Britain rather than a random selection of global events. In the writer’s view not only do these British cases deserve greater recognition, they are also better known to the author (who has had a variable degree of involvement with some of these incidents cited). Hopefully, the reader will agree nothing is lost; contrary to common bias, British events encompass the total spectrum of UFO events reported in the US and elsewhere, from humble lights in the sky, car stops, physical trace cases to abductions. Nonetheless, there are subtle differences in comparison to countries such as the United States; these will be defined as they occur and discussed in this chapter’s concluding remarks.*

## Preface

In the author’s view cultural trends influencing the perception of UFOs during a specific era are notable and important. It is the author’s contention that the “British UFO experience” has been defined in public conciseness not

only by “inexplicable” incidents but also by those ascribed a rational solution. In any event, the reality (ontological status) of the UFO remains highly controversial; often subjective, with one person’s UFO being another person’s low flying aircraft or Venus distorted by an unsettled atmosphere....

The manifestation of UFOs in respect to the British Isles can be roughly divided into seven general periods of activity. From a psycho-social perspective a pattern is notable; each era is dominated by a specific trend or fashion in UFOs that becomes preeminent, before being discredited and/or simply falling out of favour.

Supposedly “true” UFO events are highly important; they represent the rationale for studying this subject. Ironically, many of these cases are little known, often dwarfed in their conceptual significance (as you will see) by less evidential but better publicised events. Defining what is “signal” and what is “noise” is a core issue underlying research on the subject. Is there a true residue of exotic events behind the misperceptions and hoaxes or is the whole corpus of UFO reports simply a modern mythology with various prosaic solutions? Let us therefore look at a selection of cases, in the hope that the likely truth underlying them can be determined ...

## 1: The pre “flying disc” era: The Middle Ages to 1947.

While there was no conception of “flying discs” or UFOs prior to 1947, there were British accounts of aerial anomalies prior to that date. Some medieval chronicles describe observations of “flying ships”, in one instance

reputedly leaving a roped anchor in a church steeple from which a crewman climbed down. Some are modern hoaxes: The supposed Ampleforth (or Byland) Abbey account of a “round flat object... like a discus” that reputedly flew over the monastery on the afternoon of the 28th October, 1290 is now generally acknowledged as a fabrication by sixth form schoolboys dating from the 1950s (Leslie and Adamski 1952; Roseburg 1968; Vallee & Aubeck 2010). There are however genuine early modern accounts of strange fireballs and multiple suns, even of giant people being seen in the clouds. Many of these events occur during times of social upheaval (such as the English Civil War (1642-1649)) and are either likely to be allegorical fiction or instigated by natural objects such as meteors, “Brocken Spectre” type illusions and sun-dogs. Among the better examples is the detailed account of a physician, Cromwell Mortimer FRS (1702-1753), who at **20:40 hrs** on the **16<sup>th</sup> of December 1743** saw a light “like a large sky rocket” ascend into the heavens while walking through St. James’ Park, London. It resembled a “flaming head” encircled in bands of iron, emitting a “long tail of light”. The light assumed a vertical wavy course, being around 20° from the horizon and traversed the sky in a North to West direction. It was eventually lost to view after being observed for around half a minute (*Philosophical Transactions* Vol. 43, 1743).

Comparable events were occurring up to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. From **December 1904 through to May 1905** various manifestations of mystery lights were observed, connected with a significant Methodist religious revival in North Wales. These centred on a woman called Mary Evans (sometimes called “*Mary of the lights*”), who became an active participant following her meeting with Evan Roberts, the revival’s original instigator. These lights manifested as luminous arcs, “balls of fire”, “lamps” or “stars”, which

sometimes moved in a notably dynamic manner, merged or “burst”, or were seen to rise from the ground, in most instances in close proximity to Mary Evans. Some accounts claim that one or more lights would reportedly follow Evans before and/or after her attendance to chapel meetings. There were also manifestations of luminous “bars” of light, often static and located at ground level. One notable aspect of these manifestations is that could be clearly seen by some participants, but not by others close by.

Evans (along with Roberts) also claimed religious visions, the former experiencing an encounter with the Devil, manifesting as a black dog. The lights seem to vanish as the Welsh revival ran out steam by about mid-1905, and Evans died in near obscurity in 1936 (McClure 1983). It has been speculated that at least some of these lights were hoaxed or (more recently) they were of seismic origin, so-called “earthlights” generated by the nearby Bala fault-line (i.e. Devereux 1993).

From the 1890s through to the commencement of World War One there were alleged observations of “airships” throughout England. These were directly associated with fears of German expansion and technological achievement, combined with speculation regarding secretive inventors. The UK experienced waves of such reports in 1909 and 1911-1912, while similar events occurred elsewhere in Europe and the United States (most notably in 1896 in regards to the latter). These so-called “scareship” waves have never been definitively explained, although some incidents have been exposed as hoaxes or - as with some later “flying disc” accounts - suspected mistaken observations of astronomical bodies such as Venus. In most instances the reports describe (or are consistent with) airships and the aviation technology of the era, and don’t

exhibit the high performance attributes and streamlined appearance of “flying saucers”.

One of the first English “phantom airship” observations of 1909 originated from **Peterborough**, on the **23 March 1909**. At 05:15 hrs Police Constable Kettle heard what he took to be a powerful motorcar engine, seemingly coming from above. Looking up, he saw a powerful light attached to what appeared to be an unlit oblong-shaped body. He perceived it to be travelling at considerable speed and it eventually vanished from view, heading North West. No historically documented airship or aircraft flight is correlated with this event (*Peterborough Advertiser* (newspaper) 25 Mar 1909; Watson 2018).

On the **14<sup>th</sup> October 1912** at **Sheerness, Kent** (home to a long established naval-base), between the hours of **18:00** to **19:00hrs** various observers heard the “sound of an engine, seemingly originating from a dark aerial object with a red light; some accounts also claiming it emitted a “searchlight”. Flares were released to help guide this “aircraft” to a safe landing, but with no result. As with other so-called “scareship” reports, this event cannot be correlated with any known Zeppelin or other flight. An official (but inconclusive) enquiry was made at the time by the-then First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill. Researcher Brett Holman speculates it may have been a British aircraft clandestinely flown by a public minded individual to highlight the danger of German air superiority. **Sources:** The National Archives Air 1 /2456; Hansard 18 & 21 November 1912; Holman 2006, Watson 2018.

Between **June 1915 to early September 1915** there were various observations of ascending white lights at various locations in **Dartmoor** and **Devon**. These lights were initially

seen at low altitude and ascended, floated above the ground or made a few motions before climbing into the sky. As these events occurred during World War I they were the subject of an official enquiry, which suspected (but never proved) that “fire-balloons” (an early form of “Chinese Lantern”) were responsible, possibly linked to espionage activities.

**Sources:** W.P.Drury, R.M.L.I 04/09/1915; AD 131/119 EYNL The National Archives.

There are, of course, various retrospectively-reported pre-1947 events, describing aerial objects more comparable in form (but not identical) to those recounted in modern UFO reports. Here, one must stand for the rest... In **Aldeburgh, Suffolk** during “the middle of World War 1” a woman looking out her window observed (at just above rooftop height) a round flat aerial “platform” with “brass rails”, upon which stood around a dozen people in blue uniforms. This manifestation eventually turned and disappeared behind some houses. It is speculated this may be associated with a known Zeppelin crash that occurred nearby in 1917 but the “platform” in no way resembled the one-person observation gondola of such craft (Watson 2018, Grove 1968).

During World War Two there were alleged sightings by bomber crews of anomalous lights termed *foo fighters*, the extent of which remains controversial, with a few “classic” incidents subsequently exposed as later fabrications. So, while there are pre 1947 examples of claimed aerial anomalies, these events usually occurred during times of notable social stress (during the build-up to or during major conflicts) and their forms were either visionary in nature (i.e. “suns” or “sky giants”) or reflected the known technology of that era (i.e. flying ships or airships).

Therefore, it is difficult to directly associate them with the UFOs of our era. They do suggest that cultural factors, contemporary concerns, and technological trends markedly influence whatever anomalous aerial manifestations occur during any specific historical era.

**Sources:** *The Aldeburgh Platform* <http://aldeburghplatform.blogspot.com/> accessed 14/08/22; details Carl Gove's 1968 investigation into this claim; Devereux, P. *Earthlight Revelations pp64-76* (Blandford 1989) Holman, B. *The Scareship Age 1892-1946* (PDF online; 2013); Leslie, D. and Adamski G. *Flying Saucers have landed* Thomas Weiner Laurie (1952) McClure, K. *Stars and Rumours of Stars* (1983); Rosenberg, S *UFOs in History* (1968) In Condon, E. *The scientific study of UFOs* (Bantam 1969); Vallee J. & Aubeck, C. *Wonders in the Sky Unexplained Aerial Objects from Antiquity to Modern Times* (Penguin 2011); Watson, N. *UFOs of the First World War* (The History Press 2019).

## 2: The “Flying Disc” era... 1947-1960.

The conception of UFOs as they manifested in the UK was (and continues to be) significantly influenced by well-publicised incidents from the United States; propagated both by global media and English imprints of American books on the subject. The term used to originally define them - “flying saucers” - was inspired by a description by Kenneth Arnold of his seminal observation on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 1947 of mystery flying-wing type “objects” over the Cascade Mountains in Washington State. He described their motion as being akin to “a saucer skipping across the water”. This was widely (mis)interpreted as defining their appearance – and was the basis for the term “Flying Saucer” subsequently propagated and popularised by the US press.

In regard to the literary transmission of this concept to Britain, two notable US authors had English imprints of their “flying saucer” works during the early 1950’s; pulp writer Donald Keyhoe and the first “contactee”, George Adamski. Keyhole’s first work on the subject - *Flying Saucers Are Real* - was published in 1950. This and his subsequent books described (in a dramatised narrative format) the first significant American sightings and the concept of an insider “cover-up” instigated by what he termed the “silence group”. The “contactee” claim of Adamski premiered in an English-published book co-written by the Anglo-Irish author Desmond Leslie, *Flying Saucers Have Landed* (1953). The second section of this book detailed Adamski’s supposed meeting with a “Venusian”. This introduced an influential conception of a “flying Saucer” (an elaborate domed disc with portholes and three spheres on its underside) along with the concept of the “*contactee*”; a singular chosen mouthpiece for entities originating from planets within our own solar system, most notably Venus and Mars. England was soon to have its own; the book *Flying Saucer from Mars* printed in 1955 detailed the supposed contact experience of a “Cedric Allingham” (Peter Davis?) in Scotland. This is now widely believed to be a hoax, instigated in part by the astronomy populariser Sir Patrick Moore (who later became a notable UFO sceptic).

The term UFO (an “alphabet soup” acronym equating to *Unidentified Flying Object*), while reportedly coined by Blue Book director Edward Ruppelt in 1950, didn’t come into common use until around 1956. Until that time, the various aerial manifestations reported by witnesses were defined as either “*flying discs*” or “*flying saucers*”, even when the sighted “object” wasn’t disc-shaped. The common range of

forms at this time were *discs* (resembling an inverted plate, or two inverted plates placed rim to rim, with or without a “dome” on top), a *sphere*, a *cigar* (usually a horizontal tubular form with rounded ends), and “star” like forms. In terms of rational explanations, “saucers” and “spheres” tended to be ascribed to weather balloons, while the “cigars” were often said to be bolides (and from 1958 onwards space debris re-entering the atmosphere). Misperceived observations of stars and planets - most often Venus - were often considered to account for most anomalous lights.

While the occasional claimed landing event was reported, accounts of UFO entities reports were rare and usually associated with contactee claims. In the UK this would remain the case until the 1970's. An overview of UFO cases reported up to the mid 1950's enacted by Dr. Graham Knewstubb defined the 1950's era of “flying discs” as follows:

*“76% of the phenomena were observed visually ... 24% involved RADAR, 11% photographs, 6.5% optical Instruments, 6% (other sundry devices). According to visual observation , 52.5% of the objects sighted were discs, 14.1% were cylinders, 15% were spheres, and 8.2% (are of) miscellaneous shapes” (in 10.2% of cases, shape is not recorded ) ... In colour the objects fall into two main groups: 32% appear as bright metallic solid objects, 28% are luminous bodies of differing and varying colours, while in 40% of cases no colour is specified. At night 78% of the objects are described as luminous and 22% are unspecified. The luminosity varies from a dull glow to a brilliant flaming radiance.... a small but interesting class of observers, amounting to less than 2% of the whole, claim to have had a close view at ground level”.*

**Source:** Flying Saucer News *No. 4 winter 1953-54*  
(pp15-16)

Unlike America, British sightings occurring from 1947 through to the early 1950's are generally not well documented, existing mostly in the form of newspaper and magazine accounts. Until recently, few accounts from prior to 1950 were noted by researchers; only with the advent of internet newspaper archive sites are they now being (re)discovered. A "trawl" by the author and the ASSAP Chair Chris Jensen-Romer through old newspapers in May 2022 located a number, some of which are featured below.

Two other factors further complicate this situation.

Firstly, until the 1960s the then Air Ministry (now incorporated within the Ministry of Defence (MoD)) followed the common administrative practice of only keeping official documentation for a short time before destroying it; 8 years in regard to Air Ministry records of "flying saucers". Some records have, nonetheless, survived; mostly those associated with parliamentary enquiries. One residual official document from this era is a briefing memo on "flying discs" made for Winston Churchill in August 1952. This concluded based "on the principle of William of Occam's razor", that the reports likely had prosaic causes (*PRO PREM11/855*). This verdict was based on an earlier study by the ad hoc Technical Intelligence "*Flying Saucer Working Party*" active during 1950-51; which (in turn) was influenced by the negative findings of *Project Grudge*, the USAF's initial flying disc study effort. Nonetheless, based on this and other official discussions the Air Ministry began to formally monitor sightings from 1953 onwards.

Secondly civilian saucer groups did not come into existence in Britain until 1953; with even the countries' oldest magazine on the topic, *Flying Saucer Review*, not incepted until 1955. This was seemingly in response and reaction to American cultural trends, with the first US civilian bodies (the Flying Saucer Bureaux and later NICAP) being established around this time. Some, like the *British Flying Saucer Bureaux* published bulletins and journals of record. Others such as the *Wigan Flying Saucer Group* did not. This latter body (founded in 1953) had around 25 members, mostly university students with David Wightman (editor of the magazine "*Uranus*") acting as Chairman. In 1956 Wightman concluded "*there is observational evidence in abundance and of a scientific nature to prove that there are sporadically present within the atmosphere of our planet, intelligently controlled objects which are not the result of (prosaic) processes carried out on this earth.* He suspected the electrogravitic theories of Thomas Townsend Brown explained their mode of propulsion and "*they are extra-terrestrial in origin and are intelligently controlled.*"

The limited resources and outreach of these early civilian saucer groups resulted in numerous oversights; most reports summarized in (at most) a few sentences. As with the modern UFO community today, flying saucer magazines of the day tended to obsess over novelty, exotica and trivia at the expense of British sighting accounts, and even when documented not all contributors were competent and/or objective. These factors combine to weaken their journals as concise and reliable journals of record, although notable exceptions exist. In any event they are indicators of the sociological factors that influenced this subject at the time. They are nonetheless cited here, as they are often the only accessible contemporary sources. And these are now

again available in 2022 due to the digital scanning efforts of modern UFO researchers over several decades.

Determining the first British “flying disc” observation is problematic; several early accounts have been retrospectively reported (i.e., Hanson 2010), including several notable war-time incidents involving RAF bomber-crew. Unfortunately, no known contemporary record denotes them as being officially reported at the time of their cited occurrence. While notably in America’s shadow regarding early sightings, the first instance of anything comparable to a “flying saucer” observation occurred in January 1947, involving detections of unaccounted RADAR targets over the North Sea (below). To date, the earliest British “flying disc” observation, discovered by researchers Dr. David Clarke and Andy Roberts, is an event from Sandwich, Kent of 30<sup>th</sup> June 1947 featured in various British newspapers in early July of that year (below).

In this period, official attempts to offer prosaic explanations were treated with suspicion by flying disc advocates; every case (no matter how basic) seemingly being a conceptual battlefield. At this early stage of organised interest there was haphazard comprehension of how prosaic objects and phenomena were misinterpreted as UFOs, along with the means to evaluate them. Controversies erupted over cases that today would be deemed easily explicable even by the majority of hardened UFO enthusiasts. In a commentary associated with the 1955 “Skymaster” sighting (below) the Air Ministry stated that around 85% to 90% could be easily ascribed rational solutions. In other statements they speculated that the remainder could be explained if described in more detail and as such were often defined in Air Ministry (and later MoD) statistics as “unidentified (insufficient information). This seems questionable as many

“unknowns” were described in as much detail as the accounts evaluated as explicable.

The Air Ministry were able to present relatively coherent sighting causation statistics when so required by the government; the categories used indicating a relatively sophisticated understanding of the prosaic causes generating spurious observations of “flying saucers”;

	1953-4	1955-6	1957	1958	1959 *
Satellites and Debris	n/a	17	7	9	1
Balloons	n/a	26	26	1	3
Celestial objects	n/a	2	4	-	1
Meteorological etc	n/a	1	1	-	2
Aircraft	n/a	9	19	1	4
Misc. (other prosaic causes)	n/a	3	8	-	7
Unexplained	6	6	25	-	4

\*January to May only

- Taken from DDI (Tech) S290/2 *Parliamentary questions, flying saucers*, ref: AIR 2/18564 & *Statistical analysis of UFOs* The National Archives Ref: AIR/2/19126 The National Archives .

During this time the first sceptical work on the subject entitled “*Flying Saucers*” was printed in 1953, authored by the American astronomer Dr. Donald H. Menzel. This aimed to show how all flying disc reports had natural causes, often involving optical atmospheric effects of various kinds. As a consequence the British Flying Saucer Bureau used the term

“Menzelforms” to define events potentially explicable by such means.

**Sources:** DEFE 44/119 & DEFE 2057 1 (pp 140-146) The National Archives; Keyhoe, D. *Flying Saucers are Real* (Gold Media Books 1950); Arnold K. & Palmer, R. *The Coming of the Saucers* (Privately published 1952); Menzel, D. *Flying Saucers* Harvard Press (1953); Leslie D & Adamski, G *Flying Saucers have landed* (Werner Laurie 1953); Allingham, C. *Flying Saucers from Mars* (1955); Ruppelt. E. *The report on Unidentified Flying Objects* (1955. 1960); AIR 20/9994 (The National Archives); Clarke D and Roberts A . *Out of the Shadows* Piatkus Press (2002); Clark, D & Roberts A *The Flying Saucerers* (2007); David Clarke *The UFO Files* Bloomsbury/The National Archives (2012); Track “9” - 2013 11 12 *Ufology: A Primer*; Autio UK and 1946 -1989 a Guide <https://archive.org/details/UFOLOGYAPrimerInAudioUKA/US19461989Guide> (accessed 07/06/22); UFO definition; Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford University Press 2016).

George Adamski’s long shadow.

An overview of British UFO sighting claims from 1953 through to 1969 reveal a number featuring supposed craft with a form comparable to American contactee George Adamski’s Venusian Scout Ship. Likewise, several English entity cases describe entities similar to the “Nordic” type humanoid he reputedly encountered. In 2022 (in fact decades before this date) it is generally accepted Venus’ surface is an inhospitable hellhole incapable of supporting humanoid life, and that Adamski’s claims are fraudulent. Tellingly, we also have no such reports predating the publication of Adamski’s book in 1953. These “offspring”

British accounts may therefore represent instances where psycho-social factors influenced some early British UFO report narratives. Today, we cannot be sure whether these supposed observations were total fabrications instigated by Adamski's popularity or were "merely" conceptually influenced by his claim. In either case, his scout ship and aliens offered a widespread media-propagated stereotype for the then-novel concept of "flying saucers". In the following listing, cases that appear to have been influenced by Adamski's claims are marked with an asterisk.

**Sources:** Adamski G and Leslie D *Flying Saucers have Landed* (Werner Laurie 1953); Moore, R. Adamski's long shadow *ASSAP Anomaly Issue 51* (2021).

Some late 1940's and 1950s era case studies:

Anomalous RADAR contacts were detected over the **North Sea** from **January 16 to 23<sup>rd</sup> 1947**. These targets (nicknamed "Charlie") were noted as moving at high altitude and/or erratically, along with sudden changes of speed and rates of climb. Interception aircraft (usually Mosquito's and Gloucester Meteors) were vectored into these targets, but nothing was ever observed. Weather balloons, anomalous propagation (false RADAR contacts) and a new type of Soviet aircraft employing captured Nazi technology have all been offered as explanations, but an analysis of surviving data casts doubt on all these proposed solutions. It should be noted that "Charlie" events occurred 6 months *before* the inception of the modern "flying saucer" myths.

**Sources:** Shough, M. (2009) *Operation Charlie. A new study of the British "Ghost Aeroplanes" of 1947*. NARCAP (National Aviation Reporting Centre on Anomalous Phenomena).

At **05:15 hrs BST**, on the **30<sup>th</sup> June 1947** at **Sandwich, Kent**, Mrs. Marjorie Hyde (the wife of the then Rector of St. Andrews, Deal) observed a sharply-defined form “*more of a ring than a saucer*” while she waited for railway level crossing gates to open. This dark grey, soundless, and possibly rotating “ring” (“*not filled in like a saucer*”) was only observed for a few seconds, moving left to right of the observer “*not too high up.... inland from the direction of the sea*”. The witness stated she was reticent to discuss this sighting but was encouraged to “say something” due to the heavy flying saucer press coverage of the time. Mrs. Hyde’s observation was relayed by numerous British newspapers during early July 1947, often with an account of supposed “flying saucer” wreckage recently recovered near Roswell, New Mexico; the latter often being given greater prominence! Virtually the next day, however, the British press published stories stating that the Roswell “saucer” was a “weather balloon” used to record high-altitude winds. As a result, the Roswell incident was dismissed from public consciousness for several decades until it attracted renewed interest during the early 1980s and beyond. As for the Sandwich observation, the possibility that the “object” was a smoke ring cannot be ignored; especially as it happened on a level crossing, in an era when steam trains were in common use. Marjorie Hyde, however, was adamant this was not the cause.

**Sources:** *Birmingham Daily Gazette* (9<sup>th</sup> July 1947); *Northern Whig* (9<sup>th</sup> July 1947) et. al.; *Dundee Evening Telegraph* (9<sup>th</sup> July 1947 – i.e. contemporary refutation of Roswell saucer); Clarke, D. and Roberts, A. *The Flying Saucerers* (2007) pp9. Assessment by R Moore (2022).

On the **23<sup>rd</sup>(?) November 1947** at **06:32hrs** a number of observers saw a bright, red soundless cone-shaped “rocket” producing a long trail of sparks over **Prescot, Northern**

**England.** It appeared to be flying “very fast” at near-rooftop height along a straight course, originating from the east and heading west towards Liverpool. One observer said it “went out” after it seemed to “fall” a short distance. The recounted aspect of the “rocket” (i.e. observed over a wide area, emitting a trail/sparks followed by its sudden disappearance) is consistent with it being an exceptional “bolide” meteor.

**Sources:** *Liverpool Echo* (24 November 1947 and 4<sup>th</sup> December 1947) Assessment by R Moore (2022).

**1<sup>st</sup> June 1950 at 14:30hrs** a Meteor pilot landing at **RAF Tangmere** reported that, while flying 20,000 feet over the Portsmouth area, he observed a circular, fast-moving bright metal “object” It was cited as travelling on an Easterly course over 1000 feet above the pilot on “a reciprocal course”, at an estimated speed of around 800 knots (920 mph). The form was observed for in excess of 15 seconds, with the pilot observing it twice during his encounter. Enquires were made to the nearby RADAR station at RAF Wartling; they reported detecting an unusual, seemingly fast-moving RADAR target just after the pilot’s observation. This was, however, deemed to have had no connection with the Meteor pilot’s observation, the contact interpreted as interference from another RADAR transmitter. The *Flying Saucer Working Group* assessed this report and concluded it was either an optical illusion or a metrological balloon. The Tangmere incident is considered to be the earliest detailed account of a “flying saucer” from a military source and the first to be officially evaluated by a British governmental agency.

**Source** DEFE 44/119 (The National Archives); *Daily Herald* 7 Jun 1950.

At **RAF Farnborough, 11.27 hrs** on the **14 August 1950**, Flight Lt. Hubbard, an experienced pilot, heard distant humming, and observed a “discus” with a shimmering “mother of pearl” surface producing bluish sparks of light. During the course of the event the form moved closer to Hubbard and was seen to “rock” from side-to-side; the witness perceiving an ozone-like smell when the form was overhead at low attitude. The “discus” was reported as being “fast moving” and observed for about 30 seconds. On the **5<sup>th</sup> September 1950 RAF Farnborough** Hubbard along with air traffic control tower staff again observed a similar object following a horizontal course, combined with intermittent stop and “falling leaf trajectory” motions; vanishing by “diving” to the horizon at great speed. These two observations, combined with the RAF Tangmere event comprised the three reports assessed by the governmental Technical Intelligence “*Flying Saucer Working Party*” active during 1950-51 who subsequently arrived at a negative conclusion regarding the existence of “flying saucers”.

**Source:** DEFE 44/119 (The National Archives); Clarke, D. <https://drdavidclarke.co.uk/national-archives-ufofiles-7/flying-saucer-working-party/> (accessed 14<sup>th</sup> August 2022).

At **Ramsey, Isle of Man** six engineering workers were having a work break outside the open doors of their factory at **10:05hrs** on the **20<sup>th</sup> October 1950**, when they espied a strange aerial object through a break between the clouds. This was described as resembling a long narrow oblong with rounded ends; with each end being dark while the centre appeared almost transparent. The media reported that no RAF or civil aircraft was over Romsey at the time. While of interest due to it being among Britain’s earliest alleged “flying disc” observations (indeed, the press report recounting it carries the headline “*now flying saucers over*”

*Britain*") it was likely to have been one of many high altitude "research" (or espionage) balloons in use at the time. Compare this account with the incident at **Gailey, Staffordshire (18<sup>th</sup> June 1957)**.

**Source:** *Daily Mail* 21<sup>st</sup> October 1950. Assessment by R Moore (2022).

On **19:10hrs 19<sup>th</sup> September 1952** at **RAF Topcliffe, Yorkshire** 2 RAF officers and 4 aircrew were observing a Gloucester Meteor jetfighter flying East to West, when a silver-white coloured circular object was seen 10,000 feet up and 5 miles astern. This circular form was seen to descend in a pendulum-like manner, swinging left to right. As the Meteor began its landing approach, object appeared to be following it; but then ceased descending and "hovered", rotating on its axis. The form then accelerated at incredible speed to the West, then turning South East and disappearing from view; being visible for around 15-20 seconds. On the 19<sup>th</sup> September 1952 Roy Mason (Labour MP for Barnsley) asked the Secretary of State for Air George Ward "*what was the result of the enquiry relating to the unidentified flying objects sighted by airmen during the NATO operation Mainbrace on September 20<sup>th</sup> 1952?*" Ward replied: "no object was identified".

**Sources:** File AIR 16/1199 (Fit Lt J Kilburn's Memo to Coastal Command Oet., RAF) (The National Archives); Sunday Dispatch 21<sup>st</sup> September 1952; LUFORO BULLETIN Vol 2 No 4 April 1961 (pp4-6); Hansard.

On the **1 October 1952** a Gloucester Meteor took off from **RAF Little Rissington**, crewed by Flt. Lt. Michael Swinney and Lieutenant David Crofts. During their flight they observed three "perfectly circular" white shiny objects they compared to "parachutes", flying at an estimated height of 12,000 feet. The objects, after being observed for a while,

vanished suddenly. **Source:** AIR 29/2310/2 The National Archives.

\* In **Norwich**, on the **6th October 1953**, a Mr. F. Potter, a business owner and long-time amateur astronomer observed on leaving his house at **19:15hrs** a strange yellow light in the South Western sky. This light, when viewed through a 3-inch refracting telescope, was seeming resolved into an elaborate form; a dark grey bell-like body with a flattened dome on top; the “dome” possessing a series of portholes with rays of light streaming from it. This form was reportedly viewed for around three and a half minutes, with several other observers also claiming to have observed it. Notably, this incident occurred shortly after the UK publication of *Flying Saucers Have Landed*; a fact mentioned in newspaper discussions on the event. Desmond Leslie gave a lecture on Adamski’s book in the town on the 20<sup>th</sup> October of that year. Almost as if following a conceptual stereotype, Potter claimed to have mostly observed this UFO through his telescope - much as Adamski had alleged with his “Venusian scout craft”.

**Source:** *Eastern Evening News* 11<sup>th</sup> October 1953; *Flying Saucer News Autumn 1953*; Hanson J and Holloway A *Haunted Skies The Encyclopaedia of British UFOs Vol 1 (1940-1959)* CZF Press 2010 (pp 102-103,143).

At **10:00hrs** on the **3<sup>rd</sup> November 1953** a Vampire Jet from RAF West Malling encountered a very bright white doughnut-shaped object emitting or reflecting a “fierce light” near the **Thames estuary**, while flying at an altitude of 20,000 feet. This form passed over the aircraft and followed a level course and was interpreted as moving away at great speed. On **14:30 hrs** on the same day a RADAR station located in Southeast London tracked an unknown

target at an altitude of 61,000 feet, the “return” comparable in strength to that of a large bomber. It was also visually observed through a sighting telescope, being described as a white stationary spherical or round form. The Air Ministry suggested both events were instigated by a balloon fitted with a metal RADAR-reflecting “target”.

**Source:** *Flying Saucer News* Autumn 1953; *Flying Saucer News* no 4 Winter 1953-4 pp3; Hanson J and Holloway A *Haunted Skies The Encyclopaedia of British UFOs Vol 1 (1940-1959)* CZF Press 2010.

On the **20<sup>th</sup> May 1954** at Wincanton, Somerset, a man returning from a dance at **02:00hrs BST** noticed an orange glow some distance away. Looking closer, he reputedly observed a bowl-shaped object with a windowed “dome” on top, hovering a short distance from the ground. Shadows were seen to move inside and a luminous orange sphere seemed to hover a short distance from the object. The form then lifted off from the ground, tilted and climbed away at great speed. The event was subsequently reported to the local police; grass where the “dome” allegedly landed was reportedly found depressed in a circular configuration but no assessment was seemingly made of this.

**Sources:** Bowen (“Few and Far between”) *The Humanoids Sphere* 1978; Hanson J & Holloway D *Haunted Skies Vol 1* (pp 124-126) CFZ Press 2010.

At **23:30 hrs BST** on the **25 Jun 1954** a vicar at **Seighford, Stafford** observed a bright “crablike” or “dome shaped” object that “shone like gold”, from which hung bright “appendages”. This form remained low in the sky throughout and was observed for around 1-2 hours, moving backwards and forwards and making wide sweeps of the sky. While listed in BUFORA’s archives as “unexplained”, it is often the case that nocturnal UFOs with long durations

are usually explicable in astronomical terms. With this in mind, it is notable that both Mars and Saturn were visible (and fairly low in the sky) at the time; Saturn (mag. approx. 0.50<sup>o</sup>) setting around 0:50 hrs UTC in the SW. The motions attributed to it are explicable via the *autokinetic effect*, an illusion by which a point of light seen against a dark background can be seen to make transitory “wandering” motions.

**Source:** *BUFORA JOURNAL* V3, N10 p8-9 1958, *Flying Saucer News* No 6 (p8) 1954; *Astronomical assessment by R Moore (2022)*.

\* On Thursday evening, on **July 8th 1954** at **Wigan, Greater Manchester**, Harold Hill an experienced amateur astronomer (and BAS member of long standing) was concluding his spectroscopic observation of the sun and was closing the shutters of his observatory. As he walked outside at about **21:30 hrs BST** he saw an object 55<sup>o</sup> to the South, comparable in brightness to Venus (which was visible elsewhere, low in the West). Thinking this might have been a supernova he called his wife to get his 8x30 binoculars. Through these, the “star” was “resolved” into a small bright metallic globe. It was occasionally obscured by cloud (coming in, Hill reports, from the SW); and during this time the form shifted position and appeared higher in the sky. Hill then returned to his observatory and attempted to view the object with his 12-inch reflecting telescope, tearing the viewfinder from its mount in the scramble. Using it with an x50 “wide field” lens, Hill and his wife observed a cluster of around 15-20 minute star-like objects near the main “object”. These were subsequently lost to view with only 2 “objects” thereafter being visible, less bright than the original form, and seemingly “gyrated” and exhibiting a “pendulum-like” motion, which Hill compared to “dancers”. These flashed “like a diamond in strong light”.

After a total of 25 minutes the cloud obscured any further view, the sighting terminating at 21:55hrs BST.

Hill believed the phenomena was high in the stratosphere, if not higher, and was not of an astronomical nature. Noting the contactee claims of George Adamski (then recently published) he speculated he had seen a craft comparable to Adamski's tubular "mother craft", the objects actually being a rotating cylinder, first seen edge on, then with either end luminated or reflecting the setting sun - thus giving impression of two sperate objects. He further speculated that the smaller objects were "scout craft" milling about the main vessel. Despite this account being featured in the press no additional observations of this event were uncovered. Hill wrote a letter to the British Astronomical Association (BAA) detailing his observation, but this also elicited no response. The main witness was an active member of the Wigan Flying Saucer Group (see above). Once again, we have a 1950's era report whose interpretation was influenced by the claims of George Adamski. One is tempted to suggest that this was - once again - an observation of a high-altitude research balloon (or a "train" of same) but other claimed attributes of the objects cast doubt on this supposition.

**Sources:** Recording "9"; 2013 11 12 Ufology a primer Audio UK and 1946 -1989 a Guide

<https://archive.org/details/UFOLOGYAPrimerInAudioUKAUS19461989Guide/40.mp3> (accessed 07/06/22); Hanson J & Holloway D *Haunted skies the encyclopaedia of British UFOs* Vol 1 (1940-1959) CFZ Press 2010 (pp 127-129).

**October 4 1954 at 16:40hrs;** Flight Leader Salandin of the 604<sup>th</sup> fighter squadron was flying a Gloucester Meteor at an altitude of 16,000 feet in the vicinity of **North Weald Essex** when he observed 3 objects in the distance which were not

producing contrails. Two of these objects went to his port side while another headed directly towards Salandin, making a close approach towards the aircraft. The latter “object” was described as akin to a featureless metallic saucer with a “bun” like dome underneath and on top. It subsequently flew past the Meteor on his port side – Salandin being unable to follow the “saucer’s” motion thereafter. On landing Salandin reported the event to his intelligence officer Guy Gibbons -- who at the time was editor of the then newly established *Flying Saucer Review*. A report was also made to the Air Ministry but no official reaction was seemingly instigated, details of this event not noted in their archives; likely destroyed due to the “eight-year rule” relating to government documentation at that time.

**Sources:** *London Illustrated News*, December 2, 1954; *RAF Flying Review*, July 1957.

\* On the **21<sup>st</sup> October 1954** a female housewife while in her home at **Ranton Staffs** became aware of a sound like “water being poured on a fire”. On looking up at the sky she observed a “Sombrero” shaped object with two “entities” looking out of a window. These resembled Adamski’s “Venusians”, having long blond hair and high foreheads. Her 2 children were also present but hid under a table throughout the incident. The witness reported a long history of psychic and paranormal experiences before and after this incident.

**Source:** Gibbons G Full report on the Ranton affair; *Flying Saucer News*; *Winter 1954/5 (pp8-9)*; Hanson J and Holloway, D *Haunted Skies Vol 1 1940-1959* (pp 144-151); CFZ publications 2010.

At around **22-2300hrs** on the **5<sup>th</sup> December 1954** a housewife was putting her four children to bed in a Victorian-era terraced house in **Newtown, Southampton**. While doing so she turned and incidentally glanced out of a bedroom window. She was paralysed with astonishment, observing brightly luminous “hovering” object, comparable in appearance with an old fashioned “spinning top” or “two saucers joined at the rim”. The witness estimated its angular size to be larger than the full moon. The “spinning top” then proceeded to change colour; described as being “green, merging with red, merging with silver-white”. It continued to “hover” and change colour for about 2-3 seconds. It then “shot off” at “colossal” speed from a standing start in a Northeast direction. The observation had a total estimated duration of around 12 seconds.

This case was reported twice – both to Norman Toogood (a BUFORA investigator) in 1964 and to the author (then a BUFORA investigator) in 1999. Toogood discovered four other cases stated to have occurred on the **4<sup>th</sup> December 1954**. One occurred at **Portland Bill** and related to a fast-moving brilliant silver object. Another was of a shining disc seen at **Poole**. A sighting also occurred at **Selborne** and related to a disc spinning on its axis, changing colour from silver to red. The last occurred at **Guildford**, involving a rapidly moving reddish disc. Toogood stated that all these events were orientated along a 150 km straight line to relation to each other. The author has checked this supposition and – based on the information available - has found it to be generally correct. Unfortunately, the times when these additional events occurred were not noted and the accounts could not be located at the time of writing in 2022. Toogood’s proposal is comparable to the concept of Aimè Michel’s *Orthoteny* popular in 1960’s Ufology; the

theory that UFO sightings repeatedly occur along established “straight track” routes.

**Source:** *Newton Road, Southampton 5 Dec 1954* case report (BUFORA and author’s private files).

Daytime on the **May 25th 1955** the crew of a London Airport bound Portuguese "Skymaster" aircraft observed a long, slim “rotating” wingless cigar-shaped object, with a “polished aluminium” hue while flying 5-6,000 feet over **Epsom** and **Dunsfold**. It was seen to pass 100 yards at “terrific speed” under the aircraft’s nose. No smoke trail was observed. The “cigar” was only visible from the aircraft’s flight deck, being observed by most of its crew. The Air Ministry subsequently concluded the “cigar” was merely a “long toy balloon”. No paperwork relating to the Air Ministry’s enquiry into this event has been located in the National Archives; likely destroyed as a consequence of the then- current “eight year rule”. **Sources:** *Dundee Courier & Western Daily Mail* (May 26, 1955); *Flying Saucer News no. 9* (Summer 1955).

At **Bexleyheath, Greater London** between **12.30-1.00pm** on **the 17<sup>th</sup> July 1955** there were numerous reputed observations of a circa 25ft diameter bell-shaped UFO described as having a “greyish” or “beaten silver” surface and an under-surface with either “suckers”, “three spheres” or “lights” underneath. It was stationary for a few minutes before shooting up rapidly into the sky. There are several accounts of this event although they differ in regard to various salient details. Many of these accounts were acquired retroactively, decades after the event. It is also notable the event is stated to have occurred in a populated urban area.

**Source:** Hanson J and Holloway A *Haunted Skies The Encyclopaedia of British UFOs Vol 1 (1940-1959)* CZF Press 2010. (pp 168-173).

\* At **Coniston, Lake District**, at around **11:00hrs** on the **15<sup>th</sup> February 1955**, two children (Steven Darbishire and Adrian Meyer) reputedly saw a *“strange silvery round object with a silvery, glassy appearance”*. It was further described as a *“solid metal-like thing with a dome (with) portholes, and three humps or landing domes underneath”* It was reportedly seen at a low elevation, moving behind a feature and coming back into view a few seconds later. It then reportedly tipped upon its side and shot up into the air with a deep swishing sound. Darbishire claimed to have taken several images of the UFO, which, while they came out blurred, had sufficient detail to make out its basic shape. On examination of these pictures an engineer called Leonard Cramp concluded the UFO depicted had the same configuration as Adamski’s Scout Ship. The witness subsequently came into contact with Desmond Leslie (the co-author of *Flying Saucers Have Landed*) and subsequently met Adamski on one of his later visits to the UK. David Wightman (of the Wigan flying saucer group) also interviewed Stephen Darbishire and visited the spot where the pictures were taken and generally accepted their account (while, paradoxically, rejecting Adamski’s claims). Today, these pictures are now mostly forgotten or remembered as just another 50’s era saucer hoax. Like other reputed British UFO images of this era - mostly taken by children - their originators eventually stated the images were faked, but this was later retracted leaving these photographs in a conceptual limbo...

**Source:** *Flying Saucer News*, Spring 1954, Roberts, A. & Clarke D. *Flying Saucers; A social history of Ufology* (Heart of Albion Press 2007).

At **22.45hrs** on the **14th June, 1956** a number of residents at Wolverhampton observed an object, described as either star-like or resembling a bright luminous yellow disc. Moving slowly, it approached from the North and was later observed in the Southern portion of the sky, before sinking below the horizon by **23:30hrs**. It was speculated the light was associated with air-to-air refuelling exercises involving the USAF then ongoing in the region. A local weather station suggested the event was caused by a metrological balloon released from Liverpool at 21:00hrs that night. This balloon, however, was believed to have burst by 21:41 hrs and - even if it had endured longer - would unlikely to have been illuminated by the sun's rays at 22:45 hrs. This is typical of many sightings, both from the 1950's and today; unspectacular, in all likelihood explicable but nonetheless difficult to resolve.

**Source:** BFSB *Flying Saucer News Bulletin* no. 6 (1956) pp 4-5.

**12<sup>th</sup> June 1956 at 23:30-45 hrs** a large, brilliant orange "ball-like" coloured object form (in size compared to "the Queen Mary (seen) at a distance of 2-3 miles away" observed over Gloucester, Cleeve hill and Deerhurst, Gloucestershire. Its light was so intense that one observer claimed it could reputedly be seen through drawn curtains, while another said it "twinkled" but was nonetheless "incandescent". The form was generally reported to move slowly East to West; during its "progress" it was perceived to have "paused" for around 30 seconds. Checks with the local RAF, Police and fire service yielded no further reports or suggested explanations. The airbase at Fairford also stated they had nothing airborne at the time.

**Source:** BFSB *Flying Saucer News Bulletin* no. 6 (1956) pp 7-8.

At **Lakenheath & Bentwaters** air force bases at **13<sup>th</sup> August 1956** their defence RADAR systems seemingly detected a high-altitude object travelling at 2,300 - 4,600 mph, with contacts detected from 21:30 hrs to 02:30 hrs the next morning. Only a red light was seen by some ground observers, and this was later identified as probably the planet Mars. Other RADAR contacts were made, in one instance associated with a very fast-moving red light observed by two groups of observers - which some speculate were caused by the then-active Perseid meteor shower. Several Venom fighter jets were sent up and detected various contacts (both stationary and in motion) via their own in-flight interception RADAR. In one instance, an unseen contact was detected as suddenly orienting itself to the aircraft's rear. Weather conditions at the time were potentially conducive to generating temperature inversions, capable of inducing false RADAR contacts. The Lakenheath/Bentwaters case either represents one of the most significant cases in British UFO history or a prime example of how a combination of natural phenomenon create an illusory one!

**Sources:** Condon, E *The scientific study of UFOs* (Bantam 1969) Chapter 5 (pp373-387) & Section IV (245-247) ; Shough, M "Distant Contact: RADAR/Visual Encounter at Bentwaters" in Spencer, J and Evans, H. *Phenomenon* (McDonald group 1988); Clarke, D. *Lakenheath-Bentwaters UFO* <https://drdavidclarke.co.uk/radar-uaps/lakenheath-bentwaters-ufo/> (accessed 14/08/22).

At **Coverack, Cornwall 11:30hrs** on the **1st May 1957** a post man (who had recently served as a Navy Petty Officer) was in the process of conducting a letter delivery when he saw a dome shaped object, flying slowly West to East. It appeared to be soundless and sharply defined, with an

estimated angular size of a halfpenny held at arm's length. It glinted like gold possibly due to reflected sunlight. The "dome" moved slowly across the sky at an estimated speed of 10-15 knots (against an ENE wind) for about ten minutes. On reaching the coast north of Manacle Point the form tipped to a 45° angle and shot upwards, climbing "much faster than a jet" until lost to view. Enquiries made at RAF St. Mawgan revealed no service aircraft were then airborne in the vicinity.

**Source:** *Flying Saucer News Bulletin* no9; summer 1957 (pp 5).

**09:30hrs on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1957 at Gailey, Staffordshire** a male witness observed a silver "cylinder" (with an estimated angular size of a sixpence at arm's length), moving slowly along a North-Westerly course (330°). After 15 minutes of observation, it changed direction, thereafter travelling in a North Easterly direction (60°) and following a curved trajectory. It then remained stationary for 2-3 minutes thereafter changing course again, assuming a NW trajectory for approximately 10 minutes. Estimated height and speed was 30-50 mph and 5,000-10,000 feet, respectively. It was also seen by a female Gailey resident between 21:15 and 22.00hrs; she reported it was stationary for about 15 minutes when initially observed although by 22:00hrs it was perceived as traversing in a NW direction. A similar cylindrical form (but with a slightly glowing blunt "nose") was seen at Stafford on the same day; once at 21:15hrs and then at 21:45 hrs. During the first observation the form was silvery-gold in hue and as bright as the moon - in the second instance it had assumed a less bright red orange colour and was observed for an additional 20 minutes. During the second observation the form moved at an estimated speed of a "fast propeller-driven aircraft" but later "slowed down". Distance was estimated to be

between half to one mile away. Another observation occurred at Stafford at 20.30 hrs (one hour before sunset) on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 1957. A civil servant was cleaning the windows of her house when she observed a large object in the northern sky. It was described as a soundless greyish rectangle, projecting from the underside of a cloud above the sun. She observed it for 10 minutes and it remained stationary throughout that time.

The cited attributes of this UFO is consistent with a high altitude research balloon. It is known various universities (i.e. Bristol and London) were conducting such programmes during the 1950s and 60's and beyond. That these sightings occurred around sunset (21:36hrs on the 19<sup>th</sup> June) is consistent with a balloon dropping to a lower altitude due to the air cooling (and thus being heavier) at around this time. One observation states the UFO assumed a red-orange hue at around 21:45 hrs suggesting it was reflecting light from the setting sun (its higher altitude enabling it to do so for longer, in comparison to the perspective of a ground observer). This explanation is equally consistent with the long sighting durations, and its intermittent static aspect. If caught in a thermal, such a balloon could also have exhibited a sudden burst of speed, as described in one account. A partially inflated balloon would also resemble a cylinder or rectangle, albeit one standing on end. **Source:** *Flying Saucer News* bulletin no9; summer 1957 (pp 6-7) Assessment by R Moore (2022).

At **1200hrs** on the **4<sup>th</sup> Apr 1957** three separate ground-based bombing range RADAR units at RAF West Freugh, Scotland detected what was interpreted as a large object "as big as a battleship" (along with three smaller objects) at 14-60,000 feet high and due NE over the Irish Sea (around 20-25 miles away). These forms alternated between being

stationary or moving NE-E at a determined speed of 70-240 mph. These RADAR contacts were detected for 36 minutes before vanishing; no visual sightings were associated with this event. **Source:** AIR 20/9320, AIR 2019321 and AIR 2018444. The National Archives.

At midnight on the **20 May 1957** a ground RADAR station at **Kelvedon Hatch** detected an apparent aerial object exhibiting "very unusual flight patterns" located 32,000 feet east of Ipswich. Two one-seater F-86D Sabre fighter jets from the American 406<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber Wing based at **RAF Manston** were scrambled to intercept it. Visibility was poor due to misty weather conditions. The jets were vectored towards the target; when about 12 miles away they were requested to use their afterburners to intercept the contact (subsequently accelerating to a speed of about Mach 0.92). At least one aircraft (flown by Lt. Milton Torres) acquired a strong RADAR signal directly ahead of their location. Ground Control then ordered the pilots to fire all the aircraft's 24 unguided rockets at the contact.

As the jet turned to engage both ground and airborne RADARs indicated the target was moving away at incredible speed (estimated to be in excess of 1000 knots by the ground RADAR unit). A day after landing Torres was debriefed by an official, who told him not to discuss the incident. Later commentators have noted the order to fire on the UFO without provocation; Dr. David Clarke speculates that this was a secret exercise (using a simulated RADAR track) to test the abilities and inclinations of NATO fighter pilots.

**Sources:** *USAF F-86D from Manston ordered to fire on UFO – May 20th 1957*

<https://www.manstonhistory.org.uk/usaff-86d-manston-ordered-fire-ufo-may-20th-1957/> (accessed 14/08/22); DEFE 24/1931/1 & DEFE 24/1942/1. (The National

Archives); Clarke D. *The UFO Files*; pp69-71 (The National Archives 2012).

\* In **Aston, Birmingham**, from the **18<sup>th</sup> November 1957** up to **January 1958** an entity appeared in the front room of Mrs. Cynthia Appleton's abode. This being (claiming to be from "*Ghanasvarn*", a continent on the planet Venus) had long blond hair and was attired in a bright one-piece outfit. During one contact the being showed Appleton an image of a domed disc with three half spheres on the underside. They claimed to be on Earth to prospect for a substance called "Titium". Their dialog featured scientific matters supposedly beyond the witnesses' understanding. The entity predicted the witness would give birth to a baby boy – which subsequently occurred (and was christened Matthew). The Appleton's subsequently vanished from public view thereafter and nothing more is known of them. **Source:** Cramp 2001, LUFORO Bulletin *Nov-Dec 1961* ; Hanson J and Holloway A; *Haunted Skies: The Encyclopaedia of British UFOs Vol 1 1940-1959* (CZF Press 2010).

In regard to **UFO "car stop" cases**, Levelland Texas USA (2<sup>nd</sup> November 1957) represents the earliest and best documented instance, although other alleged events pre-date this, albeit less often retroactively reported (i.e. the supposed event at Tamacor, Idaho (30<sup>th</sup> January 1947)). The Bexleyheath case cited previously represents one of the earliest British cases on record relating to a UFO allegedly affecting a mechanical device. There is also an account of an occurrence at **Newton Steward, Galloway, October 1955** that alleges a lorry was stalled by an object resembling a "double saucer" (**Source:** *Flying Saucer Review* Vol 1 No 5 pp 3-4).

### 3: Social Consolidation Era: 1960-1969.

UFOs were increasingly mentioned by the British media throughout the 1960's; with local papers often featuring numerous sightings from their catchment area. While conceptually on their way to being established within the English public consciousness this was still an incomplete process; UFOs often referred to as “things” in newspaper accounts and features. It is likely this process of acculturation was mostly complete by 1967; likely consolidated by the major wave of reports occurring in October and November of that year.

In 1962 the Air Ministry merged with the Admiralty and the War Office to form a new organisation; the *Ministry of Defence* (MoD). While the UK government didn't - as in America - establish a formal project to assess UFO reports, the MoD had a procedure to access them (albeit on an *ad hoc* basis). The division charged with evaluating sightings was variously known as AS2 (Air) or DS8; with DI55 (Tech), who monitor the military technology of rival nations, also being briefed on significant incidents. Occasionally, the MoD would send out “investigators” - usually disinterested air force personnel – to interview witnesses, usually those in paramilitary and military occupations. This was conducted either by personnel from DI55 (Tech) or the *RAF Provost and Security Service (P&SS)* normally concerned with investigating criminal activity and ensuring air force installation security. In many instances the MoD would offer rational solutions for events they had investigated; sometimes conceptually dubious, other times plausible. Many significant 1960s era British cases involve interaction between witnesses, UFO researchers and the Air Ministry/MoD.

**Statistics relating to UFO observations reported to the  
MoD & evaluated between 1<sup>st</sup> January 1959 through  
to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1969:**

Satellites & Debris	313	
Balloons	111	
Celestial Objects	123	
Meteorological & Natural Phenomena	94	
Aircraft	441	
Miscellaneous	110	
Unexplained	124	
		<b>Total reports: 1,316</b>
(total % deemed explicable: 90.6%)		
(total unexplained: 9.4%)		

Here, (as with the 1950's statistics cited earlier) the MoD makes the inference that "unexplained" cases exist only because they lack sufficient detail to be satisfactorily identified. Nonetheless, in 1970 BUFORA executive member John Cleary-Baker made the following observations regarding 1960's MoD UFO statistics:

*"My own observations confirm that upwards of 90%, of UFO reports relate to misidentified conventional objects and natural phenomena. I agree that aircraft, especially at night are a major cause of error, with satellites and satellite debris following as a close second. The proportions in which the other 'dud' reports are assigned to the*

*various stated categories seem to be about right.”*  
John Cleary-Baker Ministry of Defence UFO  
statistics *BUFORA Journal* Vol 3 No 1 (Autumn  
1970), pp 8.

In this decade what could be termed the British “UFO study movement” matured; with several bodies amalgamating and forming **BUFORA** (the *British UFO Research Association*) in 1964; to date the most significant national civilian body in the UK. UFO journal articles of this period exhibit a subject in two minds – some articles documentarian and critical, while others speculated about “alien spacecraft” with “anti-gravity drives” and “force fields” (the works of Leonard Cramp being a prime example of the latter). In regard to the latter approach, these space opera concepts were occasionally evoked to explain why many alleged photographic images were blurred. The image of the ufologist as a credulous individual blinded by make-believe science likely arose in this era. But a more “scientific” Ufology also came into being at this time - one that accepted that many sightings (80% to 90% of all reports) had rational solutions, while ensuring the inexplicable remnant was well documented for future study. Attempts were also made to compile national sighting listings. British UFO observations became more diverse while entity reports remained comparatively rare. The 1960s was the last era in which contactee claims would hold any sway on mainstream Ufology (George Adamski dying in 1965). By decade’s end their advocates had withered away to a faction that was often branded as “cultist” by “scientific” Ufologists.

**Sources:** Chapman, R. *Unidentified Flying Objects* (Mayflower 1970); Cramp, L. *Piece of a Jigsaw* (Somerton Publishing 1966).

## The Warminster Thing

One factor looms large within any discussion of the 1960's British UFO scene; the numerous sightings associated with the market town of **Warminster, Wiltshire**, all grouped under the label of "*The Thing*". This was instigated by a series of events in mid-1965 involving strange noises, vibrations, reputed discoveries of dead birds and various observations of various kinds of UFOs (including alleged photographs). Central to Warminster's special UFO status was local journalist Arthur Shuttlewood. He played an important role in sustaining the town's status as an "attractor" for reputed aerial anomalies, claiming numerous sightings over several decades, organising sky-watches and writing six books on the topic. Here, it should be noted that Warminster is on Salisbury Plain where there is an area used by the Army for combat training; from a rational perspective it's therefore unsurprising the area was host to various "anomalous" sounds and light displays!

The town was the scene of several large "skywatches" held during the 1960's and 1970's (often on various bank holidays), attended by BUFORA and other UFO groups. The regularity of such gatherings made them a target for hoaxers, who staged bogus sightings for the unwitting audience. The majority of later Warminster sightings were made by UFO enthusiasts, and usually related to distant lights. One notable manifestation was termed the "*Amber Gambler*"; a low-level reddish orange luminance seen to randomly appear and disappear while under observation. Critics often dismissed such 'Gambler' events as being instigated by observations of flares ignited over the army exercise area. There were, nonetheless a few higher-

strangeness events from car-stops to entity encounters occurring in the vicinity.

The foibles of human nature likely made a notable contribution to the mythos of the Warminster “thing”. During the early 1970s it was discovered that a member of Shuttlewood’s personal skywatching group had faked a number of UFO images subsequently printed in his books. Dewey and Ries’ work *In Alien Heat* suggests some of the initial incidents linked to the Warminster “Thing” (such as the dead birds) were likely based on a hoaxed account detailed in a letter and had no objective basis. Various commentators also note that Shuttlewood’s poetic and florid interpretations of his and other people’s UFO observations were capable of conceptually transmuting natural lights in the night into alien “spaceships”.

**Sources:** Shuttlewood, Arthur *The Warminster Mystery* Neville Spearman 1967; Dewey, S. and Ries, J *In Alien Heat* Anomaly Books 2006.

### Some Example 1960’s Era Cases

At **04:30hrs** on the **28<sup>th</sup> August 1960** a rotating object described as a “large (green) Catherine Wheel” or a “child’s spinning top” emitting sparks from 3 central openings was observed, flying low and fast over **Boreham Wood, Herts.** Supposedly seen by two independent observers it was associated with a “*high-pitched vibrating noise...akin to a tuning fork*”. The “spinning top” flew along a level course, heading South. This event had duration of around 2 minutes, the “wheel” vanishing from view behind trees. The Air Ministry was duly informed and passed the report onto “*the department which investigates these matters*”. A connection was made with a supposed “secret space

project” based at Boreham Wood that at the time employed around 1,700 workers.

**Source:** LUFORO BULLETIN No 8 15<sup>th</sup> Sep 1960. ((pp6 & 9); LUFORO BULLETIN 11-12 December 1960. ((pp5)

On the afternoon of **11<sup>th</sup> September 1960** there were numerous observations of a reflective immobile object seen at various locations over **East Anglia**, with local police stations and the Air Ministry receiving many enquiries regarding this manifestation. The object was located in the Northeastern sky, being occasionally obscured by cloud. One report stated the aerial form resembled “*2 glass marbles, one on top of each other*”. This event was formally explained by several sources as a research balloon originating either from Bristol or London University. Its static aspect puzzled even some knowledgeable commentators at the time, but this was likely attributable to lower air density prevalent at high altitude and the balloon being well above the then-prevailing 30 knot wind. There may have been up to three such high-altitude research balloons airborne at the time, RAF Marham noting that quantity of contacts on their RADAR.

**Source:** LUFORO BULLETIN V1 N2 January 1961 ((pp5 & 7).

At **Ryde**, Isle of Wight on **July 3rd 1961** at around 12:15hrs two women saw from a sea facing window in their house what they initially believed was an illuminated hovercraft approaching them level. This form glowed with an orange light with (as with the Norwich case) light streaming from what the observers interpreted as “portholes”. The UFO then reportedly shot upwards at rapid speed, leaving a luminous ring that persisted for a few minutes. Leonard Cramp interviewed the witnesses and acquired drawings of what was reputedly seen – depicting an Adamski style

“Scout ship”, minus its three “landing spheres” on the underside

**Sources:** LUFORO Bulletin Nov-Dec 1961; Cramp. L. *A.T.Factor: Piece for a Jigsaw* Pt. 3 Adventures (Unlimited Press (2001)); pp 77-80.

At **11:30hrs** on the **25<sup>th</sup> June** (or the **5<sup>th</sup> March**) **1962**, Alex Birch (then 14) was taking photos of his two friends (16-year-old “AA” and 12-year-old “BB”) in a field at Mosborough, Sheffield. At this locus AA reported as having thrown a stone at a tree – and then shouted “look up there!” On doing so all three youths saw five dark grey “flying saucers” emitting “white bubbles” – reportedly so bright they squinted and had to look away. One UFO was reputedly larger than the other and was surmounted by a dome. In the 20 seconds these UFOs were supposedly visible, Birch took one photograph before the mystery craft shot away at speed towards the direction of Beighton. When developed, the picture was found to depict five fuzzy disc-shaped blobs with white marks in front. “AA” and “BB” subsequently made written statements, confirming the event had happened as described. The images’ haziness was attributed (by some) to a “force-field” supposedly surrounding the UFOs, the “bubbles” water being droplets suspended within an antigravity field supposedly generated by the UFO’s propulsion system. An examination of the negative by Kodak found it to be “untouched”. Birch also made a presentation to BUFORA in 1962 and was interviewed about the incident by the Ministry of Defence; who concluded the picture showed “ice crystals”.

Eight years later a bombshell was dropped - on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1972 Birch confessed to fabricating the images on the BBC current affairs programme *Nationwide*. He said the UFOs were painted onto a piece of glass. The original

negative of this image was reputedly sold to a friend of the family for £20, who subsequently advertised it for sale in the magazine *Flying Saucer Review* and which was purchased by a UFO researcher from Northern England. In 1999 Birch contacted researcher Jenny Randles, requesting her help in tracking down people who had used his photograph, to obtain copyright fees. During the course of his conversation with Randles he stated the photograph was actually genuine, the hoax confession made to ease the social pressure then upon him. Around the same time "BB" was tracked down and interviewed by academic and veteran researcher David Clarke. He stated; *"it was a hoax...it was painted on glass... we were messing about in Alex's dad's greenhouse when we had the idea"*. "AA" was also interviewed by Clarke who informed him that; *"We had a teacher at school who was a UFO freak and we said 'let's take a photo of one'... We just painted them on a pane of glass - if you look at the original you can actually see the edge of the pane of glass that we painted the UFOs onto"*.

This case represents yet another claimed British UFO photograph fogged in controversy.

**Sources:** The National Archives AIR 2/16918; Clarke, D, Moore, R and Randles J. Mosborough UFO Picture Controversy *BUFORA BULLETIN No. 10 (Apr-May 1999)pp 8-11*; Letter from Norman Oliver dated, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1999 (author's file).

**At Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 1962**, a car collection driver (Ronald Wildman) was in the process of delivering a vehicle (a Vauxhall Victor) to Swansea. On a clear early morning around **03:30hrs** Wildman had reached the Ivinghoe-Tring Road. On

rounding a bend in that vicinity he almost ran into a glowing white oval object with 8-10 small square “vents” along its rim, suspended some 30 feet from the road’s surface. At this juncture the car seemed to involuntarily reduce its speed from 40 mph to 20 mph. The UFO moved straight ahead of the car, just above tree-top height and then accelerated, going “upwards and to the right”. As it did so, the “oval” reportedly dislodged frost from a tree. The case was subsequently reported to the local police and the Air Ministry (later the MoD) took an interest in the case. It was later discovered an official file had been compiled on the incident, albeit comprising of clippings from newspapers and flying saucer journals; this is now held by the National Archives (in Kew, London).

**Sources:** *LUFORO Bulletin Vol 3. No 1. (Jan-Feb 1982) pp8-9; FSR Vol 8. No. 2. Nick Redfern (Discovery of Air Ministry interest and file on case).*

At **0600hrs July 16<sup>th</sup> 1963**, around farmland in the village of **Charlton, Wiltshire**, a loud noise “like a blast” was heard. Later that morning, an anomalous depression was found in a potato and barley field. This consisted of a circular depression with an 8-foot diameter and 3 inches deep area in its centre. There was also an irregular zone of stripped crops some distance from the indented area, extending up to 6 feet away (in which 4 “slot” marks were noted) but no traces of burning were found. The army was called in to investigate, sinking a shaft into the recessed area and subsequently finding a “metallic” object. The “Charlton Crater” was debated in the House of Commons on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 1963. Conservative MP (and later President of BUFORA) Patrick Wall asked the Secretary of State for War whether the Army had come to any conclusions in regard to the “crater”. He replied “*The Army Bomb Disposal Team which excavated the crater at Charlton have found no conclusive*

evidence regarding its cause. The small object which was initially thought to be a meteorite appears in fact to have been a piece of local rock (Ironstone RM) and was not the cause of the crater.”. The event is also notable for a strange letter printed in the Daily Record from a “Dr. Randall” who claimed the crater had been caused by a three-legged spacecraft from Uranus.

**Sources:** Chapman, R. *Unidentified Flying Objects* pp 86-95 (*Mayflower* (1970)); BUFOA Journal *Summer 1963* (pp 13-15); Cramp, L. *Piece of a Jigsaw* (Somerton Publishing (1966)); Hansard Vol. 682.

\* On the **24th April 1965** at **Scoriton, Devon** an individual called Arthur Bryant claimed he boarded a landed UFO, meeting two entities, along with a more human and youthful looking individual who said he was called “Yamski”... who, while in conversation with Bryant stated that “*Des-Les would understand...*”. On their departure the aliens promised Bryant “proof of Mantell”, the UFO later reputedly returning and leaving various metal fragments (including portions of a British electro-mechanical computer). Bryant subsequently died from a brain tumour in June 1967. “Yamski” was interpreted by some as being the reincarnation of George Adamski, given the supposed landing occurred the day after Adamski’s death. This contact claim was widely rejected even by Adamski’s supporters (most notably Desmond Leslie). This claim effectively delineates the decline of Adamski’s influence over the British UFO narrative. Following Adamski’s demise new trends - such as UFO abductions - began to dominate the subject, both in Britain and the US. The results of space probes sent to Venus and Mars during the same era also dispelled notions that they could be abodes for intelligent life. Alleged encounters with UFO entities, historically more diverse than today, rarely featured blond haired entities

after that date and none claimed to be from Venus; in fact, if any origin was cited it was from planets well beyond our solar system.

**Sources:** Buckle E *The Scoriton Mystery* (Neville Spearman (1967)); Oliver, N *Sequel to Scoriton*. London (Norman Oliver, (1968)).

On the **19<sup>th</sup> September 1965** on a very clear night (**0130 hrs BST**) Paul Green, a heavy engineering worker, was driving his motorcycle along the Colchester-Mersea road, England when he perceived a humming noise that increased in pitch before desisting. He then observed a pulsing blue light (at an angular elevation of 20-30°) approach him rapidly from the East. Green's motorcycle engine then suddenly failed; the rider dismounted and observed a smooth saucer-shaped object with a ring of spheres "like a ball race" land on a nearby area of marshland. This object (perceived as having a pulsating, smoking recession on its lower section) then vanished behind hedges, although a pulsing light could still be seen behind them. The witness reported experiencing a tingling sensation during his observation. Green eventually restarted his motorcycle, the object still visible at its last noted location when he left the vicinity. Another possible witness, a scooter driver was observed in the vicinity; there were also accounts of strange noises and other anomalies by others originating from this region.

**Source:** *BUFORA Journal* Vol 1 No. 7 (Winter 1965); *UFO* Robert Chapman 1970 ( pp 82-83).

**7<sup>th</sup> January 1966, 22:00hrs** at **Wilmslow, Cheshire** Police Constable Colin Perkes was on foot patrol in a retail area along Alderney Road during a clear night with a full moon. He heard a high-pitched whine; Perkes turned to look in the direction of the noise. He observed to the Southeast a low-level greenish glowing smooth elliptical form, its surface

“tiered” like a dustbin lid with a dark, flat base. This object was estimated to be 30 ft long – or approximately the size of a bus. It remained stationary for an estimated 5 seconds before moving away “sideways” in an East-South-East direction, vanishing rapidly. It is possible the object was observed by another observer from a locus a mile away (at Morley Road), who at the same time saw a luminous green saucer; initially perceived to be stationary but which moved away some 3-4 seconds later. This second report is complicated due to the observer giving two possible dates in January for their observation. The weather conditions described by the observer, however, best fit those known to be prevalent on the 7<sup>th</sup> January. There are also claims of a glass-like residue having been later discovered around the sighting vicinity, but the reality status of this rumour has never been determined. Details of P.C Perkes’ observation reached official channels, either via a report from the Chief Constable of Cheshire or Manchester Airport. This resulted in an Air Ministry official questioning Perkes and a 20 page report being compiled.

This inquiry came to no firm conclusions on the event, although it did determine Manchester Airport did not notice anything on their RADAR.

**Source:** *AIR 2/17983* (AIR 2 UFO REPORTS 1966) The National Archives; *BUFORA Journal* Summer 1966 (pp5); *Northern UFO News 192* (March 2018).

On the **10<sup>th</sup> July 1967** at **08:45hrs** several schoolboys attending Whippingham Primary school at **Whippingham, Isle of Wight** momentarily saw a creamy coloured cloud-like object compared to “2 saucers (placed end to end) and glued together”. It was seen “hovering” near trees in nearby fields 400 metres away. It was seen again at 10:30 hrs, moving away erratically (“wobbling and fluttering”),

heading westwards and eventually moving out of sight. Civilian UFO investigators later discovered a line of flattened barley in a field where the object was seen, running in parallel to the main road. This depression was 3-8 metres wide and ran for just over 80 metres, along an East to West orientation. The crop was depressed in a swirled manner, seemingly from one direction. Similar traces were found, generally manifesting as a lineal depression and roughly following the same East to West orientation right up to a river's edge up to a kilometre away. These traces were subsequently photographed. The traces' similarity to damage caused by a whirlwind or funnel cloud is notable; although not all aspects of the sighting testimony are consistent with this explanation.

**SOURCE:** *BUFORA Journal* (V2,N3 pp7-9); *Flying Saucer Review* V7 n14 (pp2-9).

In the **Bentilee Estate** area of **Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire, 21:00hrs 2 Sep 1967** a brightly glowing object was seen, moving slowly over some rooftops. The observers - a mixture of local adults and children - described it as resembling a glowing dull orange coloured disc surmounted with a red dome. The observers had the impression it landed in a nearby field, after which it was no longer luminous. Policemen were called to the scene but saw nothing. A yellowish light was later seen to rise from the fields, then hovered and dwindled rapidly from view. Nothing anomalous was discovered when the "landing site" was examined.

Other similar sightings occurred around the Stoke on Trent region over the following 3 weeks. One such occurred **on the 4 Aug 1967 at around 0830hrs** near Middlewich, on the road to Crewe. Two children observed a flattened silver "oval" form surmounted with a transparent "dome". As the

object approached the children dived under a hedge. The "oval" then hovered directly over them, whereupon they could reputedly see its underside, being reportedly adorned with numerous tiny black "tubes" with a rectangular area in the centre containing three black circles. After 30 seconds of hovering, it shot off rapidly.

**Investigators:** Roger Stanway and Anthony Pace

**Sources:** Stanway R. and Pace, A. (1968) *UFO Wave over Stoke-on-Trent* (grey literature); Chapman, R (1969) *Unidentified Flying Objects*; Mayflower Books (pp 61-74)

At around **04:00hrs** on the **24th October 1967** two policemen on the **A3072** near **Okehampton, Devon** observed a mystery light in the sky "*like a star seen through wet glass... radiating points of light at all angles*". This light was pursued (sometimes at great speed) over a considerable distance, which always kept the same distance from its pursuers. The policemen "chased" the light to Hatherleigh, where it was subsequently joined by another light and reportedly moved off into the distance. A MoD investigation concluded the policemen's sighting was an observation of Venus, which was very bright (-4.67 magnitude) in the early Eastern morning sky at the time. The aspect ascribed to the light - of always staying the same distance from the observer when pursued - also occurs in incidents involving misperceptions of Venus or the Moon. In such instances, a combination of erroneous estimates of distance and induced motion illusion result in a fruitless attempt to chase down such a UFO. The policemen's sighting marked the commencement of a wave of such sightings throughout late October 1967, many of which ascribed a cross-like appearance to the UFOs they observed. While Venus was very bright at the time, air-to-air refuelling exercises were also enacted over several nights during the same period. Hence, the potential existed

for a variety of prosaic phenomena to generate such reports during that month.

**Sources:** The National Archives DEFE 31/119 (The National Archives) ; Chapman R *UFO* Mayflower (1969); <http://www.ianridpath.com/ufo/flyingcross.html>;

One case in point is hereby described.... On a windy day at around **11:25hrs 26 Oct 1967** an ex-BOAC worker was walking his dog at **Ringstead Bay**, a rural location near **Moigne Downs, Dorset**. He saw what he thought to be a contrail – which then appeared to move towards him at rapid speed. This form then levelled out and “hovered”. The witness described this object as translucent possessing a drum-like central section with four “girders” protruding from it, akin to wheel spokes. Three of these “girders” were folded together in a manner akin to a fan. These folded out, the “girders” oriented in a cross pattern. The object “hovered” for an estimated 22 minutes, after which the “girders” folded in again. It then rotated slightly and shot away at “some speed”. The witness reported his sighting to the MoD, who suggested he may have perceived an eye “floaters” combined with a trance state. The witness replied in length, rejecting their solution. Much later, the MoD person who assessed this sighting were questioned about this evaluation; he stood by his evaluation, remarking it was unusual that no other observers had come forward.

**Sources:** *The National Archives AIR 20/ 11890* (The National Archives) ; *UFO* Chapman, R. *Mayflower* books (1970); Clarke, D *How UFOs conquered the World* ( Aurun Press UK, (2016)).

Also on the **26<sup>th</sup> Oct 1967** at **04:30hrs BST** at **Hook, Hampshire** a motorist encountered a form described as a squat ice cream cone, dark in hue with a dull finish. The driver’s car stalled but he was able to restart it... although it

stalled again several minutes afterwards. He sensed a burning smell and sensation of a pressure change. The form initially hovered, then moved away a few minutes later, the car being manually restarted thereafter.

**Source:** *Flying Saucer Review* Vol 13, No. 6 (p6-7); Falla G *Vehicle Interference Project* (BUFORA 1979, 2008).

At **17.30 - 17.45hrs** on the **20th November, 1968** Mr. Milakovic (a scrap metal dealer), his wife and their 11-year-old son (one of 11 children) were at the village of **Hanbury, Staffordshire**, concluding a house-hunting trip. On leaving the village they saw a large number of rabbits running across the road – and, thereafter, noticed a brilliantly-lit object in a field on their left-hand side. The object rose slowly and then proceeded to move towards a house over which it “stopped and hovered”. The form was said to be silent but appeared to “quiver like a jelly” at this juncture and was reputedly “as wide as the house” it was hovering above for around 5 minutes. During this time several “human like silhouettes” were reputedly seen walking backwards and forwards across the “craft’s” brilliantly lit upper portion (with one or two seen to “bend down”). The object then began to move away in a pulsating, jerky manner, climbing as it did so, its lights becoming very intense. The witnesses, alarmed, promptly left the sighting location, the object still visible.

Two civilian investigators associated with BUFORA subsequently conducted a site investigation of this claim. The witnesses were taken to the sighting locus but on arriving it was noted no house was present. Enquiries were made in Hanbury and the surrounding district but no further observations were uncovered. The local police and press were also contacted but they were also unaware of any additional reports. A light aircraft landed at a local

airport at the time, while at around 19:00hrs that day a Russian Satellite, Cosmos 253 re-entered the atmosphere, being observed over most of England. This case is representative of the type of entity observation claims made in this era, along with their often-problematic nature.

**Investigators:** N. M. H. Turner & W. Daniels      **Source:** BUFORA Journal Vo 2 No 7 (Winter 1968) pp5-9.

#### 4: Era of Increasing Strangeness: 1970-1979.

During the early 1970's the subject became globally moribund due to the perceived negative conclusion of the University of Colorado study, issued in 1969. As a consequence, this era was termed by Charles Bowen (one-time editor of Flying Saucer Review) as "the (UFO) dark age". However, this transpired to be just a temporary phase, with large quantity of sightings and media interest being evident from the mid-1970s onwards.

By this decade the concept of the UFO had become a mainstream one; with most British people now being very much aware of this concept. As such, the media regularly featured reputed sightings with very occasional documentaries aired by the three UK TV channels that then existed (i.e. BBC, BBC2 and ITV). Interest in Warminster was waning by this time and skywatching had fallen out of favour. This was likely a reaction to the uncritical approach of those often enacting them, combined with the statistically improbability of observing an "unknown" by these means. The various observations from Warminster were now generally ascribed to a combination of imagination, misperception and hoaxing, and the fact it was located next to Salisbury Plain, a major army exercise area.

MoD records indicate that 780 reports were made to its so-called “UFO desk” in 1978; among its highest yearly totals prior to the 1990s and beyond. This has been attributed to the UK release of the UFO movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* generating increased interest in the subject. The MoD ceased to issue UFO statistics quantified by suspected rational causes from 1973 onwards.

Around the 1970s the term “*Light(s) in the sky*” (or **LITS**) was coined, or at least came into widespread use within Ufology, to define reports of distant point or points of light reported in significant numbers (then and now). This was a replacement for the expression “Nocturnal Light” (a label coined by Dr J. A. Hynek in the 1960s). On investigation the majority of LITS events occurring in this era were found to be misperceptions of Venus, fireball meteors, aircraft along with diverse other prosaic causes. The term “**UAP**” (*Unidentified Atmospheric Phenomena*) also came into use around this time, employed by to define a type of UFO likely to be explained as an unconventional but still nonetheless natural atmospheric manifestation.

While the scientific community and the MoD remained sceptical of UFO reports, civilian bodies became more organised; with several major concerns collating reports in this era (namely *BUFORA*, *CONTACT UK* and the *Northern UFO Network*). While moves were made towards greater objectivity, this came with an emphasis on structure, bureaucracy and systems thinking that some researchers found too clinical and burdensome. The *BUFORA* “R1” report form was created around this time - subsequently copied and utilised by numerous other British UFO societies for several decades thereafter.

Issues of competency and its ability to represent researchers outside of London dogged BUFORA during the late 1970's, leading to the establishment of *UFOIN* in 1976. This group (sponsored by *Flying Saucer Review*) aimed to focus on high strangeness reports, in the hope this would lead to a greater understanding of these more exotic class of UFO claims. This effort was not without its critics; writer Andy Roberts noting (in 2008) "*UFOIN's case files was largely bonkers high strangeness cases of the sort we never see today at all. I wonder why? I've read them and they were masterpieces of froth and unsubstantiated claims. Yet if you invested any belief in them, you would think the universe was a constant Dr Who episode*" (Andy Roberts; personal communication, 2008).

Possibly as a result of *UFOIN*, claimed observations of UFO entities (and contact with same) became more prevalent in Britain; the first "modern" British hypnosis-recovered abduction narrative originating late in this decade. These "abduction" events were generally more clinical, void of the spiritual platitudes featured in the contactee claims of the 1950's and 60's. The dominant populist interpretation for inexplicable events was that they were extraterrestrial, although there were notable dissenters. For example, the British magazine *Magonia* championed the view that claimed UFO sightings were highly influenced by cultural and social factors; an attitude defined as the *psycho-social school* of interpretation. This was to remain an influential train of thought within British Ufology for the next two decades.

While BUFORA held no corporate views on UFOs, in 1976 it produced a list of potential origins for the phenomena:

"UFO Hypotheses

“In order to clarify the position with regard to the working hypotheses which BUFORA use, it has been decided to publish the following list:-

1. That the sightings involve misidentifications of objects which are manmade or natural and are well known to experts.

That the sightings involve man-made devices only known to their inventors.

That the sighting reports are hoaxes or involve fabrications.

That sightings involve natural events, which are not observed often enough for scientists to have produced suitable scientific explanations.

That the sightings are mental projections by, or received by, the witnesses.

That the sightings involve devices produced by one or more alien advanced technologies which originate  
Elsewhere in our universe (...)  
In a universe which is not yet obvious to us using conventional techniques (...)

7. That the sightings are of intelligent processes beyond our space-time continuum and not explicable in any of the above categories.

BUFORA is working on the assumption that the UFO reports made to us are mainly of category 1 and a small percentage belong to categories 2-5, but that a few percent of all reports are consistent with hypotheses 6 and 7”. - “UFO Hypothesis” BUFORA Journal Vol 5 No 2 Jul-Aug 1976 (pp 2).

**Sources:** Randles, Jenny and Warrington, Peter *UFO's a British Viewpoint*, Robert Hale 1979; *UFO Investigation*

BUFORA Ltd 1978; Watson, N. *Portraits of Alien Encounters* (Valis Books 1990)).

Some 1970's era Case Studies:

**26 October 1971** from **11:50-13:15hrs** at **Radford Bridge, Oxfordshire** a mysterious orange ball of light was observed accelerating and decelerating (along with some stationary periods) along a North - Northwest course. During this event this "ball" was observed to emit a strange intermittent "vapour trail". This object was visible for about 2 minutes and seen by observers over a wide area; movie footage of it being incidentally being "captured" by an ATV camera crew. Most described the form as a glowing "ball", although one observer claimed to see a horizontally-orientated "rocket" emitting a luminous exhaust. Later, RAF Upper Hayward formally stated that on that date an F-111 fighter jet based there had enacted a fuel dump in the skies above Oxford around midday (fighter jets being sighted in the vicinity prior and after the event). While the footage has been presented in numerous UFO documentaries since that time a military aircraft dumping fuel seems the most probable explanation - it would not be the last time such activity would instigate a UFO incident - see **Moreerton (11<sup>th</sup> January 1973)**, below.

**Source:** Stanway, R *A Challenge to Science* BUFORA (1971).

At around **23:50 hrs** on **8<sup>th</sup> October 1972** at **Cairo Mill, Oldham, Lancashire** a night security guard heard a humming noise while on patrol outside this establishment. On looking up, he saw, hovering by the side of the mill, an object resembling a segmented domed disc with a bulging window protruding from one end. The dome was described

as being covered in “bars”, comparable in appearance to an office window. The observer estimated this form was about 100 feet long and glowed with a bluish-white hue. After being observed for around 5 minutes the object flipped on its side and shot straight up into the sky at incredible speed. Two notable aspects are that the humming noise didn’t change in pitch as the form moved away and that it cast no shadows. While there were rumours of other witnesses none were actually located. **Source:** *BUFORA JOURNAL J* Vol 3 No 9.

On the **11<sup>th</sup> January 1973** at around **09:05hrs** near **Moreton, Oxfordshire** a building surveyor, while on his way to a consultation with a client, observed a low-altitude pulsating orange ball of light. The witness filmed this with a super eight camera, taking 12 seconds of footage. The ball vanished suddenly. This luminous form was observed by other observers nearby (mostly schoolteachers and pupils), who also described it as resembling an “orange ball of fire”. One observer stated it turned into a vee-shaped form, while another claimed to see a “silver shape” inside the glow. It transpired that an F1-11 fighter jet from RAF Upper Hayward had experienced mechanical difficulty while flying over Oxfordshire at the time. While airborne, it burned off fuel, before the pilot ejected and the plane crashed near North Crawley at 09:40hrs. It is now generally accepted this malfunction was responsible for the Moreton incident, the “orange ball” an observation of the F1-11’s ignited fuel. As with the 1971 Ranford Bridge event (above), the footage was shown numerous times during the 1970’s and 1980’s in TV presentations as an example of an “authentic” British UFO and was once regarded as proof that “UAPs” underlay some UFO incidents. **Source:** Randles, J. and Fuller P Case Study 2: *Fire in the sky* BUFORA Publications 1986.

\* **20:00hrs, 21<sup>st</sup> March 1972** at **Heywood Lancashire** a male witness was walking his dog along a country lane when he observed two red lights to the Northeast at a fairly low elevation. This subsequently resolved into an object “caught in the moonlight”. Its appearance was described as being akin to a silent pewter-coloured “inverted saucer” surmounted by a dark “cupola” with 3 “apertures” and a “collar” on its lower section. This “cupola” was affixed with a bright flashing red light, while a dimmer static red light was noted on the object’s rim. In terms of motion it followed some power lines (at one point flying at a “tilt”), before moving out of view. This claim is notable as a sketch of this object depicts a form comparable to George Adamski’s “scout craft”. As such, it represents a relatively late observation of this alleged type of “flying saucer” and another instance where more information regarding its observer would be useful in assessing this event. **Source:** Heywood “Saucer” *BUFORA JOURNAL Vol 3, no 1* (pp21).

**Berwyn Mountain** in **North Wales** was the epicentre of several seconds of vibrations and rumbling, terminating with a loud bang at around **20:38hrs** on the **23 Jan 1974**. A fireball was also seen in the sky at around the same time, along with lights on the mountain. A nurse, who believed an aircraft had crashed, drove to the locale to assist. On reaching the area she reportedly observed a colour-changing luminous sphere on the mountain but was unable to approach further. Police, Mountain Rescue, The Territorial Army, various academics and the media promptly arrived in the vicinity but found nothing tangible; additionally, no aircraft had been reported missing in the vicinity.

The British Geological Survey recorded a short (3.5 ML) earthquake emanating from this vicinity (which is located

on the *Great Bala Earth fault*) at that time, while the British Astronomical Society recorded two fireball meteor manifestations that night: one at around the time of the earthquake, another at 21:58hrs. But, in retrospect, what mostly seems to be a chance aggregation of natural events eventually grew over time into claims of an official cover-up, clandestine investigations and allegations of people being ordered away from the mountain. Later, there were even claims that a spacecraft and alien bodies being recovered and transported to Portland Down for study). While no evidence other than hearsay exists for these latter elaborations, the nature of the sphere observed upon the mountain remains unknown; but various explanations, from **earthlights** to the lamps of poachers have been mooted.

**Sources:** *UFO Crash Retrievals* Randles, J. (1995); Musson, R.; The Enigmatic Bala Earthquake of 1974; *Astronomy & Geophysics, Volume 47, Issue 5, October 2006, Pages 5.11–5.15.* *UFO Down* Roberts, A Fortean Words/CFZ (2010)

On the **24 Sep 1974** around **23:10hrs BST** at **Eggardon Hill, Dorset** (an Iron Age Hillfort) a driver espied a bluish circular tube-shaped form with a blurred edge. As it passed in proximity to him the inside of his car reportedly became cold, its lights dimmed, and the vehicle was unable to accelerate. The UFO departed by rising up into the sky. A comparable event also occurred in the same region at 21:00hrs on a stormy 13<sup>th</sup> September 1968. This involved two cars on the old Roman road near the hill stalling, their lights going out, a compass spinning wildly along with all clocks and watches stopping. **Source:** Case 740067 (BUFORA).

## Early examples of UFO-related hypnotic regression and abduction claims:

While the Daventry (1978) and Todmorden (1980) events (below) represent the best-known early examples of British UFO cases associated with the use of hypnosis, claims of missing time and abduction experiences, it should be noted that even earlier – if now lesser known - instances have been made.

Among the earliest British case study in which hypnosis was applied relates to the “Paul Grant affair”; involving a series of UFO and entity encounters occurring throughout the life of this individual from 1968 up to 1976. The most notable of these was an incident reputedly occurring at **Barn Hill** near **Chingford, Essex** in **1974**, involving the observation of robed entities and a UFO. Grant underwent hypnotic regression in 1978, being initially applied to this event but eventually encompassing the totality of his experiences. While not revealing an atypical abduction narrative, it produced “subconscious” details relating to the origins and motivations of the entities encountered. As such, it could be viewed as a conceptual “bridge” between the claimed UFO entity encounters of the 1960's and 1970's and modern regression hypnosis “recovered” abduction claims.

Quite possibly the first recorded British abduction involved a woman who reportedly experienced such an event on the **16th October 1973**. While driving to visit her mother in Milverton, Somerset she reportedly observed a landed hemispherical-shaped object on legs on the A361 road after her car unexpectedly stalled near **Langford Budville, Somerset** at **22:45hrs**. While examining the vehicle's engine she felt a hand on her shoulder – on turning round she

observed a 6ft tall humanoid described as (and later designated by the other entities subsequently encountered) a "robot". She then passed out; on coming round she found herself directly in front of the "hemisphere". She then passed out again, on regaining consciousness she found herself naked and bound in a chair in a room containing "machinery" adorned with wires, coils, buttons, dials, and levers. She was then examined by three human-like entities in surgical outfits with large eyes and who didn't seemingly breathe. The experiencer was scanned with various "machines", the examination concluded by the UFO entities taking nail and blood samples. These beings then left the examination room – but a few minutes later one returned and proceeded to rape her. Following this, the "men" returned to remove the restraints - the witness then losing consciousness a final time. On coming round, she found herself back in her car and on the road. She restarted her vehicle and drove back to her abode; arriving just prior to 02:30 hrs. A few months later the witness experienced mysterious letters and phone calls, along with a visit by two men who made threatening statements warning her not to reveal details of this experience. It is important to note that hypnosis wasn't required to recover details of her claimed experience when this case was initially investigated in 1979.

Probably the first British instance where regression hypnosis was used to "recover" details of a suspected "UFO abduction relates to the experience of the "Avis" family (a non de plume). On **Sunday October 27, 1974**, at around **21:50hrs**, while driving home the husband, wife and three children of this family unit observed an oval light that stopped and started in unison with their car. They then encountered a dense green mist covering the road. They seemingly passed through this in seconds – but on doing so

they discovered they were half a mile from their prior location. They arrived home at 01:00hrs, from a journey that usually only took 20 minutes.

Following experiences of anomalous trauma and sudden lifestyle changes they approached UFO researchers. Following the intervention of Charles Bowen (then editor of *Flying Saucer Review*) Mr. and Mrs. Avis underwent several hypnotic regression sessions. This produced a narrative that implied the family had been taken aboard the UFO seen in 1974, and medically examined by two groups of beings - one tall and human, the other small and whose skin was covered in a strange pelt. Communication took place between Mr. Avis and the beings encountered, relating to the origin of the UFO entities and the craft's means of propulsion. One odd detail is that (on prior to being returned to their car) they noticed themselves seated in their vehicle.

**Sources:** The Paul Grant affair *BUFORA Journal* Vol 7 No 4 Nov Dec 1978 (pp11-15); Taunton Close encounter *BUFORA Bulletin* Part 1 Vol 8 No. 2 April 1979 (pp19-pp24) Part two *BUFORA Bulletin* Vol 8 No 3 Jul 1979 (pp18-pp25); Collins, A. The Aveyal Abduction *Flying Saucer Review* Vol 23 No 6 & Vol 23 No. 7.

At **18:55hrs** on the **24 February 1975** a 62-year-old postal messenger was walking his dog on the beach near **Sizewell Nuclear Power Station**. There, he saw a bright light fly from across the sea, then hover at an estimated distance of 20 yards away and only an estimated 6 foot from the ground. The witness described this form as resembling a small (12 ft in diameter) rotating "pumpkin", glowing green tinged with yellow. It seemed to be emitting a notable but tolerable degree of warmth. The witnesses' dog trembled while the

form was at its closest extent and then ran off to the power station. The “pumpkin” continued to hover for about half a minute before shooting away to the North East. A strong smell compared to the confectionary item termed “acid drops” was noted on the form’s departure.

**Investigator:** Peter Johnson

**Source:** Pumpkin over Power Station BUFORA JOURNAL *Vol* 4., *No.11* (Jan-Feb 1976) pp17.

On the night of the **14<sup>th</sup> November 1976** two individuals (Joyce Bowles and Edward (or “Ted”) Pratt were in a Leyland “Mini”, driving to collect Mrs. Bowles’ son at **Chilcombe, Winchester**. At **21:00hrs**, while on the narrow road leading to that village, the car suddenly “shook” and suffered steering problems. The vehicle then veered onto a grass verge, coming to a sudden stop as if hitting an “invisible barrier”. At this juncture a hovering, orange cigar-shaped craft was observed - with three human-like seated “entities” visible through its windows. The craft’s lower portion was shrouded in vapour, reputedly emitted from “steam jets”. One of the UFO entities was then noticed (or “materialised”) outside the craft, walking up to Bowles’ side on the car and looking into the vehicle, placing its arm on the roof. The entity could be seen more clearly at this juncture; reportedly attired in a silver “boiler suit” with a polo-neck collar and a seam on its right-hand side. Bowles further noted the entity was approximately 6 feet tall with blond hair, piercing pink eyes, a beard, and sideboards. Bowles then wrapped her body around Pratt to stop him from leaving the car. The entity then looked at Pratt, then at the car’s dashboard. Bowles found the entities’ gaze “horrible”, its eyes so bright that she suffered an afterimage on looking away; whereas Pratt felt only “peace and tranquillity” when the entity stared at him.

The car engine then started (even through the ignition keys were in the “off” position) and the headlights activated, being much brighter than normal. The entity then walked to the back of the car and then vanished, along with the craft. Bowles and Pratt tried to move off (in first gear) but the car would not move; after another attempt a few seconds later they managed to drive away from the scene.

Bowles claimed to wake up on the following Monday with a rash on her face and neck and right shoulder blotchy. She also allegedly received a telephone call telling her not to publicly discuss her encounter. Details of this event, were, however, supplied to print (local papers and *The Daily Mail*) and TV broadcast media sources (i.e., BBC1’s *Nationwide*) but no notable repercussions resulted. Bowles further claimed she was visited by a “government official” in connection with her UFO experience.

It has been alleged that, on the weekend of this incident, eight sightings of a luminous “cigar” UFO occurred around the Winchester area; however, no details of these additional events have been located at the time of writing (2022). Bowles and Pratt claimed to have had two additional experiences with the same entities; one on the March 7, 1977, and again in June 1977; all occurring around the Chilcombe area. Both involved the witnesses being taken aboard an “alien spacecraft” and having verbal interaction its crew.

During their second encounter, the UFO entities reputedly presented Bowles and Pratt with images of various geometric symbols, the meaning of which they were unable to comprehend. One commentary has interpreted these as crop circle “designs”, although the testimony doesn’t directly support this. A link with crop circles is also inferred

due to one entity (during the second encounter) making the enigmatic statement that “*this is our field*”. This has been retroactively connected by some with the discovery of a crop circle at the locus of the initial Bowles/Pratt encounter.

Several facts of note were subsequently discovered in relation to Joyce Bowles. The first is that Bowles worked for long-standing BUFORA council member “Dr.” John Cleary-Baker (possibly in a secretarial capacity). She also appeared in a 1972 BBC TV interview, where she claimed to have seen ghosts at her home. In 2002 Dr David Clarke wrote to the MoD and asked - in conjunction with other requests – if they had conducted any investigation or interviews in relation to Joyce Bowles; the Ministry could not, unfortunately, find any record that such had occurred.

In conclusion, the Chilcombe entities seem very much of their time, resembling humanlike, white males. All the American astronauts throughout the 1970s were exclusively male and white, while the stereotypical 70’s technician was predominantly so (and often depicted as bearded). Their height, blond hair and silver boilersuits echo George Adamski’s “Venusians”. Silver has also long been associated with magic, angels, and the Space Age. Its evidential value aside, this claim was made at a time when “UFO entities” were widely diverse in form and when British “occupant” cases (once rare) were becoming (relatively) more common.

**Sources:** The Winchester Encounter *BUFORA Journal Vol 5 No 6 Mar/Apr 1977* (pp10-18);

DEFE 24/2032/1(8); The National Archives.

[https://www.colinandrews.net/UFO-Councillor-Hicks-](https://www.colinandrews.net/UFO-Councillor-Hicks-JoyceBowles.html)

[JoyceBowles.html](https://www.colinandrews.net/UFO-Councillor-Hicks-JoyceBowles.html); accessed 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022; *Out of this World* (BBC Documentary originally broadcast 1977);

At **Bignal End, Staffordshire** on the **31<sup>st</sup> December 1976**, at **02:24hrs** a 65 year old woman was awoken from her sleep by a loud bang. She noted her room was flooded with a brilliant glow and observed out of her bedroom window a large oval object. Subsequent investigation noted at this juncture the object was located at an Azimuth of  $290^\circ$  and an altitude of  $10^\circ$ . Finding her alarm clock was no longer working she went down to check the time. On coming back upstairs she found the “oval” was still present, now reputedly filling a quarter of her window. She noted the object had moved slightly and gradually darkened to an orange colour. At this time it was orientated at an Azimuth of  $320^\circ$ . She then observed two figures in silhouette against the “oval” object, moving to and fro. The witness claimed to have observed the “oval” for “at least” 1 hour and 15 minutes. Her son (then aged 31) then returned from a restaurant and stated he had seen a big orange ball in the sky. They both continued to observe it until “04:15hrs” until it “moved away” in the distance. A subsequent investigation ruled out various causes; believing the moon had set an hour before.

Unfortunately, the latter assumption was incorrect. Critics of the “unexplained” status of the events state the moon was actually still visible at 02:24hrs, then being at an Azimuth of around  $+284^\circ$  and an angular altitude of  $+6^\circ$  (confirmed by the author in 2022 via an astronomy program). The orange colour is consistent with the moon’s colour being tainted by refraction (due to the greater relative thickness of the atmosphere at low elevations). The long duration and very slow motion are comparable to the sidereal motion exhibited by stars and planets and thus consistent with the “oval” being the moon. We can postulate the “stick men” were either eye “floaters” and/or objects in the environment partially obscuring the setting

Moon. This celestial body, however, set at around 03:13hrs – an hour before the last cited observation of this UFO. Was the terminal-cited time somehow in error?

Nonetheless, the Moon seems the most likely cause for this incident. During this era it was difficult to access astronomical data with the precision required to assess UFO incidents, most dependant on printed almanacs giving limited data rather than the highly precise and configurable output of the PC based programs available today. The Bignal End incident is now regarded as a classic example of how the moon can be misperceived as a UFO; along with the perils of accepting *ex cathedra* statements from “experts”.

**Source:** Original report: Northern UFO News No 33. February 1977 (pp7). Astronomical assessment checked by R Moore 2022.

On the **26<sup>th</sup> September 1977** at **07:35hrs BST** a female computer programmer in her 20's was driving a van from Bristol to Minehead. While doing so she noticed something hovering over the far hedge of a field north of the road in the **Kilve, Somerset** region. She stopped the van to get a better look and walked towards the gate of the field, noticing as she did so that cows in the field were all huddled together in one corner. She then observed a smooth, egg-shaped form 15-20 feet across with a smooth, silvery-grey hue, the hedge partially obscuring it. The witness, on attempting to approach the form experienced sensations of prickly skin and her hair standing on end. A low humming sound could also be heard. After a few moments she walked towards the van, the sensations of static dissipating. The form remained in its initial location as she drove off. A short time later she observed an object in the sky travelling

rapidly out of site. The witness estimated the sighting's duration as being around twelve minutes.

**Source:** The Humming Egg of Kilve *BUFORA Journal* Vol 7 No 2 Jul-Aug 1978 (pp8).

At **Milford Haven primary school, Northwest Wales** at **13:00hrs** on the **4<sup>th</sup> February 1977**, around 14 children in the playground noted (in a field orientated Southwest of them) a very low-level long silver "cigar" or "bow" shaped object comparable in size to a doubledecker bus. A "dome" with a red (or orange-green) light was mounted on top, while a few of the children saw a "door" and a "runway" on the object's side. Six of the children claimed to see a silver-suited "figure" with "big ears" near the object. The object was reportedly present for several hours in the field before (at around 15:45 hrs) it seemed to move, hover for a while and then disappear behind bushes. Several days later, under the jurisdiction of a schoolteacher "under exam conditions", the children involved drew consistent images of the object. Here, it needs to be noted that numerous UFO reports from the region occurred thereafter; many involving supposed "entity" reports, a farmhouse plagued by repeat incidents and even claims that a "UFO base" existed just off the Northwestern Welsh coast.

These incidents became so numerous that the area became known as the *Dyfed (or Welsh) Triangle*. A low-level MoD investigation concluded that at least some of these UFO events (particularly the entity events) were staged pranks; indeed, years later a person confessed to donning a silver fireman's outfit and walking around Milford Haven at night with this intention. The investigation also noted the area had several military bases in the area. As to the Milford Haven school event,

researcher Hilary Evans suggested the UFO could have been a sewage tanker or similar, which are tubular, mostly silver, comparable to a bus in size and often have a ladder on one side. While few of the witnesses still wish to discuss this event, none have stated it was a hoax and still maintain they saw a UFO.

**Sources:** Pugh, R. J. *The Dyfed Enigma Broad Haven School Report Flying Saucer Review Vol7 no 23*; Evans H. *Tread in them thou Boldy Common Ground 1* (May 1980) pp2-7. Also Evans, H *The Dyfed Enigma The Unexplained Vol 7* (1981); Clarke D; *The Secret Files: The Welsh Triangle Fortean Times Issue 200(2005)*; also at <http://www.uk-ufo.org/condign/secfilwelsh1.htm> (accessed 15/08/22); The Broadhaven Triangle <https://www.babiafi.co.uk/2019/06/the-broad-haven-triangle.html> (accessed 15/08/22); Mantel P *UFO Landings UK Flying Disc Books 2022*,

**At 3:10-3:15hrs March 9<sup>th</sup> 1977 at Nelson, Lancashire** two textile workers were driving towards their menswear factory to commence their night shift (northern mills often being continuously active during this era). While doing so they observed a strange light over Pendle Hill, that gradually approached in their direction. This light then “dropped out of the sky” and resolved itself into a dark “cigar” shaped form “larger than a bus”, with pointed ends and multi-coloured lights on its bottom. The form was also reportedly covered by a partially grey “mist”. As the “cigar” approached, the witnesses’ car headlamps dimmed and its engine suddenly cut out. The observers further reported several sensory effects, most notably a feeling of pressure on their head and neck and their hair standing on end. The “cigar” hovered for 5 minutes before moving away; the

witnesses restarting the car with some effort on its departure.

**Sources:** *Grimshawe J and Randles J FSR v23 no 2 1977 NUN 36-37 (1977).*

On June **6th, 1977**, on the **B6278** near **Barnard Castle, County Durham** a 16-year old male was driving his motorcycle through heavy rain. While doing so he observed two purple objects to the South, resembling a car's full beam headlights. These seemingly paced his motorcycle for a short distance, and then vanished. The witness then noticed a Jaguar car about to overtake him, and at the same time saw a brilliant pink-purple oval shaped light enveloped both; the witness was unable to get a proper view. At this juncture he noticed that power was seemingly "draining" from his bike. He applied its brakes and yet the bike still "pulled" forward. He approached a small hill and was also "pulled" over this. At the same time he felt heat all round him; his wet driving suit began to steam, and on stopping he found the petrol tank and sides of his bike were very warm. The object vanished suddenly after a few seconds and power returned to his motorcycle. The witness also noticed the car also appeared to be losing power. On the incident's conclusion both drivers stopped and conversed; the car driver (while having seen less of the object) was mystified. On returning home the witnesses' mother noticed his face was very flushed and red but this quickly passed. The motorcycle's brakes were checked and found to be so worn as to require resetting. The witness also commented that his jacket was stiffer than before; the case investigator examined it; while it seemed to be rough any "difference" was deemed to be insignificant.

**Investigator:** Brian Straight **Source:** Northern UFO News *issue 41 October 1977 (pp7).*

In the late **Summer of 1977**, a family was driving from **Yeovil to Chard** on the **A30 road**. At around **22:10hrs** they had reached an elevated part of the road called **Windwhistle Hill**, near **Chard, Somerset**. On this hill, on the opposite side of the road to the *Windwhistle Inn*, a very bright glowing orange “cigar” around an estimated 200-300 feet in length was seen, hovering approximately 800-1000 feet above the road. They seemed to pass this without incident but on returning home the couple found they could not account or recall about an hour of their journey-time. On driving past the same location the following day, they passed strange “figures” who seemed abnormally tall and thin (one of the figures seemed to extend his leg halfway across the road). One of the adult witnesses - “Kate Walker” - later discovered a news clipping detailing the observation of a mystery orange object and believes this occurred on the date of her experience, which, if correct, indicates it occurred on the **12<sup>th</sup> September 1977**. The report was submitted by “Kate Walker” to BUFORA during the late 1990s – the event subsequently being extensively investigated by the association thereafter. BUFORA’s efforts discovered several other reports from the region, one (of a “humming top”) dating from 1950. An account of a visionary experience (involving the observation of “giant men” being seen from the hill during the 1640’s) was also located. Local folklore also claims Windwhistle Hill (and its Inn) is haunted by the ghost of a highwayman and a witch. This case, if nothing else, shows how UFO sighting locations can be associated with long-standing paranormal and/or folkloric beliefs; what this indicates, of course, is a matter of debate. One notable aspect of this case is that BUFORA did not employ hypnotic regression in regard to the suspected episode of “missing time” due in part to their moratorium on hypnosis and partly due to the wishes of “Kate Walker”.

**Investigators:** John Heptonsal et. al.

**Source:** Strange Places: Dixon, G (2000) *In the Shadow of Windwhistle Hill* <https://bufora.org.uk/Strange-Places%3A-Windwhistle-Hill.php> (accessed 14/08/22).

At **03:55hrs** on the **3<sup>rd</sup> May 1977**; a telephone call was made to the police regarding a strange object seen over **Hainault Forest, Essex**. Police officers were duly dispatched, who on arrival proceeded to unlock the forest path access gates to reach the suspected locus. While doing so, they noted a luminance to the East; and observed a red pulsing bell-tent shaped “object” hovering at an estimated 300 yards away. This object then vanished suddenly while under observation, and a smell of burning was noted emanating from the vicinity. A later site examination by UFO researchers found a crushed bush in near the location where the “tent” was seen. Checks with a Geiger counter found nothing significant; soil samples were also taken and found to be normal, apart from slightly elevated radiation levels and traces of titanium. Five days after this incident a tall, broad glowing blue entity was reputedly observed near the original sighting location. Veteran UFO researcher Jenny Randles has speculated the UFO was instigated by an observation of the setting Moon, its orientation at the time and date of the incident rendering this a viable solution.

**Source:** *BUFORA Journal* Vol 6. No. 3 1977 (pp 15-30) Randles, J May Day! May Day! *Fortean Times* 419 June 2022 (pp27).

On the **12 December 1977** at **Clifton Campville**, on the Staffordshire/Derbyshire border, four girls (all aged between eight or nine at the time) were playing in some fields by the side of the village. It was 16.30hrs and it had been a dullish day with scattered cloud and a light breeze, and evening was now falling, with a few stars already being

visible. One girl was on a pony, two were helping to walk it around and one was watching. One girl spotted an object coming towards them fairly fast from the Northwest. The "object" was almost overhead; at this juncture one girl fell over and the pony was reportedly in "severe distress", struggling to break free. The UFO was egg-shaped and white in colour, with a slight protrusion on the base, with two bands (red and blue, respectively); above these were three round "portholes". On top were two slowly pulsating lights (one red, one white) which were attached to "cylinders", while four curved dark legs projected from its underside. The "Egg" emitted a strange bee-like buzzing noise. The "object" subsequently made a 'U' turn before heading off in the direction it originated, passing by at an estimated height of about 60-70 feet (18-21 metres). It then "fluttered down", like a leaf caught in a breeze, its motion interpreted as manoeuvring for a landing in the nearby woods. But within a couple of seconds the object reportedly reappeared from the depths of the woods and streaked away at a steep angle.

**Sources:** *BUFORA Bulletin* Vol. 9 No.1  
(pp19- 20) *Flying Saucer Review* Vol. 26  
No. 4 (1980) Case designated in UFOIN case  
archives as "No. 7746 The Lullington Wood  
Encounter."

On the **1st January 1978** at **00:05hrs** at **Chatham, Kent** a resident was awoken by a humming noise; she then awoke her mother and went to a nearby window. Doing so they saw a silvery grey domed disc with windows, which was seemingly the source of the humming noise. A "door" on the side of this hovering object opened and 5 small yellowish "discs" came out and flew away from the main form, leaving "trails".

Investigated by: J. Castle      **Source:** *BUFORA Journal* Vol 7  
No 3.

On **March 17<sup>th</sup> 1978 at 11:30 hrs** a service engineer (Ken Edwards) was driving home from a trade union meeting, passing through **Risley** (now part of the new town of Birchwood) in **Warrington, Northern England**. Near the UKAEA (UK atomic energy agency) research institute then based there, Edwards saw a gigantic, stooped figure attired in a silver outfit; walking in a stiff gait with its arms sticking out from its chest. It was then seen to pause at the end of the road. Thereafter, narrow beams of light were reputedly emitted from the entities' eyes at Edwards, who claimed to have felt dizzy and experience sensations of "pressure". The entity was then seen to walk down a hill and then seemingly pass through the research institute's fence. He then recovered and discovered his radio transceiver was no longer working. Thereafter he drove out of view of the event locus. On returning home, Edwards reported this event to the local police who - along with security personnel from the atomic institute - searched the area but found nothing.

This case was considered anomalous for several decades until the case was researched by Glen Vaudrey. He discovered that an employee (of tall stature) then working at the nearby fire-station had reportedly borrowed a silver heat-resistant suit from the station, to play a prank on students staying at the sleep research institute. Failing to elicit any response from them, he crossed the road to return to the fire station. It was there he encountered Ken Edwards in his car. The suit was very cumbersome, notably impeding the prankster's locomotion. As Edward's car illuminated the suit, this attire reflected the lights back at the driver, giving the impression of "laser beams". Unaware

of the distress he had caused Edwards the fireman walked back to the station - passing through a partially open gate (which from Edward's perspective looked as if the "figure" had spectrally walked through it). The fireman never confessed to the hoax at the time due to fear of disciplinary action. The hoaxer was inspired to enact this prank in part due to numerous stories of UFOs being run in local newspapers at the time. Ken Edwards died in 1986; while the atomic institute, the fire station and the sleep laboratory was demolished several decades back when the zone was redeveloped. Another example of a seemingly anomalous event with a prosaic solution and one that, while having no actual connection to UFOs, became associated with them; the figure interpreted as a space-suited "alien" due to depictions of similar entities in contemporary science fiction.

**Sources:** Randles J. and Whetnall, P; Entity Encounter at Risley; *Flying Saucer review* Vol. 24 No. 2 1978; Vaudrey, G; Atomic Age Alien? Solving the Risley Silver Man Mystery *Fortean Times* Issue 397 (pp 37-40); ASSAP webinar with Vaudrey, G 'The Risley Silver Man' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcYFety-gXc>

On the night of **1<sup>st</sup> September 1978**, **Llanerchymedd** (north Anglesey, Wales) became the focus of perceived anomalous manifestations for several hours. At **20:30hrs** two women noted the sky had assumed a reddish tinge and observed a single, roughly circular cloud, black on the bottom and white on top that persisted for around half an hour. An odd light was then seen at around 20:00hrs by several observers in the Eastern sky. Two witnesses then observed it ascending with one stating it resolved into a vertically-orientated "bullet" with two protrusions. Two observers then reported seeing a number of greyish coverall-clad tall figures; one account states one raised their hands above

their heads and waved their arms side to side but didn't respond when the same gesture was reciprocated. Other activity was reported by others, from bizarre sounds and reports of UFOs which persisted until all activity seemingly ended at around 23:00hrs. The sighting was followed by several days of intense military activity in the region. This event is notable for the large number of observers involved (at least 20 or so, ranging from adults of both sexes including two policemen and children. A site investigation uncovered no unusual ground traces and all the nearby military bases denied responsibility for the anomalous events. However, one UFO society who investigated the event (Federation UFO Research) suspected the various events that night was indeed explicable in those terms, having discovered - contrary to official denials – numerous reports of military activity occurring around the time of the various UFO manifestations. **Source:** *BUFORA Journal* Vol. 8, No. 1; *Flying Saucer Review* Vol. 25 No. 5, 1980.

At 17:15hrs, Elise Oakensen (then head of a teacher's centre located in **Daventry**) was driving home from work on the evening of the **22 November 1978**. At around **17:15hrs** she observed what she interpreted as the lights of an aircraft. But as Oakensen drove "under" them she noted they were stationary and fairly low in the sky, and that these red and green lights were attached to the left and right ends, respectively, of an apparent dumbbell shaped "object". Oakensen looked back as she drove through **Church Stowe**, noting that the "dumbbell" was still visible. At this juncture her car engine seemed to lose power and slow down, but its lights remained on. Her recollection of events after this was intermittent – the car and its engine being off and her being in darkness on her next recollection. She then recalled strobe-like lights moving in a semi-circle around the car and perceiving a piercing noise for around

half a minute before the lights shot off into the sky. Her next recollection was of driving her car and arriving home - to discover she could not account for 10 minutes of her journey. On reporting her case to BUFORA, hypnotic regression was suggested to recover this apparent period of "missing time". While this was enacted little of any consequence was discovered, the session ended due to the distress exhibited by Mrs. Oakensen during the session. The witness is now sadly deceased.

**Sources:** Oakensen E *One Step Beyond* Regency Press 1995; Northern UFO News 63, Aug 1979; BUFORA Journal Vol. 8, No. 2 (pp15-17); The Daventry Event; a personal perspective *BUFORA Bulletin (2) No. 9 1999* (pp 6-13).

At around **17:10 hrs** on the **31<sup>st</sup> December 1978** there were numerous sightings throughout the **British Isles**, describing either "an aircraft or fire", a "lit railway carriage" or a "cigar" shaped object with luminous windows emitting sparks and a trail. Most (but not all) stated the UFO travelled from West to East and it being visible for up to several minutes. It was quickly discovered that the expended rocket booster from **Cosmos 1068** (a Soviet spy satellite) had re-entered the atmosphere over Europe at that time. The descriptions are classic examples of the so-called "**airship effect**" noted by W. K. Hartman in the late 1960s; whereby lumps of burning debris are interconnected by cognitive processes into the "lights" of a darkened flying object. Some UFO researchers at the time disputed this evaluation, citing apparent discrepancies such as durations and directions of travel inconsistent with that of *COSMOS 1068*. It was speculated (in all seriousness) that alien UFOs had used the re-entry event as a cover for their own activities in Earth's skies! Today, it is accepted that estimations of duration, heights and courses, especially from civilian observers are often erroneous (and ideally

need to be assessed by investigators), explaining these differences. The descriptions are all consistent with this explanation; portions of the re-entry body breaking away from the rocket stage and glowing due to atmospheric friction; creating the illusion of an elongated dark body with luminous windows.

**Source:** BUFORA BULLETIN Vol. 10 No 1 February 1981 (pp11-21) *n.b:* while the intent of article is to “demonstrate” event was anomalous ironically it does the opposite!

On **February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1979 18:45hrs**; two 14-year-old girls were snow-sledding on a valley side at **Meanwood, West Yorkshire**, when they saw green and red lights above their heads emitting a loud whine. These lights subsequently travelled downwards following a spiral course - then ceasing this mode of motion to promptly land approx. 30 feet from the witnesses. At this juncture the form was described as resembling a grey lens with small fins on its underside; the noise emitted by the object changing from a whine to a humming noise. The girls then ran from the object to watch it from a safer distance. It remained on the ground for about 4-5 minutes and then took off again; initially heading towards the girls but then retreating away in an arc, to once again land a short distance away. It remained grounded for about a minute, then ascended, wobbling, and then rapidly vanishing from view. A later examination of the sighting locus found two “E” shaped depressions and blackened stones in the approximate area where the object had reputedly landed. An analysis conducted by Leeds University on a soil sample from this locus found traces of fertilizers, metals, coalite and carbon residue.

**Source:** Northern Ufology July 1979 (pp11); Randles J UFO Study Robert Hale 1980 (p247); Mantel P *UFO Landings* UK Flying Disc Books 2022.

On the **9<sup>th</sup> November 1979** at **Livingston, Scotland**, Robert Taylor (then a sixty-one-year old forestry worker) was patrolling an area of woodland in this vicinity. He had driven his van to the edge of this locus to check for stray animals. He continued on foot, with his dog (a Red Setter called "Lara"). Taylor turned into a clearing - and encountered a dome shaped object just above the ground; it was about twenty feet wide with a dull grey metallic colour. It had a rim near the base from which projected what resembled several vertical "antennae" or "propellers". Portions of the object became intermittently transparent through which Taylor could see the background landscape. Two 1-foot diameter grey spheroids then seemed to issue forth from the "dome", rolling towards him. These had projecting spikes which made a sucking sound as if being pushed into wet earth. These "spheroids" surrounded Taylor; who then felt a tugging on his legs and noted a foul gaseous sensation. He then collapsed unconscious, face forward onto the ground. When he regained consciousness a few minutes later he found his dog by his side, but the dome and spheroids were gone. Unable to stand, he dragged himself towards the van, and then attempted to radio his base for help, but he could not speak. Following an unsuccessful attempt to drive away the witness made his way home (somewhat arduously) on foot.

On finally reaching his abode Taylor found himself to be thirsty and could still taste the smell he perceived during the encounter. A visitor from the local medical centre subsequently visited him at home. A graze on his chin and one on each thigh was noted; but blood pressure and

nervous system tests found nothing of note. An ambulance took Taylor to hospital (for x-rays) but he discharged himself after being kept waiting for several hours.

On examining his thick police-issue trousers, two ripped sections were discovered, in the form of one upwards tare on each hip. This was consistent with the way the “spheres” had grasped Taylor. A series of traces were subsequently found at the event locus. These consisted of a circular area with a stepladder like mark on each side. According to one account “drag marks” were found here Taylor had fallen; consistent with him being pulled forward by the “spheroids”. Finally, between these two traces were about twenty or thirty holes consistent with the possibility they were made by the spikes projecting from the spheroids. Soil samples were taken but were damaged (and hence contaminated) in transit. Nonetheless, basic chemical analysis and examination for elevated radiation levels found nothing significant.

To date, no definitive solution has been found for this event. Suggested explanations include an encounter with “ball lightning”, a mistaken water tank, an hallucinatory experience (either a *petit mal* or induced via exposure to deadly nightshade), an encounter with a bomb disposal robot, or a superior mirage of Venus and other adjacent celestial bodies.

**Sources:** Campbell, S. (1980) Close Encounter in Scotland *JTAP Vol 1 No 2* (pp43-46); Campbell, S. (1982) UFO Encounter at Livingstone BUFORA Ltd; Livingstone BUFORA Ltd; Keatman M and Collins A (1979) Physical Assault by unidentified objects at Livingston; *FSR Vol 25 No 6* (Part 1: pp2-pp7) *Part 2: Vol 26 no. 1; Part 3; Vol 26 No 3*. Campbell, S Livingston a new hypothesis *JTAP Vol. 4 No 3* (pp80-87).

## 5: Abductions, Skycrashes, Crop Circles and Flying Triangles; British UFOs 1980-1989

Charles Bowen, editor of *Flying Saucer Review* since the 60's and 70's, stood down from the magazine in 1981 due to ill health. He was succeeded by Gordon Creighton, who, on assuming editorship was less unwilling to fund UFOIN, while UFOIN itself was unhappy with the direction Creighton was taking the magazine. As a consequence, Jenny Randles and the majority of UFOIN investigators merged with BUFORA in 1982. At around this time certain ex-UFOIN members became involved in *Psychic Questing*; an activity involving the acquisition of supposed mystical artefacts, which reportedly brought them into conflict with various supernatural entities and sorcerers. Later still, some of these same psychic questers became influential figures in "alternative" archaeology. ASSAP (established in 1981 due to a conceptual rift with the SPR) was significantly influenced by the psychic questing movement during this era.

In 1981 Shirley Mclver conducted a PhD study of BUFORA's membership and their views for the University of York; until that date such research had only assessed contactee type societies and UFO cults. Concluded in 1984, her research indicated the average BUFORA member was typically lower middle class to middle-class, male, single, and aged 20-40. They also had a long-term interest of UFOs triggered by books or other media, and felt they were either extraterrestrial or unknown natural phenomena. While generally not religious they tended to believe in an afterlife and be interested in parapsychology (Mclver. S. *A sociological study of*

*unidentified flying object groups* PhD Thesis University of York 1984).

As a consequence of the BUFORA/UFOIN merger the *Code of Practice for UFO Investigators* (drafted in 1981) established an ethical framework for researchers. This was generally followed by investigators affiliated with BUFORA; one (Steuart Campbell) considered the document poorly drafted and so created his own – being suspended from investigating cases for BUFORA for his pains.

The Rendlesham Forest incident dominated British Ufology throughout this decade; it's widely believed evidential nature emboldening advocates of the ETH (extraterrestrial hypothesis). That this theory was popular with mainstream media (who truly only believed in its ability to sell copy and books) also did this ideology no harm. YUFOS (the Yorkshire UFO Society) founded in 1982 strongly endorsed the ETH and promoted interest in unconventional aircraft, purported secret projects and the supposed official cover-up of UFOs. Nonetheless, the psycho-social school persisted and critiqued what it saw as a faddish credulity running rampant through the subject. Rendlesham and the Cracoe Fell incident (see below) became conceptual battlegrounds for both factions during this era.

A resurgence of interest in abduction claims was instigated in 1981 by the publication of the US book *Intruders* by Budd Hopkins, and later by Whitley Strieber's *Communion* in 1987. In 1988 BUFORA began its moratorium on using hypnosis in relation to instances of so-called "missing time", usually to recover details of suspected UFO abductions. While a number of British researchers ignored this, many also adhered to it, establishing a distinctive British approach regarding such cases. The first reputed observations of

“Flying Triangles” (large triangular shaped forms with many of the flight attributes of UFOs) occurred in Belgium in 1989 and shortly afterwards the UK was eventually host to comparable observations.

The first modern crop circle was discovered in **May 1980 at Westbury Wiltshire**. It should be noted that there were similar, earlier events; from the “Mowing Devil” described in a 1692 pamphlet to the grass circles found at Evanlode in June 1960. At this time, they manifested as simple depressed, swirled circular impressions (or configurations of same). Due to this the first instances were ascribed to a hypothetical form of stationary whirlwind. They increased in frequency throughout the decade, consuming the time of numerous UFO researchers and those who specialised in them; the latter being dubbed **Cerealogists**.

### The Oz Factor

The Oz Factor is a term coined by UFO researcher Jenny Randles in the early 1980s to define an "aura of unreality" reported by some witnesses prior and during a claimed UFO manifestation. This includes a succession of noise, instances of slowed or missing time and/or senses of unease or “presence”. It is also applied to cases where only a few participants observe a spectacular UFO in an otherwise highly populated area. Such unusual perceptions cease, and the environment returns to normal once the suspected UFO has left the vicinity. Oz Factor sensations only tend to be reported in association with a close approach of a suspected UFO.

**Source:** Randles, J. UFO Reality (Robert Hale (1983))pp 93-101.

**Sources:** Clarke D and Roberts A *Phantoms of the Sky* (Robert Hale (1990); Spencer J and Evans J *UFOS 1947-1987* (Fortean Tomes (1987)); Butler, Brenda, Street, Dot and Randles Jenny *Skycrash A Cosmic Conspiracy* (Neville Spearman (1984)); Fowler, O *The Flying Triangle Mystery* (Phenomena Research ("Grey" literature 1996)); Keatman M & Phillip, G *The Green Stone* (Neville Spearman (1979)) & *The Eye of Fire* Harper-Collins (1988, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition); 1980; Randles J and Fuller, P. *Controversy of the Circles* (BUFORA Ltd, 1989)).

### Some Example 1980's Era Case Studies:

At **Todmorden, North Yorkshire, 05:05hrs** on the **29 November 1980** a police constable called Alan Godfrey was finishing his shift, first driving to the town centre and then making one last attempt to find some stray cattle. Just 100 yards into his progress he observed a bright light in the road ahead of him. Godfrey at first assumed this was a bus taking shift workers to the mill but discovered (when around 100 yards away from it) it was not the bus. He observed what Godfrey interpreted to be a very low-level metallic but florescent bowl-shaped object which was an estimated 20x14 ft in size (in aspect akin to a child's spinning top). The lower section rotated, while the upper portion had a number of dark rectangular windows, while trees and bushes near the "bowl" appeared to shake. The witness made a failed attempt to contact his station via his car radio, and then attempted to sketch the form before him. Godfrey's next recollection was of finding himself a further 100 yards from the road. After collecting a colleague from the town centre, he returned to the sighting locus. It was at this juncture the time was noted; 04:53hrs, suggesting some considerable time had elapsed since observing the

bowl. Godfrey officially reported the observation to his police headquarters, who subsequently released details of the event to the local media. A local UFO group (MUFORA) on investigating the incident discovered a possible instance of **Missing Time**; Godfrey being unable to account for some 15 minutes of his time following his observation of the bowl.

In the summer of 1981 MUFORA decided to use hypnosis in an attempt to “recover” the details of this missing interval. Two sessions of hypnotic regression generated an account of Godfrey being taken aboard the UFO and encountering a tall robed bearded entity wearing a skullcap who stated his name was “Yousef”. This entity was accompanied by entities described as “robots”. During this encounter Godfrey was placed on a “bed” or “table” and examined, with “bracelets” being placed on his wrists. Several odd details surfaced in the narrative - Godfrey stated he saw a black dog prior to him being led to the examination table and that he noted the UFO’s floor was “carpeted”. However, a full chronological narrative of the “abduction” could not be “recovered”.

It is believed the regional Superintendent submitted a report of Godfrey’s sighting to the MoD, but no trace could not be located when a formal request to then was made several decades later by David Clarke.

Jenny Randles has speculated the UFO could have been a **Plasma Vortex**, a hypothetical “UAP” type natural phenomenon related to tornadoes and whirlwinds. A desktop study of this case was enacted by Peter Brookesmith, David Clarke and Andy Roberts in 2010-11. This concluded that the UFO could have been a bus, misperceived as a UFO with windows. They also note the

presence of a Futuro house at Todmorden at the time of the sighting; a novel saucer shaped house which superficially resembled the Godfrey UFO. They also suggested the “missing time” may have been due to a *petit mal* (i.e. a transitory epileptic fit). While another sighting of a blue UFO was considered as an additional observation of Godfrey’s UFO, it was subsequently found to have occurred several days before his experience. The abduction account contains elements potentially inspired by Science Fiction TV programmes broadcast at the time; the robots from a show called “Buck Rogers in the 25<sup>th</sup> century”, the bracelets from another called “Blakes Seven”. This, combined with the “carpet” and the “dog(s)” also reputedly perceived as being seen inside the UFO suggest the hypnotic regression sessions may have generated a fantasy narrative, which it has done in many other instances (within and outside of “Ufology”). Alan Godfrey himself rejects these suggestions, maintaining he had an authentic UFO sighting and contact experience.

**Sources:** Randles J *The Pennine UFO Mystery* (Panther (1983)); Clarke. D; Roberts A & Brookesmith P A Policeman’s lot... *Fortean Times part 1 (397) & Part 2 (398)*; Godfrey, A *Who or What were They* (CMP Digital Press (2017)); DEFE 24/2032/1(8) The National Archives .

**Rendlesham Forest**, near the village of **Rendlesham, Suffolk** became the focus for various rumours suggesting that, between the **26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> December 1980**, a major UFO event had occurred near the adjacent Woodbridge Airforce Base. At this time the American *81<sup>st</sup> Tactical Fighter wing* and the *67th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron* were based there. Accounts of this initially surfaced as a series of rumoured UFOs encounters involving serving USAF personnel. Many were known only by aliases for a considerable period of time; their actual names being

gradually disclosed from the mid-1980s onwards following their retirement from the American Airforce. Rendlesham Forest is largely plantation woodland, adjacent to the (now defunct) twin airbase complexes of Woodbridge and Bentwaters allocated to the USAF during the Cold War.

Around **0300hrs** on the **26<sup>th</sup> December 1980**, base personnel observed an “unusual light” from the East gate at Woodbridge AFB, which seemed to land (or crash) into the woods. An airbase security detail entered the forest to investigate. One source (a memo written by Col Halt on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 1981) states they encountered

*“a strange glowing object... metallic in appearance and triangular in shape, approximately two to three meters across the base and approximately two meters high. It illuminated the entire forest with a white light. The object ...had a pulsing red light on top and a bank(s) of blue lights underneath.... hovering or on legs”.*

The UFO reportedly evaded its observers, and “*manoeuvred through the trees and disappeared*”.

This so-called *Halt Memo* further claims that “*animals on a nearby farm went into a frenzy*” and the “*object was briefly sighted again approximately an hour later near the back gate.*” A triangular configuration of ground marks interpreted as “pad” impressions “*1.5 inches deep and 7 inches in diameter*” were found “*the next day*”, located around 3.21 km from the airbase’s East gate. The local police also saw these marks, but concluded they were made by local fauna, probably rabbits.

The second incident (occurring early morning on the **28<sup>th</sup> December 1980**) resulted as a consequence of Col. Charles Halt entering the forest with a group of airbase personnel to investigate additional rumoured sightings of mystery lights as well as the 26<sup>th</sup> December landing traces, which were checked with a Geiger counter. Halt discovered the ground traces were associated with elevated radiation readings. (Subsequent expert examination, however, indicates the readings were only marginally significant and attributable to sources such as local geology and the surrounding pine trees).

Halt and his company then observed various unusual lights for around three hours. The most notable was a bright light compared by Halt to a “winking eye”. These events were intermittently noted by Halt on a hand tape recorder, resulting in an audio recording of around 18 minutes in length. This, in addition to the 13<sup>th</sup> January 1980 *Halt Memo* represents the main documentation associated with this account – unfortunately on this Col. (later Lt. Col.) Halt incorrectly cites the date of both the primary and secondary events.

The Rendlesham Forest incident has, since the mid-1980s, become Britain’s best known UFO case, and incidentally reinforced belief in the extraterrestrial hypothesis (ETH) among researchers (both in Britain and globally). Nonetheless other solutions to these events in late December 1980 should be considered, and in fact appear viable in at least some instances. The events on the first night are potentially explicable due to the airmen seeing a fireball meteor, known to have occurred at 03:10hrs that morning. This was initially rejected as it was inconsistent with the cited date of the initial incident on the Halt Memo. Subsequent research, however, uncovered a police log that

indicated they both occurred on the same day. It is also possible that any unaware observer going into the woods looking for a crashed object might have startled by the (then active) Orford Ness lighthouse, mistaking it for a UFO. Damage to the tree canopy found later and attributed to the UFO seen during the first night is explicable in terms of forest agency harvesting timbers from the forest. Likewise, the lights encountered by Col. Halt and his men seen during the second incident are also explicable as Orford Ness Lighthouse (the pulse rate of Halt's "winking eye" and its beacon matching exactly). But details mentioned later – the close encounter with the "pyramid" on the first night (not fully disclosed at the time, one witness claims, due to fear of official censure) and cardinal compass points given for the lights observed on the second night contradict what would otherwise be sound and reasonable solutions. The Rendlesham incident highlights the weaknesses of eye-witness testimony; that any sighting-account statement (regardless of source) are not concrete artefacts and are potentially malleable due to poor memory and other human foibles. One's attitude to the Rendlesham affair largely depends on your faith in the statements made by its participants. The fact it almost exclusively involved American servicemen explains its current dominance; engaging both MUFON (the world's largest UFO society, based in the US) and the affluent, content-hungry media outlets that exists on that continent.

**Sources:** DEFE 24/1512 The National Archives; Randles, J. Military Contact alleged at air base; *FSR Vol v27 n 6 1982*; *Randles J. The Rendlesham Forest Mystery FSR V27 N6 1982*; Randles J. *More about the adventures of a very peculiar lighthouse FSR V29 N6 1984*; Butler, Brenda, Street, Dot and Randles Jenny *Skycrash A Cosmic Conspiracy* (Neville Spearman (1984)); Randles, J. *UFO Crash Landing:*

*friend or foe?* (Blandford (1998)); Randles, J , Roberts A, and Clarke D. *The UFOs that never were* (London Books (2000)) pp 164-222; Moore, R *The Rendlesham Forest Incident; an overview Anomaly* (ASSAP) 2011 (pp63-72).

**Cracoe Fell** is a 507 metres high gritstone outcrop located in moorland, located 1.5 South East of the village of Cracoe, North Yorkshire. At **10:55 hrs** on the **16<sup>th</sup> March 1981** from the kitchen window of a police house overlooking the 'fell, the wife of PC Steve Guest observed a line of 5 bright magnesium-coloured spheres hovering at the top of this feature, possibly attached a structure (something later described as a "fin"). Her husband and a guest (another policeman) eventually joined Mrs. Guest to observe the light sources up to 11:55hrs, after which it fluctuated in brightness and vanished suddenly. During this observation the lights were observed through binoculars and six photographs were taken. It later transpired that a couple driving through the area observed 3 shining spheres on the fell at around 15:45hrs which they also believed was attached to a structure. The police house photographs were assessed by four separate individuals; all concluded that they were authentic, with one even positing that the lights were attached to an Adamski-type saucer. There were however doubts expressed from the event's inception. One local resident, a farmer said the UFO was created by sunlight reflecting off the gritstone fell, but this suggested explanation was mostly overlooked.

In 1983 the Cracoe Fell images received national and local media exposure, elevating this event's importance in the canon of British UFO incidents. Controversy erupted between the promoters of the case (a group called YUFOS) and another local group (WYUFORG) along with BUFORA regarding the identity of the Cracoe light(s). YUFOS

considered the sighting (and the pictures) as being caused by a true UFO, while WYUFORG and BUFORA concluded the lights were just a reflection. Several researchers visited the locus and found that Cracoe Fell was indeed highly reflective and could generate such an image when lighting conditions and the sun's orientation was correct. One researcher, Andy Roberts, photographed this effect and demonstrated it closely resembled the original Cracoe UFO images. A later analysis by BUFORA inferred Robert's later image depicted virtually the same effect as depicted in the 1981 photographs. Therefore the reflection theory for the UFO image is now generally accepted and the case along with the controversy it created is now mostly forgotten.

**Sources:** Clarke D and Roberts A *Phantoms of the Sky Robert* (Robert Hale (1990)). pp 73-77.

Clarke D, Randles J and Roberts A *The UFOs that never were.* (London House (2000)) pp 94-110.

On the **4<sup>th</sup> October 1981, 19:55 hrs at Hollington, Hastings East Sussex** a woman watching TV felt "compelled" to go her kitchen window. Doing so she observed a large stationary yellow object in the sky that wobbled like "two blobs of golden jelly". On observing this she called her son to the window. Although by that juncture the form had vanished it reappeared some 10 minutes later. As they observed it changed shape repeatedly, into a vertical cigar, then into 2 golden "dinner plates" and then a "crescent". On several instances during the sighting this manifestation seemed to "emit smoke" to hide from approaching aircraft. Cloud veiled the object once again, but it appeared again in form of a bright red disc on the horizon, then as (a short while after) a gold and then orange luminance with "structural features" and "lights". It vanished finally from view at around 21:00hrs. A few bizarre events occurred thereafter. Strange characters appeared on the witnesses'

TV screen, and she suffered from a persistent headache. The claimant further alleged she experienced a fourteen hour long blackout; interpreted as possibly indicating an “alien contact” experience (the witness having previously read of the Alan Godfrey case).

The case investigator, Philip Taylor, discovered that, at the time and date of this incident, the Moon (at 3 quarter phase) was visible in the sky, in the same portion of sky as the UFO. Furthermore, the Moon set at 21:00 hrs; the same time the UFO vanished. Taylor postulated that a combination of low and high altitude cloud distorted the moon, causing it to be interpreted as a UFO that “produced smoke” and “changed shaped”. The “UFO’s” change of colour from red to orange was likely due to the moon being distorted by atmospheric refraction, which especially affects astronomical bodies at low elevation. This case demonstrates that events involving detected misperceptions of prosaic objects and phenomena can be highly complex and be less than obvious in context. It further hints at the influences of cultural beliefs propagated by the media can shape both the perception and conception of observers. Investigator: Philip Taylor **Source:** PROBE REPORT: Vol 3 Issue 1 (July 1982).

At **Clapton, Somerset** on the **9<sup>th</sup> June 1982** (as dusk was falling) three farm labourers were finishing haymaking at around **21:15 hrs** when they observed a bright pinkish-red “ball” heading towards them from the North East. This form was an estimated 1.6 km distance from the observers and around 200 feet off the ground (investigators later acquiring an angular height estimate of 25°). They ran towards the form for about 90 metres and then stopped... the ball then perceived to slowly lose altitude, dropping behind a tree. The form was an estimated 8 km distance

away by this juncture. A few seconds later the ball reappeared behind the tree, before promptly “dipping” down from view. Nothing further was seen thereafter, other than a light flashing from behind the tree for around 10 minutes. One witness revisited the site 10 minutes later and found the flashing light to be still present, observing it for an additional 5 minutes before going home. On returning to their employers farm they asked the other farming labourers working there if they had observed it but they hadn’t (and treated the incident as a joke). However, the labourer’s employer had indeed observed a reddish ball, seemingly moving due East from the vantage point of his farm. The sighting had a duration of around 25 minutes.

After assessing various possible explanations, it was decided that a **superior mirage** offered the most probable solution. The weather conditions were conducive; being warm (around 21c), clear and calm with the event occurring just before sunset. This may have resulted in some ground-light source being distorted and elevated by **an inversion layer**. As the effect lessened in intensity the ball seemingly dropped to the horizon. The inversion then temporally re-asserted itself, causing the ball to seemingly rise and “hover” before dropping to ground level. The inversion may have persisted to a lesser extent thereafter, explaining the flashing light that was observed for up to half an hour at the final sighting locus. While not a conclusive explanation, the mirage theory does account for much of the claimed observation.

**Source:** *Clapton Jun 6 1982* case file (“grey” literature-BUFORA and author’s archives, 1984, 2022); Moore, R *The Clapton Event BUFORA Bulletin No. 23* (Nov 1986).

At **02:00hrs BST** on the **12<sup>th</sup> September 1982** at **Radstock, Wiltshire** a retired 57-year-old man went outdoors to put

stale bread out for the birds. While doing so he observed a static, flickering creamy-coloured light in the sky, with an estimated angular height of approx. 30°. He compared it, in brightness and appearance, to an aircraft running light; it was initially observed for 5 minutes, the light remaining stationary throughout the sighting. The witness terminated his viewing of the light by returning indoors. Half an hour later he went outside again – and discovered the light was still visible, in the same position that it was last observed. The witness viewed it for a further five minutes; the light retaining its static aspect. In a letter to investigators the witness speculated it could have been an experimental flare being tested over Salisbury Plain...

Such cases are typical of **LITS** (*Lights in the Sky*); markedly unspectacular observations that comprise the vast majority of any UFO report sample. In most instances, they can be easily explained often as misperceptions of astronomical bodies. As also proved the case in this instance; subsequent investigation discovered that while no bright planets were visible at the time, the first magnitude star Capella was in that general part of the sky at roughly the angular height cited by the witness. Its aspect also only changed by a few degrees between 0200-0230 hrs. Although the observer gave a wide estimation in regard to the light's cardinal bearing, a simple drawing he provided indicated its orientation is consistent with the orientation of Capella at that time (i.e., to his far left or due Northeast). When assessing UFO reports it is important to recall that people are extremely poor at estimating factors such as height and compass orientation, especially without easy reference points or technical aids. Duration is also poorly estimated without direct recourse to a watch or similar time-keeping device.

*Source: Radstock, Wiltshire 12 Sep 1982 ("grey" literature/author's files)*

**6<sup>th</sup> July 1984 at 21:45hrs BST** a 10-year-old child playing in his houses' back garden at **Hinkley, Staffs** observed a silvery object in the sky, rapidly approaching him from the North North East with an angular elevation of approx. 20°-25°. It moved to a bearing of South-Southeast and - when virtually above him - the object then seemed to hover. At that juncture he called his father from upstairs to come and look at the UFO. Both his father and mother came out to view the form. At this point (when viewed both with the naked eye and through binoculars) it was found to resemble a silver tyre with a turquoise-coloured light in its centre, a portion of the tyre reflecting the setting sun. This object then turned and enacted an unusual circular motion before moving away, then hovering for a while before disappearing from view behind some trees. The sighting lasted for an estimated 1 minute and 45 seconds; the tyre was estimated (at its closest) to have an angular size comparable to a 1 pence piece held at arms-length. A subsequent investigation found no evidence of any air traffic in the area. Weather was warm (around 27° C) and with a 1 mph wind. The investigation could find no obvious solution but considered the possibility the event was instigated by a saucer-shaped toy balloon. However, the very low wind speed combined with the observed motions of the tyre. render this explanation questionable. While the main adult witness was a ufologist, he had a good reputation for objectivity. **Investigator:** Clive Potter

**Source:** Potter, C. Observation of a metallic saucer shaped object by multiple witnesses at Hinkley, Leicestershire *BUFORA BULLETIN* No. 21 (May 1986) pp29-36.

At **20:40-20:45 hrs** GMT on the **19 May 1985** a 43-year-old man walking in the Lowtherville region of Ventnor, Isle of Wight (and overlooking the English Channel) observed a “yellow flare” coming from the sea, due Southeast, and orientated at a low elevation. This form was seen to gradually ascend and then decrease its altitude before hovering for half a minute. By this juncture it was perceived as a black discus around 8ft across with a flange about its centre. It further had two florescent blurred lights on its upper portion and a yellowish glow around its rim. The discus continued moving in a Northwesterly direction; its course incidentally brining it relatively close to the observer - who by that juncture perceived it making a “shisshing” noise. As it moved the form was obscured by a hedge; while the witness hurried to this point, he was unable to catch sight of it again. Its speed was estimated to be around 30-60 kph and the incident had a duration of around three minutes. With regards to weather, it was dry but totally overcast with virtually no wind.

This event is notable for several reasons. The case’s investigator (Paul Fuller) concluded the UFO what is today termed a **UAV** (or *Unmanned Aerial Vehicle*). He discovered – via an enquiry to the police - that the Navy had been conducting tests involving a helicopter and two RADAR stations in the vicinity. He thus suspected the discus was a UAV used in this test. Fuller subsequently wrote to the MoD, asking if this was indeed the case, but gained no definitive reply from them in this regard. Two decades later, when Freedom of Information Act legislation enabled the release of (surviving) government records relating to UFOs, the internal correspondence relating to Fuller’s enquiry was located. It implied the officials contacted (at least) had no knowledge of an UAV being used that evening. The case is also notable because of a protracted argument

between Fuller and another researcher (Steuart Campbell) as to whether the UFO was a mirage of Saturn. Fuller considered this unlikely, due to object's wide-angle of motion and the sky being overcast during the sighting. **Source:** Fuller, P (1985) *The Lowtherville Incident* BUFORA case file (AFU); *The UFO World*,1986,(1987,p18).

**At Horsham, East Sussex, 16:06hrs 15<sup>th</sup> July 1985** a 19-year-old male witnessed from his abode a spherical object with a greyish flange a quarter of the way from its bottom. The sphere's surface was described as resembling "highly polished silver metal". The form seemed to emit a throbbing sound, which ceased before it was lost to view. It moved in an arc, from bearings 330 ° (Northwest) to 260° (Southwest) at an estimated constant angular height of 30° and at an estimated distance of around half a mile away. The sphere was observed for around 4 minutes, the observation terminated by the form moving out of view.

The incident was reported to ATC/Dunsford Aerodrome, who subsequently passed it onto the Ministry of Defence (including its sub-departments Sec (AS) 2(air) and DI55). Nothing significant was noted on RADAR at the time the event took place. This account was unknown until it was found in declassified MoD documentation released in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, as a consequence of FOIA legislation. To date, the witness has never been traced or interviewed by civilian researchers (his identity redacted from the unclassified file version).

**Source:** DEFE 24/1923/1(3). The National Archives.

**At 21:15hrs GMT on the 10th October 1986**, at the village of **Musbury, Devon**, a Mr. A.B (then aged 63) and his wife were returning on foot from a harvest supper held earlier that evening. Whilst ascending a steep section of road at

the Eastern portion of Musbury, A.B observed a reddish light, situated at an angular height of  $21^\circ$  in the South-Eastern sky, over Musbury Castle (a hill fort). After about five seconds the light seemed to slowly approach the witnesses along a jerky line of-site path for ten seconds; then "stopping in mid-air". Its perceived shape at this juncture was of two stacked closely joined flattened spheroids; the upper sphere coloured reddish-orange, the lower reddish-white. This light had a constant brightness, was silent and appeared hazy; seemingly surrounded by a "luminous mist". At the form's apparent closest approach its angular size was estimated to be comparable to a half penny piece at arms' length. The form then terminated hovering, moving jerkily  $2-3^\circ$  to the right in a second; hovering again for an estimated 3 seconds before moving away to the South West. Duration was estimated to be 2 minutes, 45 seconds. The following morning A.B wrote up the incident and constructed a sighting-device, from which he deduced the light's magnetic cardinal bearings as being an initial  $121^\circ$  and a final  $122^\circ$ .

Two other observers, Mr & Mrs C.D, had arrived home on attending the same harvest supper as Mr & Mrs A.B. Mr. C.D (then in his mid-sixties) noticed a light in the South-eastern sky whilst parking their car, having an estimated angular height of  $45^\circ$ . The form appeared to be moving away, at this point resembling a ring of light, with miniature star-like lights around its edge. The form was either red or orange in hue and its size appeared to increase and decrease around every 7 seconds. It then altered its shape to a hazy figure-eight form, moving from the observers like "a child's sparkler... waved around". Estimated duration was 5- 10 minutes, ending by the light seemingly moving from view.

On studying A.B & C.D's sighting accounts, its investigator suspected a mirage-like effect could have been responsible. The form's perceived narrow, line-of-sight course, apparent decreases and increase in size, jerking "motion" and changes in shape seemed consistent with this supposition. The light's reported hue(s) are also typical of images distorted by refraction (i.e., reddish). The different colour of each spheroid is also consistent, caused by differing air-densities within an inversion layer. Weather data also appears conducive; the 10<sup>th</sup> October being warm (17°C) with a cold weather front then over S.E England.

The relevant astronomical objects then visible were Jupiter (SE, 32°), while Mars was in the S.W, (at an elevation 1°), the Moon was in the S.W, and 5° above the horizon at 1st quarter phase. The only relevant bright stars were Aldebaran (N.E, 10°), Capella (N.E, 26°) and Fomalhaut (S.E, 10°). Jupiter was not in the position cited by A.B; the investigator suspects he may have mistaken Aldebaran for this planet. While Jupiter was close to the UFO's orientation, its elevation seems too high to be distorted by an inversion layer. Portland Bill light house was another candidate (proposed by Stuart Campbell). This lies 48km at a bearing of 122° in relation to Musbury and is usually visible up to a distance of 46km under normal conditions. The "contractions" and "expansion" attributed to the UFO by C.D could have been due to flashes of the 'Bill's beacon. However, A.B does not report this. Also, neither refers to it disappearing for 15 second intervals (the 'Bills beacon eclipse rate). A military heliport (R.N Fost) is located on Portland Bill. Given some helicopters are fitted with a bright orange landing-light, it can be hypothesised that the UFO was actually caused by one such light, whose associated low-flying helicopter was subsequently distorted by a temperature inversion. A low-altitude airborne object

is also consistent with the various accounts stating the form “moved slowly away” and was no longer visible thereafter.

A similar event (occurring at Frodsham, Cheshire, 07:25hrs on the 29<sup>th</sup> December 1988) was subsequently discovered by the investigator; involving a young girl observing an orange-white star, which continuously changed shape from a dumbbell or "figure eight" to a star ball. It was observed for a few minutes before vanishing into a point of light. This incident was evaluated as an observation of Venus distorted by ice-crystals (Venus then being in the SE, 5 ° above the horizon).

**Investigator:** Robert Moore.

**Source:** Moore, R. The Musbury Incident (author’s files); *UFO TIMES* No. 33 Jan-Feb 1995 (pp11-12); Northern UFO News *Issue 136 (April 1989)*, pp 13; Stuart Campbell *The UFO Mystery explained* (Explicit Books (1988)).

On the **4<sup>th</sup> August 1988** at **Little Hayward, Staffordshire** at approx. **00:05 hrs** a man and his girlfriend were driving home from a meeting along the A513 road. On reaching a minor crossroads both noticed, 30 feet up by the side of the road, a diffused but “contained” fluorescent mist. This seemingly contained a solid circular or semi-saucer shaped object associated with a pulsating bright red light. This manifestation was estimated to be around 30 feet in diameter and eventually moved upwards, eventually being lost to view. The witnesses visited the site next day and found a 3.5-meter damaged section of hedge (uprooted, with pieces broken, scuffed, severed or stripped) below near where the form was seen. This was seen by other reliable observers and samples from the affected area were sent for analysis. The subsequent examination found no evidence of heat damage or other anomalies. The detailed investigation by several UFO societies that followed

concluded that the UFO could have been an exotic natural phenomenon, either generated by a nearby earth-fault or a luminous atmospheric vortex. The report on this event was submitted to the MoD and discovered batched together with other documents, when their UFO records were declassified in the 2010's .

**Sources:** DEFE 31-177 (50-64) The National Archives; Potter, C *UFO Damages Hedgerow* . *UFO TIMES* No. 6 March 1990. (pp21-24)

At **5<sup>th</sup> July 1989** 11:10hrs BST a taxi driver located on Gradmore Road, Blackpool, reported observing a red-orange coloured light to the Southwest, overflying a portion of the coastal Irish Sea visible from his location. This light moved rapidly and hovered, before moving away in a Northwest direction at fantastic speed. The light was swiftly followed by what was claimed to be a low-flying RAF Tornado fighter jet; moving rapidly in the light's direction with its wings in a swept back configuration. The witness further claimed to have seen smoke issuing from the aircraft's front, as if it had discharged a missile. Oddly, the observer perceived no noise either from the UFO or the aircraft and claimed an additional UFO sighting a week or so later. The Tornado jet could not be traced, and the case's investigator suspected certain aspects of the case indicated the event may have been hallucinatory in nature. **Source:** Dormer, J. *Glowing Object with Tornado in Pursuit* *UFO TIMES* No. 17 Spring 1997 (pp 9-11).

## 6: Fiction, disillusion, and the media; UFOs 1990-1999.

The broadcasting of the Si Fi/Horror serial *the X Files* from 1994 onwards on BBC1 and BBC2 generated a wave of

popular interest in UFOs which lasted for the remainder of that decade. The series' catchphrase "*The truth is out there*" has now become iconic and employed in media stories about UFOs even today. Exploiting this interest various newsstand publications on the topic appeared, endorsing a populist ETH view; the best informed of being a reiteration of YUFOS' journal *Quest* at that time renamed *UFO Magazine*. However, alas, by the decade's end all but UFO magazine had folded, and even that ceased publication by 2002. The influence of former MoD desk clerk (and later independent UFO researcher) Nick Pope from 1993-1995 enacted a greater degree of co-operation between Ufologists and the Ministry of Defence. Unfortunately, when he left his post in 1995 the "UFO Desk" reverted to its traditional haughty and dismissive aspect. A perusal of internal MoD documentation released under FOIA legislation indicates the defence establishment were critical of Pope's approach and his decision to publish a book describing his tenure.

With regard to the UFO reports of this era, a fashion for floating luminous paper balloons popularly termed *Chinese Lanterns* generated numerous UFO sightings during the latter part of the decade. Crop circle manifestations grew in increasing complexity during this time, resulting in the so-called *pictograms*. These would often take the form of a large circle with an elaborately patterned interior or an elongated aspect. This seemed to prove that some intelligence was behind them -- and indeed there was. In 1991 the artists Doug Bower and Dave Chorley publicly claimed to have invented the crop circles; it was also apparent by this juncture that several informal crop circle creation teams were active in the Hampshire and Wiltshire regions. This defined their nature for most people; the

majority thereafter deeming them to be human-made landscape art.

In 1994 an independent film producer called Ray Santilli exhibited footage he claimed showed an autopsy of alien bodies, recovered from the supposed July 1947 flying saucer crash at Roswell, New Mexico. Initially many UFO researchers were under the impression BUFORA was uncritically promoting the movie, with articles in their journal attacking anyone who questioned its authenticity. This resulted in a reverse of the Cracoe situation; with YUFOS/QUEST criticising and doubting the movie's authenticity. Critics further noted the tight control Santilli welded over exhibiting the movie at a BUFORA conference hosted in 1995. After the movie was shown doubts crept into even the minds of those (seemingly) promoting the footage and today – following a confession from its main creator – most now accept it is fraudulent.

BUFORA suffered from notable internal dissent during the late 1990s – first over the dismissal of Jenny Randles as its Director of Investigation, then a row over money being spent on the study of a claimed alien body from Israel (that subsequently turned out to be a frog). Further woes ensued regarding how the Santilli movie was handled by some members of BUFORA council culminating in a finally a major schism over the handling of the 1997 “Sheffield incident” (below). This controversy generated was informally termed “*the Tornado War*”, due to the importance some gave to an associated claimed UFO interception and an allegation that an ejected pilot was encountered on the moors, smelling of gasoline. This unfortunate combination resulted in BUFORA facing the coming century in a weakened state. It is notable that few outstanding UFO reports originate from this era. Looking back, it appears by the decade's end many long-

term researchers were disenchanting – either burned out by their involvement with the crop circle fiasco or by internal in-fighting...

**Sources:** Clarke, D and Roberts, A *The flying Saucerers* (2007); Pope, N *Open Skies, Closed Minds* (1995).

Schnabel, R *Around In Circles* (1999). Mantel, P *Alien Autopsy Exposed* (Flying Disc books (2018)).

### Some Example 1990's era Case Studies:

At **21:00hrs** on the **4<sup>th</sup> August 1990** two young men (claimed by various sources to be either chefs and/or poachers) located at the southern edge of the Cairngorms national park near **Calvine, Perthshire, Scotland** reputedly observed a diamond-shaped object hovering at a relatively low altitude. These claimants further stated they observed two military aircraft make repeated approaches towards this mystery object. The “diamond” persisted hovering for around 10 minutes, before ascending vertically upwards at speed. During the course of this event five colour non-digital format images were taken of the object. These were sent to the newspaper the *Scottish Daily Record*, who then duly submitted them to the RAF Press Officer at RAF Pitreavie Castle for assessment.

RAF Pitreavie subsequently performed an assessment of the photographs; concluding they were probably authentic, but the UFO may represent a potentially “sensitive” object (i.e. a possible experimental device). The aircraft depicted in the photographs were identified as Harriers but their origin could not be ascertained. The negatives were then reportedly returned to the *Scottish Daily Record* - although the newspaper states they never received them. The *Scottish Daily Record* never ran a feature on this incident,

leading to speculation that a D Notice was served on the newspaper. While a possible reference to this exists in a declassified document, the evidence that one was enacted remains inconclusive and has been formally denied by at least one commentator.

Knowledge of these pictures was first disclosed by Nick Pope in his book *Open Skies, Closed Minds*. In this work he states an enlarged copy of one image was hung on a wall in the Air Ministry, which was subsequently taken down by a senior member of staff (possibly over concerns it depicted a classified aircraft). Pope only knew at the time the image had been taken in Scotland sometime during the early 1990s. Other than two-line trace drawings in a redacted MoD file, no other copies of the Calvine photographs were known until 2022, until a retired RAF officer involved in the MoD assessment of this image passed a first generation copy of one image to UFO researcher and academic Dr. David Clarke. This was assessed by Sheffield Hallam University; who concluded the image depicts an object halfway between the fence post shown in the image and the Harrier aircraft, which seems not to have been placed there by any post-production method.

The unredacted version of the MoD file containing details of the Calvine incident (i.e. DEFE 24/1940) is closed until January 2076; due to the official ruling that records relating to individuals are withheld for 100 years from the subject's date of birth. Redacted versions, however, are available via the National Archives; these being released in 2011. A response to an FOIA response relating to the MoD's records on the Calvine incident made in 2021 stated the file doesn't contain any of the original photographs, as the negatives were returned to the Scottish Daily Record; although the newspaper states they never arrived. As to the identity of

the object, it is speculated that it depicts an experimental hypersonic aircraft designated as “Aurora” - whose existence has been denied by the US military. Its described performance and appearance seem to be more consistent with an *aerodyne* (a wingless aircraft supported by vectored thrust, capable of hovering and VTOL flight). A few commentators such as the veteran UFO sceptic Robert Shaeffer believe the pictures to be fabricated, noting possible indicators of this in the image submitted to Clarke. At the time of writing (August 2022) the identity of the photographer or his companion remains unknown.

**Sources:** DEFE 31/179/1 (pp 157-8) & DEFE 24/1940/1 (pp 00-00) DEFE 31/180/1 (pp 36-37) and 24/1948/1 (pp 12 & 2729) The National Archives; Hansard, 23 July 1996; Pope N *Open Skies, Closed Minds* (1996) Pocket Books (1997); Clarke,

D (2011); *UFOs the MoD and me*;

<https://drdavidclarke.co.uk/national-archives-ufo-files-7/national-archives-ufo-files-3/> 1990 Calvin UFO incident; FOI request reference: CAS-66677-Q1R4R1 (Publication date: February 2021);

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/freedom-of-information/information-requests/1990-calvine-ufo-incident/>

Clarke, D (2021) *Case Files: Calvin UFO photographs*

<https://drdavidclarke.co.uk/secret-files/the-calvine-ufo-photographs/> Clarke, D (2022); *The Calvin UFO photograph* – revealed;

[https://drdavidclarke.co.uk/2022/08/12/the-calvine-uforevealed/?fbclid=IwAR20vTXEyU5piG\\_XvXWltp3L-7IHvi9p8uyVCwzEWePzinOZKlxcFV6gq\\_w](https://drdavidclarke.co.uk/2022/08/12/the-calvine-uforevealed/?fbclid=IwAR20vTXEyU5piG_XvXWltp3L-7IHvi9p8uyVCwzEWePzinOZKlxcFV6gq_w); Revealed after 32 years, the top secret pictures one MoD insider called the most spectacular UFO photograph ever captured. Clarke, D *The Mail* August 12 2022

[https://www.mailplus.co.uk/edition/features/211532/revealed-after-32-years-the-top-secret-picture-one-mod-insider-calls-the-most-spectacular-ufo-photo-ever-captured?fbclid=IwAR3tRyU4CvVTe3c4wUJZgurgZ7AJZUP\\_vSPcki55Nuvl5Pbnkaq5zck4Jvg](https://www.mailplus.co.uk/edition/features/211532/revealed-after-32-years-the-top-secret-picture-one-mod-insider-calls-the-most-spectacular-ufo-photo-ever-captured?fbclid=IwAR3tRyU4CvVTe3c4wUJZgurgZ7AJZUP_vSPcki55Nuvl5Pbnkaq5zck4Jvg)

At **Stapleford Nottingham** from **20:30** to **21:30hrs March 29, 1992**, a series of flickering orange spheres (six in total) were observed drifting through the early night sky, all reportedly making a whirring noise. Similar lights were seen on the **28<sup>th</sup> March 1992** from **19:30hrs** through to **21:15hrs** ascending into the clouds. The researcher who investigated these sightings, Anthony Jones, eventually tracked down a local inhabitant who confessed to building luminous balloons and launching them on the above-cited above dates. These home-made constructs consisted of a firelighter, copper wire and a clear plastic bin-bag. This incident is notable for being among the earliest modern account of a UK UFO sighting generated by a “Chinese Lantern”; in this instance constructed by the hoaxer as they were not commercially available at this time.

**Investigator:** Anthony James (EMRA). **Source:** DEFE 24-1956 (pp129-133) The National Archives .

Around **01:10 - 01-15hrs** BST on the **31<sup>st</sup> March 1993** there were multiple observations from **Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Staffordshire** of 2 silent bright white lights emitting a trail; travelling parallel and rapidly along a high-altitude Northwest - Southeast course. Both the MoD and various civilian UFO societies received in excess of 40 reports occurring between 30<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup> March (most, but not all, being observations of this particular event). It was later determined that a booster rocket (formally defined as “22586U”) from COSMOS 2238 had re-entered the atmosphere and was visible over parts of Europe at this

precise time. It is likely that a few sightings occurring during this period are unconnected with this re-entry event. One notable example was an observation from **RAF Cosford** occurring **02:40hrs** on the **31<sup>st</sup> of March 1991** of a triangular form with lights and emitting a “humming” sound. This form was seen to hover, apparently discharge a “LASER beam” onto the ground and then shoot away at “great speed”. This was in all likelihood a police helicopter known to be in the area; the “laser beam” a searchlight used to track a stolen car! This incident is incidentally notable due the MoD’s UFO desk (then administered by Nick Pope) assisting with submitting a list of relevant cases they had received to UFO researchers, at a time when there was no formal FOIA legislation.

There were also five reports from the **30<sup>th</sup>** and **31<sup>st</sup> March 1991** around **Somerset** and **North Devon**, from **21:00hrs** to **02:00hrs** the next morning. These either described groupings/rows of lights (or triangular clusters of same) or an interlinked object. One observation, over the Quantock Hills in Somerset involved a form heading Southeast on a level, consistent course. It was described as resembling “two Concordes flying side by side... joined together”, adorned with what resembled bright cabin lights. This form was reputedly observed for 2-3 minutes. The last sighting occurred in the **Bridgwater, Somerset** area at **02:00hrs** on the **31<sup>st</sup> March 1991**; two fishermen observing a catamaran shaped object over the River Parrot, bearing two bright white lights and a beam of light projecting from its rear and following a Southeast course. These were also observed for 2-3 minutes. While these events were deemed unexplained, they have similarities to prior events evaluated as air-to-air refuelling exercises conducted over South Western England.

**Investigators:** Doug Cooper, David Clarke, Gary Anthony, Nick Pope et. al. **Sources:** DEFE 24/2086/1; DEFE 21/2032/1 (“5” & “6”) The National Archives); <https://drdavidclarke.co.uk/secret-files/the-cosford-incident/> (accessed 11/05/22); UFO TIMES no. 31 1994 BUFORA (pp 8-9).

At **23:35hrs** on the **21st August 1994** at **Bellingham, Northumberland** a man was checking his house before going to bed, and noted a bright object in sky. To get a better look, he went into his back garden. He observed a copper-coloured dome shaped form with a bright light on its underside. This moved slowly along a valley towards the River Tyne and then changed direction, heading North. The dome then incidentally traversed closer to the witness; who reported that he smelled ozone, felt the surrounding air pulsate and the hair on his arms bristle. He then entered his house to get a camera; and succeeded in taking five images of this form, using a 35mm Hanimex loaded with 200 ASA film. The light beneath the object then brightened and the Dome accelerated away towards the north at high speed; the sighting having a total duration of approximately 12 minutes. It was later discovered that a similar dome-shaped form was observed by 5 other observers nearby at around **23:30 hrs** on the same night. The witness was reportedly visited by people from RAF Prestwick, who unsuccessfully attempted to recover the negatives. Subsequent photographic analysis suggested the “dome” might have been an aircraft.

**SOURCE:** UFO TIMES NO. 36 (Aug 1995).

At **18:48hrs** on the **6th January 1995, 8-9 nautical miles SE of Manchester Airport** a B737 aircraft was on landing approach to Manchester Airport at a height of 4,000 feet and on a heading of 119.40 degrees. At this juncture both

the pilot and co-pilot observed a highspeed wedge-shaped object with a stripe down one side and covered in white lights. This was observed for around 2 seconds through the aircraft's right-hand windscreen and a side window; the first officer ducking instinctively as it passed. No sound, wake or anomalous RADAR target was noted. The subsequent Airmiss Enquiry was unable to find a prosaic cause for this incident, but speculated the wedge might have been a microlight; although this was unlikely due to the incident occurring at night with prevailing high winds. The Airmiss working group duly listed the event as unresolved", the collision risk Unassessable.

**Sources:** Airmiss report 2/95 (Airmiss working group); DEFE 24-2042-1 The National Archives.

Sometime around **22:00hrs** on the night of **March 24 1997**, numerous observers reported observing a very low flying aircraft followed by a flash and smoke, suggesting that a plane crash had occurred on **Howden Moor, Sheffield**. An intense search of the moors was conducted and a "dangerous flying zone" declared to facilitate the search. Nothing, however, was found and no aircraft was reported missing. Later, the British Geological Survey (BGS) noted two probable sonic booms originating from that area (one at 21:36hrs, the other at 22:06hrs). It transpired that – before and after the suspected crash –that various civilian and military aircraft had been observed in the vicinity; along with some observations of supposed "flying triangles", mysterious lights and a "cigar" shaped object.

A claim was also made that a flying triangle UFO had been tracked in the vicinity by RADAR and that military aircraft had been launched to intercept it, supposedly coming into conflict with the mystery craft. This was further claimed to have resulted in a military jet being lost (hence explaining

the various crashed aircraft observations), reputedly crashing into Ladybower reservoir. In connection with the latter, a claim was made that a military pilot (of Asian extraction) was seen on the moor, wearing overalls smelling of fuel. This later transpired to be an individual who had contemplated suicide by immolation but decided not to end his life; the various observations being of him subsequently walking home. More prosaically there were rumours of military exercises, in which aircraft engaged their afterburners (potentially explaining the associated flashes, bangs and sonic booms detected by the BGS), but this was later denied. The UFO aspect of this event is notably weak; the majority of events merely describing low flying aircraft and no aerial interceptions or other exotica. Commentators have speculated the event may have been instigated by combination of military exercises (involving aircraft illicitly breaking the sound barrier) and an erratically-flown civilian aircraft.

**Source:** DEFE 24-2057-1 (pp 146, 138-139 & 150-151) The National Archives; Clarke, D. & Jeffery M *The Howden Moor Incident* (IUN special report 1/1999 (1999) – “Grey” Literature; The Sheffield Incident *BUFORA BULLETIN* 2<sup>nd</sup> series: issues 10,11 & 12 (1999).

***Experiencer Sacha Christie recounts her experience:***

“A group of us decided to go on a completely impromptu visit to a cheap off season holiday cottage called Chairn Fern in **Glyn Ciriog, Wales, on February 1997.** There was myself, my son, my partner Steve, his uncle, his sister and her son. It’s dark... wet... In the evening around **19:30hrs** I was upstairs in the bedroom, everyone else was downstairs. My partner then, Steve, was calling for me to come downstairs, his voice was urgent, the children were being noisy, my initial thought was that I was needed as referee. When I got

downstairs, he was in the kitchen doorway and was telling me to "come, look at something!" I couldn't see anything at all, the cloud was very low and just went on for miles like an upside-down snowy landscape. It's pitch black but not raining. I eventually saw a flicker of light in the cloud and told him it was lighting. He said no way look... So now I pin-pointed the right bit of sky; I kept watching, and sure enough it came back on and again and again. The light had a definite uniform pattern. Obviously fascinated, we stood and watched it. At some point we'd brought J\_\_\_ and D\_\_\_ and the children out and we all stood watching it. It was moving away from us to the right. Then it stopped moving off to the right and started moving towards us. It didn't zoom over, it came at the same pace towards us as it was moving away only it moved in a zigzag, not in a straight line."

"After a while... it was over the field in front of the house a couple of hundred yards away but it very slowly just drifted over so it was directly above us. It obviously had to have a specific way of moving because if it had perfect manoeuvrability, it wouldn't have done all the unnecessary almost three-point turns. So.. here it is hovering silently above us, absolutely brilliant white light emitting from it. (The UFO) had a central circle of light that was just solid brilliant white but cast a bluish tinge with it. There were also lines of light coming out from the central white light, which were alternating, which gave the impression it was spinning. But it was just the rate of rotation from whatever the source. Nobody was in the least bit disturbed by what was going on.... Then there was a strobe of light from behind our position, I looked and said quite calmly "oh look, there's another one" everyone looked and there was a kind of general oh yea... then we all looked back at the light in the clouds above our heads... completely forgetting about

the second one. This was a sphere... if I stretched my arms out at this circumference that was about the size of it. It has manoeuvred silently into place and under some trees without any of us noticing. It pulsed a slow grey white light, about every other second and emitted a grey mist. “

“The children were getting scared, my son had told me that he'd seen a hand come through the hedge and touch his foot, he thought it was the hedge, but then he saw it was a hand. He might as well have said “mum I need the loo...” because all I did was say to Steve, the kids are getting scared, to which he replied, come on we'll take them back inside. Okay... take that or leave it... the point is, the thought of looking, the thought of reassuring him never occurred to me, or anyone. If he'd said there was a monster under his bed, the light would be on and I would have proven to him there was no monster. As it was, we just all toddled off back into the house together. As soon as we walked in, it was like nothing had happened. The kids started playing again, J\_\_\_ and D\_\_\_ went to watch TV and Steve got on with the dishes. I just couldn't believe what they were doing. THAT was the ONLY thing that impacted me... How weird THEY were behaving. I have absolutely no idea why, but I said something along the lines of “sod this, I'm off back outside”, which I promptly did... I stomped off out of the house, laughing incredulously at this situation and went and stood right underneath this big white light that was in the clouds. I thought it looked like a jelly fish as it rippled through the different densities in the clouds. In fact, the clouds were so very low... I couldn't figure out why they were and assumed it was a memory distortion until I went back in April for the first time in 14 years. We were on the top of a mountain... approximately three miles as the crow flies from Berwyn! I had no idea of the Berwyn Mountain incident back in 1997.”

“Glyn Ciriog is in the edge of the forest, “our” house literally being the last. As I am standing in the garden, looking up and wondering what next, I heard something from my right across the bare patch of dirt behind me and it bumped into me. I ran, I was already running before I realized I was, and I was completely blind. I couldn't see, it was like being hit by a truck. Now I have no idea what it was, and I'm not even here to debate that. I didn't see anything, so I really don't know. I could make something up, I could convince myself of anything if I wanted to, but the simple fact is, I don't know what it was but it scared the bejesus out of me and I went back into the house. Steve calmly told me I hadn't been out there long so I hadn't had any missing time... like it was the most normal thing in the world to say. I think that stunned me more than anything. I was totally freaked out... I tried not to be because I didn't want to scare the children. We packed them off to bed, and I remember that I made him come to the toilet with me and once I was on the bed didn't dare put my feet down. I was literally completely terrified. Of what, I don't know. We all went to sleep. That was the end of that. “

“I've suffered so much since then. Some people say these things don't exist... Well they blatantly do because we all saw together, we were all awake, and we were not on drugs or drunk. It was not sleep paralysis, it was not group hallucination, it was not weather phenomena, it was not a craft we can easily identify such as a plane or helicopter. It was no DMT flushing our systems at three am, it was not a hypnagogic or hypnopompic state. ... So when it comes to the question of unknown structured craft in our airspace, I'd say there's no debate. I've seen and photographed them. As to where they came from... no idea whatever the answer is. The sceptics vs. believers' debate is a completely false

dichotomy from where I'm standing!... No one can explain what I saw with sound logic and reasoning... every point made still leads to why.”

Following her sighting, Sacha Christie went on to become a leading figure in the British Experiencer movement, attempting to aid those who have had traumatic UFO-related events comparable to her own. In this instance, names have been used with permission.

**Sources:** A Welsh Encounter *UFO DATA March-April 2006*; Sacha Christie presentation (source for this account) *Seriously Unidentified* conference ASSAP, Nov 2012; Mantel, P *UFO Landings UK*. Flying Disc Press 2022.

**07:00hrs** on the **11<sup>th</sup> January 1998**; a cyclist carrying out his newspaper round saw a low level bright light in the sky at **Ashton, Preston**. He subsequently turned onto another road, gaining a better view of the manifestation, which resolved into a triangular configuration of lights seemingly attached to a very large black coloured body. The witness estimated the form to be travelling at low speed (45 mph) and perceived it to emit a low throbbing sound. The triangle was then seen to eject two lights; which shot away rapidly and moved out of view within 5-7 seconds. The triangle then changed direction, albeit not banking in the same manner as a conventional aircraft. The witness thereafter proceeded with his newspaper round; the form still visible 5 minutes later - moving along a bearing of 240°. During the case investigation MoD Air 2b was contacted but denied that any military aircraft was responsible. The CAA stated no aircraft had filed night-time flight plans to overfly Preston or notified them of flying low over the town on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 1998.

While flying triangle events are (in popular belief) deemed to be experimental aircraft, it is unlikely such a device would be flown low over a populated area; likewise with it discharging any projectile! Nonetheless (coincidentally or otherwise) the triangle was last seen flying towards the direction of RAF Warton. The case's investigator - Bill Bimson - speculated the UFO could have been a mobile sensor/communication platform associated with Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) experiments.

**Investigator: Bill Bimson**

**Source:** Bimson, B. The Preston Flying Triangle Incident; 11<sup>th</sup> January 1988 *BUFORA BULLETIN* no 7. (December 1998).

**22:00hrs on the 5th October 1999** a fifty-five-year male old sales engineer was walking in fields at **Thingwall, Wirral**. Seemingly out of nowhere, a slow-moving point of light caught his attention, travelling along a level course and appearing to pass through the constellation of Cassiopeia. The observer believed he was looking at a satellite. However, he noticed a second light, and then a third, appearing together to form a triangle, with one light seemingly being the lead, the other two forming a base line more or less equating to an isosceles triangle. All three lights moved together simultaneously. But satellites... moving in formation!? The lights eventually disappeared from view "as (if) they (had) entered the Earth's shadow". The weather at the time was slightly cloudy, with no rain or wind; otherwise the observer could see a clear night sky.

The case investigator (Tony Eccles) proceeded to evaluate this account, consulting on-line sources and contacting relevant organisations. Following several false leads, the British Astronomical Association's *Artificial Satellite Section* replied with an email on the 25th October 1999 with a suggested explanation

*“A couple of summers ago, meteor observers certainly became familiar with the ‘NOSS Trio’ of satellites, which were in an equilateral pattern. Onboard sensors apparently allowed researchers to measure precise distances between these, and how they were affected by gravitational perturbations over time. The NOSS satellites were also comparatively faint - visual mag. +3 or thereabouts.”*

NOSS, or *Naval Ocean Surveillance System*, was the civilian designation given to what were actually three sets of satellites travelling in formation, code-named *Parcae*, after the three daughters of the Greek god Zeus. These belonged to the US Navy’s spaceborne electronic intelligence system (known as ELINT). These tracked the position, speed, and direction of military ships at sea; so enabled by detecting their radio emissions. The US Government denied all knowledge of NOSS/*Parcae* until 1996. Three sets of satellites were launched in 1990, 1991 and 1996.

Based on the above information the investigator concluded NOSS was the most likely solution for this event.

**Investigator: Tony Eccles Source:** Eccles A A Different Sky (The Bluecoat Press 30 May 2003).

## 7: “Death”, Conspiracies, Drones and the Internet; The British UFO experience, 2000 AD and beyond

BUFORA ceased to be a membership group in 2005, its final journal of record, *BUFORA BULLETIN*, ceasing publication at the same time, although the association continued as a collective of researchers and investigators.

It followed a modern trend of basing their activities around a website and digitalising most of their journals; most of which became available for free download from 2019 onwards. While those disenchanted with BUFORA attempted to establish new organisations all such initiatives failed (or were short-lived) and those concerned either joined other bodies, left the subject or continued as independent researchers. America's MUFON, however, acquired greater global outreach along with funding from UFO documentary series, hardly noting any significant decline in US sightings until recent years. Branches were also founded (or enlivened) in the U.K and Europe.

The internet also provided a readily accessible conduit for once fringe conspiracy theories, which became notably popular in the uneasy political climate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The MoD, after running a UFO report telephone hotline and collating reports with virtually no assessment or formal evaluation, closed its UFO desk in December 2009, stating:

*"In order to make best use of defence resources, we (the MoD) have decided that from December 1 2009 the dedicated UFO hotline answerphone service and email address will be withdrawn. The MoD will no longer respond to reported UFO sightings or investigate them."*

This decision was not attributable any decline in UFO reports but to cost-cutting and a redefinition of priorities. An MoD memo from then MoD civil servant Carl Mantel noted that MoD investigation of UFO reports;

*"consume increasing resources, but produces no valuable defence output" ...."no UFO sighting reported has ever revealed anything to suggest an extra-terrestrial presence or military threat to the UK" .... " the level of resources diverted to this task is increasing in response to a recent upsurge in reported sightings, diverting staff from more valuable defence-related activities."*

In 1996 the MoD commissioned a defence consultant to conduct a desk-top study of British UFO sightings. Codenamed **Condign** it resulted in a three volume report concluded in 2000 and costing around £20,000, entitled *Unidentified Aerial Phenomena in the UK Air Defence Region*. The study was based on a dataset compiled from reports submitted to the MoD. Subsequently released (in a redacted form) under Freedom of Information Act legislation in 2004, its author's name was unknown until recently; but has since been revealed to be an experienced defence analyst called Ronald Haddow.

Surprisingly (given the MoD's stance on the issue) it concluded that inexplicable UFO events involved sightings of exotic but natural atmospheric manifestations that Haddow termed UAPs. He further speculated the generation of UAPs were (somehow) augmented by material seeded into the atmosphere via meteor showers; noting a rise in UFO sightings when such phenomena occurred. His conclusions seem informed by various concepts popular in Ufology during the 1980's and 1990s; Jenny Randles having posited the concept of UAPs some two decades previously.

Commentators such as Dr David Clarke consider the Condign project's conclusions flawed, given Haddow's

sighting database likely consisted of raw reports; the majority thus most likely explicable as misperceptions of astronomical bodies, meteors, balloons and aircraft, etc. In any event, following the submission of the *Condign* study the MoD department under which this report was commissioned and DI55 (tech) formally withdrew its involvement with UFOs in 2000.

Since 2000 both local and national UFO groups have vanished from the scene, the various newsstand magazines of the 1990s also ceasing publication. UFO books are also now relatively uncommon, especially in comparison to the 1970's or 1980's. Even Magonia ceased publication, its editor John Rimmer citing (as a reason) ...

*“that after 99 issues ... I don't want to produce another 99 just to record Ufology's endless recycling of its own history”.*

Indeed, in the UK researchers noted various forms of decline – most notably in the scarcity of so-called “high strangeness” reports, i.e. close observations of “lying saucers, cases associated with physical traces, car stops and sightings of supposed UFO entities. As such, several commentators proclaimed **“the death of UFOs”**. There are several possible reasons for this apparent decline. Some believe that UFOs are a cultural fad that has simply run its course. People are bored of them; with other new trends (such as conspiracy theories) fulfilling the needs that UFOs once did.

The rise of the Internet provides another possible explanation. With this medium permitting easy, direct (and cheap) access to UFO information, organisations that once had a monopoly on this data are now effectively sidelined.

As a consequence, people become passive consumers of UFO data, which other people collate. Hence, the number of active researchers decline, and fewer case studies are unearthed as a consequence. Indeed, it is notable the majority of contemporary UFO discussions relate to events that occurred decades ago...

Whatever the reason, modern well-investigated British case studies now seem to be a rarity; with many contemporary events being as poorly documented as those of the late 1940's. Ironically, the Internet has made investigation of UFO accounts easier, through enabling easier access to technical resources such as topographical maps, along with weather and aircraft movement databases. Email permits quick enquiries to be made to airports and groups concerned with satellite movements and space debris events. By the latter 2019's many (although not all) Air Ministry and MoD files relating to UFOs were digitalised and accessible online.

An unfortunate consequence of online access is the decline in local newspapers. Those that do survive increasingly have come into the possession of large publication chains, based kilometres away from the areas they profess to cover. Online media, hungry for advertising revenue and functioning in a fickle consumer environment, now have a tendency to utilise (even hype) easily explicable UFO incidents as "**click-bait**". National papers also exploit UFO stories to enrich themselves, often representing them in a sensationalist and misleading manner, and not disclose possible solutions they surely must be aware of.

From around 2002 onwards, transparent illuminated paper balloons (known variously as *SkyLanterns*, *Chinese Lanterns* or *Khoom Fay*) became commonly used for parties and

other social functions in the UK. Commonly released in groups over the space of half an hour or more, these often manifest to unaware observers as clusters of lights, usually orange in hue, rising from the ground and drifting with the wind for about 12-15 minutes, eventually vanishing as they burn up. Sightings instigated by them became increasingly common in MoD UFO report files from 2005 onwards, markedly swelling their yearly tally of sightings. However, they fell out of favour during the twenty-teens, when concerns were raised regarding them posing a fire hazard and a danger to a livestock who accidentally consume their remains. During the same period *drones* (remote controlled miniature flying devices used by both civilians and the military) came into widespread use.

With sightings ascribed to Chinese lanterns, then to drones we can only wonder what further trends will emerge when we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries' third decade...

**Sources:** Clarke, D. *The UFO Files the inside story of real life sightings* (Bloomsbury (2012)) 2<sup>nd</sup> edition) Clarke D *How UFOs Conquered the world* (Aurun Press (2015)). Clarke D. Out of the Shadows? *Fortean Times* 396 *September 2020* (pp28-29) Moore R; Seriously Unidentified and the rumoured decline of Ufology *Anomaly* (ASSAP) Vol 46, December 2012; Moore, R Seriously Unidentified; 7 years on *Anomaly* (ASSAP) Vol 52 2021; Rimmer J. Goodbye to all that *Fortean Times* 245 *Feb 2009* (pp55).

Some example early 21<sup>st</sup> century case studies:

**On 6<sup>th</sup> August 2004** a “bright disc” was incidentally observed “floating” in the night sky over the home of a

mother who had got out of bed to attend her daughters in Trehafod, South Wales. She subsequently captured footage of this manifestation with her video camera. The witness said of this event; “the object kept zipping across the screen and the colour changes were absolutely amazing”. South Wales police received no reports, while an astronomy lecturer from the University of Glamorgan noted that Venus was visible at that time in the Eastern sky.

**Sources:** BBC online: 'Alien encounter' in valleys (accessed 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022).

On the **23<sup>rd</sup> April 2007** the pilot of a *Trislander* flight (Capt. Raymond Bowyer) was flying at 4,000ft, from Southampton to Alderney in the Channel Islands. At **1406hrs** Bower observed (along with his co-pilot) a bright orange-yellow, well defined cigar-shaped luminance with a grey patch near the horizon, almost directly ahead of his aircraft. Bower also observed this form through binoculars, estimating its distance to be no more than 15 nautical miles. After around 3 minutes of observing the object, Bower contacted his flight Ground Control to determine if they were aware of anything in the sky at the objects position. They replied “no”.... but did note a faint trace on RADAR, 4 miles 11 o'clock from the *Trislander*; then (half a minute later) noted another contact some 3 miles away, at a 10 o'clock orientation.

At around 14:12hrs Bower observed a second object oriented 1 degree to the right of the first object, identical in form, other than being smaller and dimmer to the first form sighted. By 1416hrs these objects appeared to change their bearings and relative elevation and seemed to be slightly larger, with one form now oriented above the other. At the final phase of the observation the objects' angular sizes became notably larger and their elevation dropped, before

they were lost from view at around **1418 hrs**. Other than these changes in orientation the objects remained stationary throughout the observation. A number of passengers also saw the object and gave descriptions comparable to Bowyer's. The pilot of a BAe *Jetstream* passenger aircraft 20 miles away also may have observed the same object; a yellowish hazy "oval" form 1500 ft high west of Alderney. A detailed case study - while suspecting a prosaic solution - found no definitive cause for this incident. **Source:** Baure J-F, Clarke D, Fuller P & Shough M *Report on aerial phenomena observed near the Channel Islands April 23 2007* (February 2008 "Grey" Literature); Baure J-F, Clarke D, Fuller P & Shough M Unusual aerial phenomena observed near Channel Islands April 23 2007 *Journal of Scientific Exploration Vol 22, No 3 2008 (pp 291-308)*.

On the **7<sup>th</sup> June 2008** at **23:03hrs** soldiers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Irish regiment while on "fire picket" near **Tern Hill Army barracks, Shropshire** observed various aerial lights that were seen to change colour. One witness took video footage of these lights on their mobile phone, which depicting seemingly cube-shaped forms. This image capture was subsequently emailed to *The Sun* newspaper, who printed an account of this event (along with stills) in their 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008 edition. They allegedly offered one of the soldier's money in return for his story, but the person concerned refused to participate. Later, the "*UFO Hunters*" TV programme attempted to gain permission from the MoD to interview the soldiers, promising to do so in a respectful manner; which was refused. No formal written report was submitted to the MoD, only a verbal account given to their superiors at the barracks. Concern over the breaching of service protocols and **damage to the army's professional image** resulted in the MoD threatening to bring formal

charges against those who had contacted *The Sun*. The MoD discovered a local hotel had released Chinese lanterns when the observation occurred; satisfied this was the answer they made no further enquiries regarding this incident.

**Source:** *The Sun* 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008; DEFE 24-2624-1 The National Archives (pp 61-51)

At **0040hrs BST** on the **8<sup>th</sup> June 2008** a South Wales police helicopter with a three-man crew encountered an unusual aircraft while hovering at 500 feet while landing at **St. Ethan**. The object travelled just below the helicopter, which swerved sharply to avoid being hit. Some media accounts claimed this form was saucer shaped and covered in lights; although a police spokesperson later stated it just resembled a small conventional aircraft. It was further claimed the police helicopter gave chase until they turned back due to running out of fuel, but this appears to be an exaggeration. In any event the crew were unable to capture any images of the object as it moved off in the direction of the Bristol Channel.

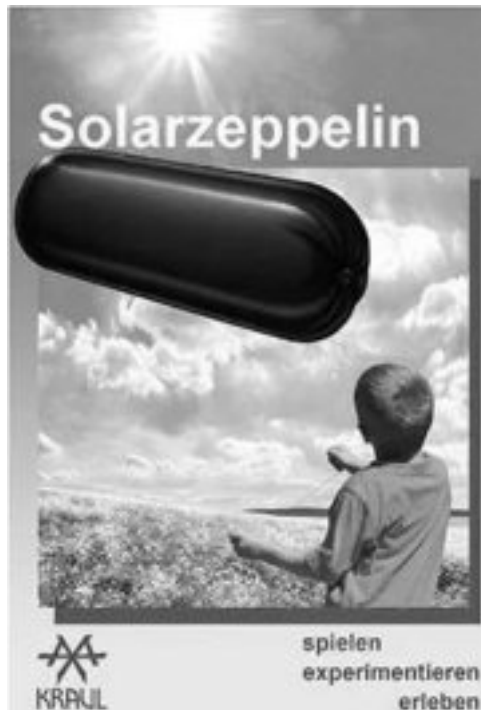
Despite inferences to the contrary, this event was never formally reported to the MoD, who was aware of the incident only through an account printed in *The Sun* newspaper. Nonetheless, in a subsequent comment to the media, they stated their assumption that the “object” was an aircraft of some kind. They also checked with RADAR stations and RAF Fylingdales but uncovered no evidence that UK airspace had been compromised on the 8<sup>th</sup> June. NATS (National Air Traffic Service) Swanback acknowledged “something” was reported at Cardiff and that the police were “dealing with it”. As these enquiries encompassed their remit in relation to UFOs at the time, they conducted no further investigation of this event.

A news-item uploaded by BBC online on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2008 reported a wedding celebration held at a hotel a short distance from St. Ethan involved a release of sky lanterns from 23:00hrs onwards. A police spokesperson expressed scepticism on this being the cause, as they were working on the assumption that, as the object was described as “a small aircraft”, this represented the most likely solution. Sadly, as with many post-2000 UFO reports, technical details exist in abundance but a concise account of the sighting is lacking. This incident also highlights the tendency of some British media to **misinform and exaggerate** in regard to UFO stories.

**Sources:** UFO spotted by police helicopter BBC online (20 June 2008) pp 51-61; *DEFE 1614-1 (3)* - The National Archives; Wedding Couple sparks UFO alert (*BBC online, posted 24 June 2008*); Clarke, D *How UFOs conquered the world* Aurun Press 2015 (pp-62-64).

At a static caravan site located at the seaside village of **Brean, Somerset** a 34-year-old man and his father observed an object in the western sky at **14:15hrs** on the **27<sup>th</sup> July 2008**. Hovering some distance over the sea it resembled a dark vertical cylinder with rounded ends; appearing smooth with a metallic silver tint when observed through binoculars. The cylinder was observed for around 10 minutes; while static, it gracefully and slowly tilted vertically back and forth throughout the incident. Two minutes of footage was taken of this object and subsequently posted on *YouTube*. Therefore, details of this observation (and its associated images) were featured by media sources throughout the world.

The likely true origins of this affair began when a university student purchased a solar balloon in a Bristol Oxfam shop for 99p. Early afternoon on the 27<sup>th</sup> July, she unpacked this device on a nearby Burnham-on-Sea beach. As it inflated due to exposure to the sun's heat it was taken by sudden gust of wind, and in a short time rose too high to be controlled. The student, concerned at the possible harm it



could cause, followed the balloon in her car but eventually lost sight of it. She subsequently heard of the Brean incident and contacted the local paper to explain its true genesis.

A Solar Airship consists of a black bag and a 25-metre-long control reel. The user wafts the bag until it is full of air and then ties it shut. On a suitably warm day the air inside heats

up, expanding the bag and causing it to “billow out” within minutes into an 8 metre long cylinder that effortlessly becomes airborne. The solar airship purchased by the student was readily available at this time (one such kit made by the Science Museum and easily available in toy shops and similar stores).

**Sources:** Exclusive: Mystery surrounds “UFO sighting” in skies above Brean *Burnham-on-Sea .com February 11 2009*; UFO sighting grabs international media attention *Burnham-on-Sea .com February 12 2009*; UFO? That’s our 99p balloon *Burnham-on-Sea .com February 25 2009*; case notes (author’s files).

**At Fen Farm near Conisholme, Lincolnshire** sometime around **04:00hrs, 4th January 2009** an Ecotricity wind farm turbine mysteriously suffered damage; with one rotor found sheared off, the other bent. The media (most notably *The Sun* newspaper) speculated – based on no direct evidence - this had been caused by a collision with a UFO. This proposition was incepted by aerial lights being seen in the vicinity (some up to 14 km away). There were in total 5 observations. The first occurred at 13:30 hrs, of a “smudge” of light that was subsequently photographed. Another was a sighting of multi-coloured lights, the other of a low-altitude light flying in the wind farm’s direction, both occurring around 18:00hrs. Another was of a bright white light seen by a local councillor. The last manifested at 22:00hrs, being a 15-minute sighting by a local turkey farmer of a low-altitude bright white light. This form had an orange edge and “tentacles” extending to the ground, above or in the direction of the wind farm.

All these events have likely explanations. The multi-coloured lights (for example) were likely caused by a

fireworks party staged that evening, while the white light with tentacles could have been a misperception of the setting moon (see also **25 Jun 1954, Seighford**). The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of January was extremely cold; ice crystals on the atmosphere potentially distorting any high-altitude light source seen during that period. This would account for the event at 13:30hrs, which is likely to have been a sun dog. It is also important to note none of these supposed UFO events occurred at the time the wind turbine failed. In any event, a report from the firm responsible for the turbine, Enercon, concluded the damage was due to bolts failing due to material fatigue.

**Sources:** UFO Hits Wind Turbine; *The Sun* 8<sup>th</sup> January 2008; UFOs crashing into wind farms; has the Guardian solved the mystery *The Guardian* 8<sup>th</sup> May 2008; The Truth IS out there; UFO did not damage giant wind turbine... it was simply a rusty bolt *Daily Mail* (10<sup>th</sup> February 2008); Randles, J. Gone with the wind *Fortean Times* 246 (Mar 2009); pp 4-6 .

On the **2<sup>nd</sup> December 2012 at 12:53hrs** an A320 commercial airliner was taxiing to land at **Glasgow airport, Scotland**. When 4,000ft and 11 nautical miles East of that locus, a blue and yellow object of indeterminate shape with a small frontal area but bigger than a balloon was seen 100 metres from the aircraft. It passed quickly underneath the 'plane and was then lost to view. Weather conditions were clear, with the sun directly behind the aircraft. The pilot filed an **Airprox** (report on a potential collision) on landing. The Airmiss board conducted an enquiry but identified no air-traffic that could have been potentially responsible. They also deemed it unlikely that a metrological balloon, microlight or hang glider was responsible. Other than an unidentified track 1.3 nautical miles of the A320 noted 28

seconds before incident no notable RADAR trace was detected. The incident was graded as class “D” (“insufficient information”) by the Airprox authority.

**Sources:** 2012166 02/12/12 A320 V Unknown GOW 090;

<https://www.airproxboard.org.uk/media/d4gln51/bluebook28.pdf> (pp709-711); Airliner 'had narrow miss with UFO' BBC Online 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west22365368?fbclid=IwAR1fjUgqUM3giBIPMSwP6a44CqjKG8xgnshEYzNgGeGsIAVVNGwAYThbRY8>

(accessed 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022). Thanks to Nigel Watson for notifying me of this case.

**The Gatwick 2018 ROV panic;** Between 19 and 21 December 2018, Gatwick Airport faced widespread chaos after a “drone” (a mini remotely-controlled flying device) was reputedly spotted hovering above the runway, causing more than 140,000 passengers to face flight delays and cancellations. Footage was also shown to the media supposedly depicting a similar object in the vicinity. Despite a massive security operation and a £50,000 reward, police were unable to find the culprit; the only two suspects were later found to be innocent. While the Metropolitan Police remain convinced these drone reports were an actuality, this occurrence shares similarities to past aerial panics. In 1896 reports of “phantom” airships swept through the US, at a time of heightened tension over Cuba and Mexico. As we have seen, further scareship “panics” occurred in United Kingdom most notably from 1909 to 1912; reflecting fears of German invasion and the militarization of that county. In 1946 Sweden and Norway was host to sightings of “ghost rockets” thought to represent captured Nazi technology (or knowledge). In the early 1970s reputed “phantom helicopters” were reputedly seen over northern England.

These were attributed to criminal and terrorist activity, but no arrests resulted.

Fears that civilian drones have been utilised for criminal activities (or be used with lethal intent) have repeatedly been voiced by the media. Therefore, did concern over terrorists potentially using drones to threaten air traffic create a modern aerial visionary panic? Did it bypass normal cognitive processes and transforming an otherwise harmless device into an object of fear? Does this instance mark the inception of a new visionary paradigm; will “phantom drones” join the “phantom airships”, “ghost planes”, “phantom rockets” and “ghost helicopters” of the past as a currency of visionary panic now and into the future?

**Sources:**

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gatwick\\_Airport\\_drone\\_incident](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gatwick_Airport_drone_incident)

At approximately **1716hrs** on **Saturday 09 November 2019** at "Per Lane" a road just north of the northern village of **Illingworth, West Yorkshire, England**, UK (located 5.3 km Northwest of Halifax, Yorkshire, England), a couple in their early thirties – a man and a woman – observed a white streak in the sky, reputedly moving very fast. The female witness compared this form to "a comet" which she said was moving "too fast to be a drone". During the course of this observation her male companion took around 9 seconds of low quality footage of this manifestation with his mobile phone. The local news website/newspaper (*The ExaminerLive*) in a later account also reports that at 09 November 2019 at around 05:25-05:33hrs another observer saw a light over North Dean Woods, Copley that appeared out of nowhere. This light remained visible for a few seconds. Thereafter, another light was reportedly seen

heading towards the first one, followed by an additional small silver coloured object which reportedly "shot away at incredible speed." This other sighting locus is approx. 10 km Southeast of Per Lane.

The claim that two aircraft were seen overfly the vicinity while event was ongoing was confirmed by using online resources. Online flight tracking sites show two *Partenavia Observer* planes - *G-OBSR* (height 2200 feet) and *G-HUBB* (height 2300 feet) - appearing in the vicinity at circa 17:13hrs, flying from a Northeastern direction and heading due Southwest. At 17:15hrs they turned towards Halifax, heading in a Southerly direction. By 17:16hrs they then moved Southeast, likely taking them near the vicinity of Per Lane. At 17:17hrs they veered roughly Southwest, continuing that bearing until they vanished off-screen at 17:19hrs. FOIA requests in relation to this flight produced no useful responses. These flight tracks could be interpreted as at least one aircraft responding to the presence of the light source (whatever it was). This event is typical of many contemporary UFO incidents where the investigation raises more questions than answers...

**Investigators:** Steve Coup, Kevin Berry, Jenny Randles, Greg Hardman et. al.

Source: The Per Lane Incident: *Seriously Strange Magazine* Issue 156 Winter-Spring 2021 (pp20-23); Randles J Fortean Times 2020 Vision *FT389 Feb 2020*; (pp 28-29).

On the **September 1<sup>st</sup> 2020** at **22:13 hrs** a 737 jet 3.4 nautical miles and at 1,800 feet and on approach to **Leeds/Bradford Airport** (via Spain) encountered an "object with a bright light" that "appeared from nowhere" slightly up and to left and around 10 feet from aircraft. Sky Lanterns were reportedly seen in the vicinity but neither the aircraft's pilot nor co-pilot believed the object encountered

was of this nature. Weather conditions at that time were clear and calm. This was one of 11 Airmiss incidents in 2020 involving an “unknown object”; most (if not all of which) involved drones.

**Sources:** Airprox 2020105 (Bluebook 30 January 2020-December 2020)

(<https://www.airproxboard.org.uk/media/oahp00s3/bluebook36.pdf>); “UFO almost collides with passenger Jet”

*The Sun* 22 Nov 2020.

(<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/13269728/ufo-almost-collides-with-passenger-jet-ukairport/>)

Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

“Not quite Star Wars...” - a sample of reputed UK UFO sightings since 2019:

Let us conclude with a snapshot sample of recent reputed UFO sightings (as posted on the ASSAP Facebook UFO page, occurring from **July to Aug 2019**;

- *On the 20th July 2019 at 15:15hrs BST, an orange spherical object was seen moving “up and down” over the M5 motorway near Bristol. This was observed for “over a minute” and then vanished behind some trees.*
- *On the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019 23:40hrs at Aylesbury, Oxford, a bright light “looking like a star” but “brighter” was observed moving West to East before getting dimmer and “fading to red”.*

- *Nighttime on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 201 at Cambridge, England – a “shape shifting” light was observed; digital image footage was taken and uploaded onto YouTube. There is some confusion as to whether this is an actual UFO report or a known distorted image of the International Space Station (ISS).*
- *On the 13<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at 23:30 hrs a series of low-level lights were seen in Western sky near Wallingbough, Oxford. These were round and irregular in form and of various colours and moving at various speeds. Similar lights were seen previously by the same observer.*
- *On late Sat night-early Sun morning the 17-18<sup>th</sup> August 2019 near Tewksbury, Gloucester a pair of orange fuzzy lights were seen and photographed.*
- *At 23.50 hrs on the 23 August 2019 and 01.20 hrs on the 14 Aug 2019 in Bristol a blue radiance was seen by various people in the city. A very similar manifestation was also seen and photographed at Fishponds, Bristol, in May 2019. Other reports around Britain also related observations of a very similar phenomenon over the past few months. These sightings were later identified as a light source emitted by the Network Rail **New Measurement Train** (NMT), looking for damage on electrified sections of railroad!*
- *A “narrow black cylinder” was reputedly seen at Shrewsbury, 14:20 hrs on the 23rd August*

*2019. It was initially static but was seen to move horizontally and vertically. It was observed for several minutes before departing and may have been independently filmed by another observer.*

So, what does this (admittedly small) sample of contemporary UFO events tell us? They demonstrate that observations of reputed UFOs are still reported in the UK, and the concept is still utilised to contextualise strange aerial events. This in some way belies the idea that UFOs are a culturally exhausted social trope. As with sightings in the past, very few of these reports related to traditional flying saucers. In this sample, all but one report represents observations of lights in the sky; the other alluded to a dark cylindrical object; this latter event being the only one observed in daylight. As in the past UFO sightings continue to prominently occur at night. It also must be admitted that- as with the majority of supposed UFO reports throughout the decades - none of these sightings are of the so-called “high strangeness” variety; their only main significance is their existence as reports. Even at this basic level of documentation, at least three events have obvious solutions; namely the ISS and a train-line maintenance laser, while the last example cited is consistent with a solar airship. The remaining are of the typical light in the sky events which could have any number of prosaic solutions.

UFOs also dance to the music of time.... Some conclusions:

The changing nature of UFO experiences hint that psycho-social forces markedly influence its expression. MoD UFO statistics suggest that quantity of British reports increase due to elevated interest generated by media trends current

at the time; i.e., the movie *Close Encounter of the Third Kind* in 1978 (780 MoD reports) and the TV series *The X Files* in 1996 (610 MoD reports).

For most of its existence the British UFO experience has been largely influenced by trends originating in the United States. The concept of “flying discs” was incepted by an American observation, namely Kenneth Arnold’s observation on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 1947. Additionally, the first known British “flying saucer” observation on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1947 was only reported to the press as a consequence of coverage of the Roswell “UFO crash”.

The first contactee, George Adamski, was an American, whose reputed encounter occurred in 1952. The concept of UFO Abductions also originated in the US, with the Betty and Barney Hill incident in 1962, along with its resurgent variations arising from the hypnosis regression work of Budd Hopkins during the early 1980’s onwards and Witney Streiber’s book *Communion* in 1988. This may be a consequence of the influence of America’s media infrastructure, the countries’ status as an affluent superpower and the formidable strength of its industrial-military complex.

Other trends are, however, not American influenced. The first flying triangle reports occurred in Belgium in 1989. The crop circles are of British origin, the first instances manifesting in Wiltshire in 1983. These are, however, likely inspired by the Tully, Australia saucer nest discovered in 1966.

Chronologically (omitting claims made long after the event) the inherent themes reflected by early British accounts appears to have as follows. Instances of “Ghost” aircraft

detected by RADAR occurred early in 1947 before the first flying US “disc” reports of June 1947; various phantom rocket & missile panics (late 1947 to the early 1950s); domed discs (1952?) and flying disc and fighter jet confrontations (1951 and beyond). The first British sighting claim of an Adamski-style Venusian scout craft was made in 1954. There were also several claims of sightings by amateur astronomers using reflecting telescopes during the mid-1950s, also echoing one notable aspect of Adamski’s initial contact claim.

The first indigenous British contactee claim (that of “Cedric Allingham”) was published in 1955, now – like Adamski’s - widely acknowledged as a hoax, while the first supposed saucer landing was made in 1953. Sightings of cigar, disc and sphere configuration UFOs occurred virtually from the onset of the flying disc phenomena, but the first observation of a UFO described as a “spinning top” dates from 1954. It is unclear when the first claim of a British UFO entity was made, contactee style claims aside. This appears to have been the 1954 Ranton Staffordshire report - the entities resembling those reportedly encountered by Adamski. The first mystery ground traces linked to UFOs (but no associated UFO observation) occurred in 1960, although there are claims the 1953 Burton landing were associated with physical traces. The first “modern” UFO abduction seems to have (reputedly) occurred at Langdon Budville, Somerset in 1973, while the first claim of a case involving “missing time” originates from 1977. The first British flying triangle reports occurred shortly after those from Belgium in 1989.

The first instance of repeated sightings in a single location (in areas now termed “UFOCALs” or **Window areas** in UFO literature) seems to have been those associated with

Warminster in 1965. The first modern crop circle was discovered in 1976 but became culturally significant from 1984 onwards. There are far earlier claims of such traces, but they had little cultural impact and were effectively ignored until researchers, looking for early examples of same, became aware of them in the 1980s and 1990s.

Some tropes have a more complex history. The first claim of a crashed flying disc originates from Roswell, New Mexico in 1947 and was widely reported in the British media at the time. It was almost immediately discredited as research balloon debris. This claim was revised in 1980 by William Moore and Charles Berlitz and then other researchers thereafter. This led to some UFO sightings being viewed and promoted as “the British (or Welsh) Roswell” by some researchers; namely the Rendlesham Incident (1980) and the Berwyn Mountains event (1973), respectively.

In regard to these conceptual tropes, few ever vanish totally, most re-occurring throughout the period when British UFO observations have been alleged. Many get reinterpreted, merged with popular modern concepts to keep them relevant. But it has been noted that few observations of UFO entities (outside of “experiencer” accounts) are made today, while car-stop cases and alleged UFO landings have also become a rarity. No one reports observations of Adamski style Scout Craft but some UFOs reportedly seen post 1970 observations still bear a basic similarity to it. Sightings of flying saucers also seem less common, while observations of flying triangles have become more prevalent since 1990.

Certain British UFO events from 1954 through to the late 1970s seem notably influenced by the claims of George

Adamski, as noted in the above case review sections. As Adamski's claims are now generally accepted as fraudulent, these influenced reports can be taken as an example of psycho-social influences having imprinted themselves on some UFO sightings. Other examples of this include the early 20<sup>th</sup> century "airship" events and the interpretation of certain late 1940's sightings as "guided missiles". All seem to be a response to threat, either as "saviours" (the Adamski influenced events) or "secret weapons" (the "phantom airships". It could be argued that the very concept of "flying saucers" at the beginning of the cold war is also indicative of a psycho-social influence; witnesses reporting "saucers" or "discs" when the first witness (Kenneth Arnold) perceived a crescent/heel shaped form. Could it be that popular cultural narratives give a defined or "permissive" context in which to interpret or "manifest" a visionary experience? For example, the first documented British UFO sighting was only reported to the media following (albeit brief) publicity over the Roswell incident. It may also require an agency to gain "momentum".

The wave of sightings at Warminster from 1965 onwards seems largely motivated by the interest of the local journalist Arthur Shuttlewood (along with various researchers associated with BUFORA). The "Dyfed Triangle" wave of 1977-78 also had its motivator in the form of local researcher Randal James Pugh. The 1978 Risley silver man occurred due to the hoaxer noting countless UFO reports appearing in the local press. We have already mentioned George Adamski and his influence on a certain class of UFO events. There are even hints that the use of regression hypnosis in relation to suspected British "UFO abductions" was applied by significant actors (most notably Charles Bowen and several investigators associated with BUFORA) during the late 1970s. This was seemingly based

on the assumption that, as such abductions had supposedly occurred in the United States then, (surely) they must also have occurred in Britain. Others have noted this phenomena; Dewey and Ries in their 2006 book *In alien heat* terming such people “Mavens”.

Press coverage seems to notably influence reported UFO forms in some instances. We have the wave of “flying crosses” of various kinds for up to a month after the first account, while British flying triangle events occurred shortly after the first observations in Belgium. It is also notable that a decline in UK UFO sightings from 2000 onwards has coincided with a decline in active researchers; representing a potential loss of future “motivators”. All these examples (and numerous others) illustrate that psycho-social factors are very much a factor in UFO accounts.

One thing is very evident. The vast majority of claimed sightings have a rational solution; often relatively simple explanations but sometimes relatively complex. Natural manifestations that have generated them include planets (especially Venus), 1<sup>st</sup> magnitude stars, bolide meteors, birds and the occasional cloud. Examples of human artifice that have oft generated reports include aircraft, high altitude balloons, laser displays, satellites and satellite re-entries. IFO events could also be seen as further evidence of the influence of psycho-social factors. Technological progress since 1947 has continually added to the stimuli that can induce them – such as laser displays, satellite constellations, solar balloons, sky lanterns and drone aircraft - while light pollution may have gradually reduced the quantity of those caused by astronomical objects over the past few decades.

A small residual, nonetheless remains. Every official study effort has resulted with such a minority statistical population – from Project Sign in 1949, the Blue Book and the University of Colorado studies of the 1960's to France's *GEIPAN* and the new American initiatives of the early 2020's. Even the ultra-sceptical Air Ministry/MoD recorded cases evaluated as “unknowns”. However, the MoD maintained throughout its involvement with UFOs that these were outliers – generated by prosaic causes too poorly described to be correctly identified. Hence their definition of *Unexplained (insufficient information)*. This is questionable; many such “unexplained” reports were no more - or less - detailed than the “explicable” ones; while far less detailed accounts were happily allocated rational solutions by official evaluators.

While most (if not all) unknowns remain elusive in regard to data definitively proving their exotic status, it seems likely at least some relate to descriptions of rare atmospheric phenomena. To begin with, such reports are sufficiently consistent to justify such an assumption. Many causes have been postulated. Ronald Haddow's CONDIGN study suggested atmospheric plasmas (or *UAPs* as he termed them) generated or fuelled by meteor shower debris. Haddow's ideas seem inspired by prior speculation by UFO researcher Jenny Randles, who originally proposed the concept of “plasma” phenomenon type UFOs she defined as “*UAPs*”. Terrence Meaden suggested UFOs were a form of luminous whirlwind – a plasma vortex – an explanation capable also of explaining simple circle manifestations. And Paul Devereux suggested they are air ionised by seismic features such as earth faults. All these theories have their strengths and weaknesses, but have the potential to generate any UFO event up to an entity encounter or “reality-alteration” experience. In other cases, the 1950s concept of “*Menzelforms*” could be relevant – this review

itself noting events possibly generated by extreme superior mirage effects.

As yet, however, we have no idea the extent to which either “UAPs” or “Menzelforms” contribute to (and hence reduce) the initial “population of British “unknowns”.

Some “high-strangeness” events have similarities to apparitional experiences and may be induced by the same processes, albeit manifesting a different type of entity. Such a process may be “paranormal” or (to some disappointingly) relatively mundane in nature. This may account for events where some observers see them and others don’t along with missing time, Oz factor sensations and some “abduction” events. Some could be induced by EM frequency emissions produced by rare forms of atmospheric phenomena generating *petit mal* episodes in those “witnesses” susceptible to them.

There are, of course, unexplained events describing exotic, constructed devices. While it is tempting to accept these events at face value (namely as exotic constructed devices, this approach has repeatedly had an unfortunate history within the subject. At present, there is no irrefutable evidence to support the idea these relate to craft with an extra-solar origin. Their transient nature and lack of supporting evidence (from definitive physical traces, supporting observations to video recordings) endlessly frustrates the credibility of such a possibility. Such devices would, surely, neither be an elusive (“jealous”) phenomenon nor possess supernatural elements; being as material as our own vehicles and requiring no excuses in regards to their lack of corporality.

So, how to account for these... It is hypothetically possible for a plasma type phenomenon to manifest with a surface that an observer could potentially perceive as “metallic”. Likewise, “portholes” and other surface features could merely be lighter (or darker) areas of a natural manifestation; misinterpreted through *perceptual filling* – a cognitive process capable (in other contexts) of causing a trail of satellite debris to be interpreted as a cigar shaped form with lighted windows.

It may be at least some such events are unusual aircraft; cases such as the 1985 Lotherville, Isle of Wight event, the 1990 Calvine incident and some “flying triangle” observations being potential examples of this. Proof of this, however, is almost as elusive as that for extraterrestrial craft. The search for technological extraterrestrial cultures is equally frustrated by a similar lack of proof, as represented by concepts such as “the great silence” to the “Fermi paradox”. From this, various commentators have concluded that no other advanced cultures exist, at least in our region of the galaxy. Nonetheless, the extraterrestrial hypothesis for “true” UFO manifestations remains a popular theory, and UFOs are often viewed in populist circles solely in these terms. Maybe such cases can be explained in pure psycho-social terms, given the belief that they are extra solar craft generates an almost religious intensity in those who revere the concept of extraterrestrials. Other theories are, however, increasing in popularity; such as the idea that exotic UFOs originate from our distant future or involve visitations from alternative universes or parallel worlds.

Any theory that posits UFO events to be physical manifestations needs to convincingly explain the lack of any conclusive image captures. While there are numerous

claimed examples none have convinced critical commentary. Many UFOs before 2000 show dark forms consistent with the interpretation that they are artefacts close to the camera (based on the inverse square law). Others have proven to be explainable in prosaic terms, such as aircraft or stills of seagulls, freezing them in flight and transforming them into “flying saucers”. After 2000 more exotic and better quality images appear but seem mostly to be GCI creations. Nonetheless, recent releases of footage from American military and paramilitary sources over the past 10 years may answer the criticism that no convincing UFO footage exists. Of course, this depends on such images being authentic (not proven beyond doubt) and that they are not image captures of prosaic phenomenon and/or experimental aircraft (again, not proven).

It may be that the relatively small angular size of the UFOs observed, often in low light conditions and combined with the suddenness of their appearance, fraught attempts to capture UFO images on recording media. Before 2000 most people had access to domestic grade cameras using chemical-based film. Furthermore, the average UFO witness is not trained to perform tasks under stress. A number of British UFO cases have generated image captures but the result is often notably underwhelming. In comparison all the post 2000 American footage was taken by military personnel with equipment built to function under the stress of combat conditions. Nonetheless, even the US footage alluded to above have captured images of relatively distant forms. As yet there have been no convincing images depicting a “close encounter” style event or a “reality alteration” incident, such as an abduction by “UFO entities”. This would be consistent with the idea these classes of event involve the same perceptual processes as

apparitions, which also suffer from a lack of verified images depicting their subjects.

While our understanding of the UFO problem is much clearer now than in 1947, some questions and many uncertainties remain. Like foxfire, a definitive answer to the UFO problem, while often seemingly just in reach, has (to date) evaded us. A greater focus on the more significant sighting accounts in future will - with luck and hope - definitively resolve the reality status (or otherwise) of the “true UFOs”.

Robert Moore August 2022.

**AN EDITORIAL NOTE:** Contrary to our normal practice we have left the sources and references for this paper within the body of the text: Robert passed away on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. He continued to revise the paper up until the week before his death, and I was in the process of laying it out when his life was taken unexpectedly by heart failure. Unfortunately in the process of clearing his home his paper and books were incinerated, and without access to Robert’s encyclopaedic knowledge of the subject I have made the decision to leave the sources and references as he gave them; if anyone is able to generate a useful bibliography of his references, most of which I suspect are very familiar to specialists in this area, I will be delighted to publish it in the next issue.

This version of Project FoxFire was edited by Christian Jensen Romer who had read each draft as Robert submitted them, and faults in the final text may firmly be blamed upon myself. I have endeavoured to keep the text as close to Robert’s intent as possible while correcting typos and minor issues.

The text was proofread by Claire Davey, William Eyres, and Caroline McKendrick and peer reviewed by external reviewers in line with our normal practice.

# UFOs In the RERC Archive: An Analysis of Twenty-one Cases

Mark Fox

## Abstract

*An analysis of twenty-one (mostly unpublished) reports of UFOs/UAPs uncovered in 2022 during archival research connected to the University of Wales.*

## 1: Introduction

Within the last two years major studies of UFOs have been announced, conducted and concluded by NASA, US congress, and the US military. Most of the newspapers in the UK and elsewhere have carried stories on these developments, suggesting that whatever they may or may not be, UFOs- sometimes termed ‘UAP’ as an initialism for ‘Unexplained Aerial Phenomena’- remain big news.<sup>1</sup>

Side by side with these developments, some other recent (and somewhat lesser known) advances within the field have also taken place. In 2019, for example, Oxford University Press published *American Cosmic*, a study of UFOs by Diana Pasulka, professor of religious studies at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, and chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religion there. It is somewhat unusual for an academic publisher to carry a title about such things; just as it is also somewhat unusual that Pasulka should turn her academic gaze to them. Indeed, as she herself avers early on in *American Cosmic*: academics don’t tend to write about UFOs, and if they do

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/wh-at-the-pentagon-report-says-about-ufos>

have an interest in such things, it's usually under the cloak of anonymity (Thompson 1991).

I have an interest in UFOs that goes back almost fifty years. I've also been privileged over the last twenty-five years or so to be granted access to what is known as the 'RERC archive': an ever-expanding collection of more than 6000 mostly unpublished accounts of extraordinary and anomalous human experiences first established by a marine biologist, Alister Hardy, in 1969 and currently housed at the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David, Lampeter. It's a little-known treasure trove containing an astonishingly wide range of testimonies to all things Fortean and, incredibly, the vast bulk of its content remains unpublished, anywhere, in any form. Excited by what I might find and spurred on by the increasing degree of attention being paid to UFOs, from scientists, government agencies, the media and academics alike, I decided that now would be a good time to attempt to search the archive for accounts of UFOs.

My initial expectation was that it might contain very few, if any, for Hardy had a particular kind of experience in mind when he established his archive and this inclined more toward the religious and spiritual aspect of extraordinary human experiencing. Undaunted, I thought I'd try my luck anyway, and set out with two objectives in mind. The first of these related simply to the question of whether or not I'd find any UFO testimonies at all. Would my trawl through the thousands of accounts yield any descriptions of UFO events? If so, would there be enough to base a study upon? What, exactly, would I find – if anything? And, secondly, given that I might turn up something, what might that something be? Would I, for example, uncover UFO features and details such as shape, size, colour, behaviour, and so on that might bear useful comparison with features and details reported in existing UFO literature? How might any findings

I might make confirm and/or disconfirm descriptions of and conclusions reached regarding UFOs within the mass of extant UFO research?

In the event, my archival search yielded twenty-one experiences of UFO 'encounters'/events contained within seventeen separate archival accounts: a significantly greater number than I had anticipated. What follows is an analysis of those twenty-one cases. Each account in the archive has a number and I have included that number in brackets after each testimony-extract.

## 2: Analysis

### Shape and Colour

As is well-known, the term 'Flying Saucer', which came to denote the 'archetypal' shape of such objects, was, in fact, a journalistic interpretation of a comment made by salesman Kenneth Arnold when describing the motion of the objects he saw on June 24th, 1947. The journalist, Bill Bequette, heard Arnold describe each one as moving like 'a saucer skipping over water', coined the term 'Flying Saucer', and the label stuck. Sure enough, descriptions of UFO sightings in subsequent years have been replete with descriptions of saucer-shaped, round, or disk-like objects, even though drawings made by Arnold reveal that what he actually saw were much closer to boomerangs in outline than to saucers.(ref unknown) What is still comparatively little-known, however, is the fact that a bewildering array of shapes has been reported within UFO literature in the years since Arnold's sighting, with whole studies being devoted to cases in which a single shape- often far removed from that of a saucer- has been described and examined (Marler 2013). Diversity, rather than unity, seems to be the order of

the day: at least as far as the shape of the UFOs is concerned.

This fact was reflected in the twenty-one cases examined within the RERC archive. Where a shape was reported, the descriptor 'saucer' occurred twice, 'circle' three times, 'ball' twice, 'trapezoid' twice, and 'city', 'surfboard', and 'bowler hat' once each. In one other case, it was not possible to determine if 'saucer' was being used to describe the actual shape or as an available term to describe an anomalous event including a bizarre aerial phenomenon.

Subjects' descriptions included the following:

'I couldn't believe what I was seeing. This large saucer shaped apparition was now quite large and so brilliant that it lit up the entire sky.' (4393)

'Though the rest of the sky was a dark navy colour dotted with stars, directly above our car &, I judged- not too far up- there was a complete circle of blackness.' (4242)

'It had just got dark and we were just sitting down to enjoy a drink, when suddenly a bright ball of light emerged from the top of the hill and moved quite quickly in an arc across the sky.' (4469)

'I noticed a pulsating light down the road [at] a distance that was in the shape of a surfboard and appeared to be hovering a foot above the ground.' (4812)

'I was looking towards the heavens and before me appeared a great piece of light travelling diagonally across the sky. It seemed to be not

much higher than a telephone pole. It was trapezoid in shape – being four foot square and twelve or fourteen feet long.’ (227)

As far as I am aware, no study of UFOs exists which has devoted exclusive attention to their colour. When considering colour within the wider context of other UFO studies, however, it is apparent that, as with shape, diversity predominates. Indeed, within the UFO literature virtually every colour is encountered within witnesses’ testimonies, a situation complicated by the fact that objects are often reported to have more than one colour or even to change colour whilst being observed.

Colour was reported in six of the twenty-one archival UFO accounts found, and if ‘black’ is included the figure rises to eight, although in each of these two cases there are complexities which are discussed below. Three objects were reported as being or in some sense emitting ‘red’: once exclusively, once in association with ‘orange’ and once in association with a variety of colours. ‘Blue’ was reported twice: once in association with ‘green.’ ‘Bright’ was used by subjects four times, although in each case it was not possible to determine what colour underlay or gave rise to the brightness.

Subjects’ descriptions of the colours of the objects they saw included the following:

‘Once, not being able to sleep at about midnight, I became conscious of a curious noise coming closer & closer as of an engine or engines purring, the noise persisted and became static, eventually I looked out of the window to discover the source, over the rooftops of the houses opposite was a

red sphere glowing and this quite obviously the source of the “engines” I had heard.’ (2751)

‘The object seemed to be cigar shaped and reddish-orange in color and just seemed to hover as we were awed by it.’ (3815)

‘I saw this thing which I can only liken to an immense bowler hat with a very thick rim. It appeared to be floating about six feet clear of the undergrowth, and a sort of blue light was coming from beneath it.’ (3371)

‘OH MY GOSH they were bigger than a car and surrounded by a halo of green light or greenish blue.’ (3978)

‘I saw just above the other apple tree on my left a circle of light, blue in the centre, round the blue a circle of amber, round the amber a circle of pink. Round the whole was a circle of clouds. The clouds seemed to be unfolding round the outer pink light which gave the whole the strange appearance of beckoning and pulling.’ (1948)

The two accounts in which the descriptor ‘black’ was used merit separate attention. One of the respondents described

‘[A] great, black and perfect circle which blocked out the moon and the stars. I could see stars all around the horizon.’ (1797).

The other described

‘[A] complete circle of blackness. Completely round. Completely black with no stars.’ (4242).

The similarities here are intriguing. In each case we are presented with the possibility of (a) something positioned between the witness and the sky to the extent that the night sky behind it was completely blocked or (b) something, as it were, 'cut out' from the night sky: not so much a presence as an absence. The identical, circular, shape is also of note. Indeed, it is very tempting here to conclude that each witness, widely separated from the other in terms of context, time and space, was describing essentially the same thing. We shall have more to say about these two cases as the analysis proceeds.

## Movement and Medium

In a bid to describe the behaviour of many of the frequently-reported objects described by witnesses, UFO researcher Luis Elizondo has recently set out what he dubs the 'Five Observables': characteristics most commonly reported in association with UFO sightings. He describes these as follows: (a) 'Positive Lift or Anti-Gravity' (UFOs can move without any means of propulsion or lift), (b) 'Instantaneous Acceleration' (UFOs can reach extraordinary rates of speed in little or no time), (c) 'Hypersonic Velocity' (UFOs often travel at speeds vastly greater than those of conventional aircraft), (d) 'Low Observability' (UFOs often seem invisible to conventional tracking means such as radar), and (e) 'Trans-Medium Travel' (UFOs often move apparently seamlessly through space, air and water, frequently exchanging one for the other with no interruption of their movement (Coulthard, 2021).

What is particularly striking about this list is the fact that four of the five 'Observables' relate directly or indirectly to movement: means of propulsion, rate of acceleration, speed, and transition from one 'environment' to another. In

view of this and of the widespread discussion that Elizondo's list of UFO 'features' has received, I was particularly interested to see whether or not any or all of his 'Five Observables' would be present within the RERC archival UFO reports.

In the event, description of movement was found in no fewer than fifteen of the twenty-one experiences examined. In every one of these cases no apparent means of propulsion could be discerned at all: the closest being the description of some sort of engine noise in account 2751. Hence, Elizondo's assertion that UFOs frequently exhibit no discernible means of propulsion was overwhelmingly confirmed.

Given the actual descriptors used, assessing the presence or otherwise of instantaneous acceleration proved more problematic, as did assessment of whether or not objects moved at speeds surpassing or greatly surpassing those of conventional aircraft. As regards acceleration, two accounts suggested at least a degree of rapidity. In account 1656, a 'very big', sparking 'star' which had appeared outside the subject's kitchen window was described as having 'moved off quite quickly' but whether such a departure could be described as 'instantaneous' is difficult if not impossible to determine. Account 4393 offered a little more, with the subject describing how at the end of her sighting a saucer-shaped object 'circled away' at 'furious speed.' As regards speed generally, rather more could be determined, with several respondents drawing specific attention to how quickly the UFOs in their sightings moved within their overall trajectories:

'It circled around at a furious speed, then came in and hovered around...for some minutes, as if searching for something. Suddenly it rose again to

some height, then circled away at the same furious speed as before, leaving the sky vacant except for the stars.’ (4393)

‘It had just got dark and we were sitting down to enjoy a drink, when suddenly a bright ball of light emerged from the top of the hill and moved quite quickly in an arc across the sky.’ (4469)

‘I saw what looked to be a flying saucer – before I could get out of bed – from the size of an egg it moved at great speed to the window.’

Taken together with the descriptions of acceleration, therefore, four accounts described objects as moving ‘quite quickly’ (twice), ‘at furious speed’, and at ‘great speed.’ In the remaining accounts where movement was reported it proved impossible to determine from descriptions given either the rates of acceleration or speed of movement in general.

No subject attempted any subsequent check to determine whether or not the objects they saw were tracked by radar or some other means: hence Elizondo’s fourth ‘observable’ was impossible to confirm or disconfirm. However, his fifth, ‘Trans-Medium Travel’, was apparently confirmed in one intriguing case:

I was conducting investigations at a place called Keta near the Togoland border and had to stay at a Rest House near the sea. Going early to bed I was awakened by the cries of birds, the barking of dogs, etc and was amazed to see a large bright light ascend from the sea and sway in the sky within my vision, and after some time it moved straight over the Rest House, and by getting out of

bed and looking upwards from the window I could see it immediately overhead.’ (800)

Two other cases are also of note, here. In account 4469 the UFO was seen by witnesses to emerge from within a hill ‘in the Matthews range, in the foothills of Kenya’, suggesting an apparent ability to move through and out of the ground and into the air, whilst in account 3978, what appears to have been the same ‘green light’ was seen by the witness on two separate occasions: the first time ‘moving rapidly under the water of our harbour, during the daytime’ and the second time in the early morning coming round a bend at the top of a hill when he was rushing, late, to work.

Despite the relatively small number of UFO accounts located within the archive and the relative ambiguity of some of the descriptors used it was possible to confirm- at least to an extent- four of the five ‘typical’ UFO features as presented by Luiz Elizondo. This was one of the most intriguing of this project’s findings and further comment will be reserved for the conclusion.

## Fear and Watching

Given the vast amount of UFO literature- a “slowly evolving quagmire” according to UFOlogist Micah Hanks (Graham 2017)- it may seem odd that comparatively little attention has been paid to the effects of UFO ‘encounters’ on witnesses, but this has been the case with one or two notable exceptions. For example: researcher Ryan Sprague has recently examined cases in which their UFO encounters impacted witnesses and affected them in various ways, including the triggering of searches for ‘deep meaning’; searches comparable in some senses to those reported by the subjects of religious and spiritual experience. (Sprague 2020) In only one case within the RERC archive was

anything found that was comparable to this, with the subject of account 3815 reporting 'a strong urge to start reading the Bible which I had never felt compelled to do before' as a result of her encounter with a hovering, cigar-shaped, reddish-orange UFO which filled her with a sense of awe and led to 'dreams with U.F.O.s and religion in them.' Indeed, RERC accounts of UFO experiences, far from being positive and uplifting during and subsequent to the events described, turned out to contain descriptors strongly suggestive of fear and associated emotions:

'At that stage of life I was not afraid of God, Devil, man or animal but never since then have I had such a scare.' (1797)

'I was petrified...I had the feeling of being engulfed...' (B1)<sup>2</sup>

'I had become very frightened.' (3371)

'I was petrified...I don't know how long I stood there but vaguely remember...my friend pulling my arm and leading me back to the car....It was at this point that the experience was just too much for me and I broke down and started crying due to the terror I had felt.' (4812)

In an archival study published in 1999, Merete Demant Jakobsen found 170 accounts of what she dubbed 'negative spiritual experiences' from an analysis of the first 4000 accounts. These included experiences of evil within a variety of contexts and amounted to 4.25% of the total

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<sup>2</sup> . This account, which could not be retrieved from the archive, is reproduced in Timothy Beardsworth's analysis of the first 1000 archival accounts, *A Sense Of Presence* (2009) Lampeter, RERC, p. 1 and is henceforth designated as 'B1'.

number examined: a very small percentage.(9) By contrast, six of the twenty-one UFO experiences I uncovered within the archive for this study contained descriptors associated with fear: some 28.6% of the total. The contrast is striking, and merits further comment later.

One further and intriguing thing is also of note in connection with the feelings reported by subjects (or, in one case, those accompanying them): namely, a sense of being watched or observed. Descriptions of this curious motif included the following:

'I knew I was being watched and believe now they knew I knew, whoever they are.' (3978)

'They did not appear to do anything but observe.' (4832)

'Upon our return to the car both girls themselves were in a state of terror and stated that they felt as if they were being watched...' (4812)

'[F]rom the size of an egg it moved at great speed to the window- an object the size of a large crab- with fearsome underpart which watched me- at the only point to do so through the six-inch curtain gap...I knew it could tell what I was thinking...' (B1) (Emphases in the original)

Taken all together, these findings suggest that the UFO experiences stand in direct contrast to the majority of reported experiences within the RERC archive. Within an admittedly small sample, reports of unpleasant sensations involving fear and a sense of being watched appear to recur a disproportionately large number of times. Indeed, when reports of the effects on animals are factored into the

analysis, the trend becomes clearer still. In account 800, for example, a bright light reported as emerging from the sea and into the air was signalled by 'the cries of birds [and] the barking of dogs...' whilst the great, black and perfect circle' reported by the subject of account 1797 appears to have terrified his dog:

'[H]e made the most peculiar {sic} noises. Sort of a combined whine, growl and yelps all at the same time...and when I opened the door to let him out he refused to go...He huddled up against my legs, as he had done several times in the house, so hard that he almost knocked me down.' (1797)

Attention has frequently been drawn within UFO literature to the effect of these objects on animals. In his seminal 1977 study of sightings contained in US Air Force Files as part of their initial studies into UFOs, for example, astronomer and early UFO expert J. Allen Hynek differentiated between experiences he dubbed 'Close Encounters' of the First, Second, and Third Kinds, with effects on animals being considered within the first two of these categories. As part of his study into these, Hynek reported that the nearby presence of UFOs made dogs bark, whimper, shake, and hide, whilst effects on cattle were also reported, including one case in which a bull was so terrified that it 'bent the iron bar in the ground to which it was tethered.'(Jakobsen 1999).

Before moving on from this stage of the analysis, therefore, it is worth considering two further cases in which the reported events apparently affected animals.

We have already had cause to note the sense of terror reported by the writer of account 4812: both on the part of himself and those who were with him. However, notable

too was the effect of the unfolding events on the surrounding wildlife, reflected in his comment toward the beginning of his account that: 'There were absolutely no noises of any kind from insects or other wildlife whatsoever which was most unusual as it was a rather warm summer evening.' This strange silence was mirrored in account 1948, in which rabbits and pigeons were first agitated by unusual events including a slowly-moving multi-coloured aerial object ('At that moment the rabbits and pigeons went frantic. The rabbits scampered about in their hut like mad things and the pigeons all flapped their wings as if they were taking flight together') before being rendered strangely silent: ('[A]fter their mad rush and flutter they all settled down without a sound as though they were all dead.')

## Stranger and Stranger

As noted, above, US astronomer J. Allen Hynek was the first to use the term 'Close Encounter(s)' to differentiate between various kinds of 'close up' UFO sightings. He used the term 'Close Encounter of the Third Kind' to designate a UFO event in which occupants were reported 'in association with the UFO sighting.' Hynek acknowledged that these types of experiences were 'characterized by a high degree of strangeness and by the complete bewilderment of the witnesses' (Hynek 2020) and I was particularly interested to ascertain whether any such accounts could be located in the archive.

In the event, three such accounts were found. Two made reference to beings of the 'bedroom invader' type as popularised by UFOlogists such as Budd Hopkins, David Jacobs and John Mack in the 1990s: beings which apparently appear in subjects' bedrooms, often waking

them up.(Hopkins 2020) Four months after seeing a UFO, the writer of account 3815 wrote how one night--

‘I came wide awake out of my sleep and asked myself who was awakening me. When I turned over there appeared this being next to my bed who was blacker than the room itself. It looked like he had a wetsuit on and the most perfect shape I had ever seen. When I first looked at it our eyes met (but it had no eyes) and it was like a standoff. When I started to travel downward with my eyes, all of a sudden out of its chest, [it] shot evil at me. I actually saw evil hang in mid-air. It just shot out like an electric current at me and my whole insides just cried out in fear...’

Comparable to account 3815 was account 4832 in which the presence of three humanoids was reported, again of the ‘bedroom invader’ type, who on various occasions ‘appeared on my side toward the bottom of the bed. They did not appear to do anything but observe.’

Even odder still was the experience recounted in account 3371 which began when, whilst in bed, the subject was ordered by an invisible voice to ‘Get up!’ His account continues:

I got up, dressed, went down and out to the garden shed where I keep my bicycle. I mounted up and headed straight for the heath land behind \_\_\_\_\_ common. Don’t ask me why because I cannot remember being told to go there. Anyway, I eventually arrived and looking up, I saw this thing which I can only liken to an immense bowler hat with a very thick rim. It appeared to be floating about six feet clear of the undergrowth, and a sort

of blue light was coming from beneath it. At the same time, I could hear a sound coming from it, and this I cannot describe because, to be brief, I've never heard anything like it in my life. Then suddenly there was this shape before me. I did not see it come from the other thing, all I know is that the top part of it did appear to resemble a human being...All I can remember was this thing which was perhaps twelve feet tall, although in my terror, I quite failed to see if it was indeed standing on the ground...I think the most frightening part was the pointed horns with the circle of what appeared to be fire which kept spinning round the horns at great speed. This [was] coupled with the triangular openings where one normally expects to see eyes but, in this case all I could see was this mass of green fire glaring from the openings....I had the feeling that here before me was a far superior intelligence to mine.'

### 3: Conclusions

#### Confirmations and Refutations

How far, then, have the findings of this RERC archival study confirmed or refuted conclusions found within existing Ufological literature? Overwhelmingly it has become clear that they have provided a high level of confirmation: particularly as regards diversity of shape and colour of objects and objects' reported modes of motion. Granted, we have seen little that hints at any form of positive spiritual transformation resulting from a UFO encounter, with negative feelings having been seen to dominate many subjects' reports, even extending to animal disturbance. Yet even here we may detect a degree of confirmation, with no lesser an authority than J. Allen Hynek alluding to the fact

that a UFO 'Close Encounter' is 'often a frightening experience, and always an awesome one.'(Hynek 2020) It is also worth noting here the absence of sound within all but two of the reported experiences: something else which, whilst not invariant, has been typically reported in Ufological literature.

## Perceptions and Realities

Finally, is it possible as a result of this study to determine what these respondents actually saw? To say anything about the realities underlying their strange experiences? At the very least, C.G Jung's oft-cited comment about Flying Saucers, 'something is seen but one doesn't know what', seems amply supported.(Jung, 1987) Further, on occasions when they did attempt to identify their 'unidentifieds', it is clear that not all respondents were able to accept the identifications given to them. For example: the writer of account 1656 includes the interesting fact that she wrote to TV celebrity astronomer Patrick Moore after the event to gain an explanation for her sighting. His reply, "'No mystery. It is the planet Venus'" appears not to have satisfied the writer, for her account ends on a rather sceptical note: 'I don't believe it. No ordinary star moved that fast.' And, indeed, her description of the quickly moving object as having 'sparks coming out of the sides and something out of the bottom and the top' sounds very unlike Venus. Elsewhere, witnesses appeared to be content with a lack of identification, as reflected in the writer of account 4469's comment that '[W]e just called it [a] U.F.O – that is, unidentified by us.'

What also seems clear is that the small number of UFO testimonies within the archive forms a group distinct from those of orbs and lightforms. The UFOs' locations, modes of movement, and effects on witnesses- both human and

animal- make this clear, as do the strange, very un-orblike shapes that they frequently adopt. Further, unlike lightforms, where a 'common core' of sorts can be determined within the hundreds of testimonies that the RERC archive contains, it appears that there is no 'core' to the UFO reports: although the similarities between certain of the descriptions do indeed suggest that the 'same' phenomenon might be being reported.

For now, then, the mystery remains. At the very least, however, the presence of such a small but extremely interesting group of testimonies bears ample witness to the richness and diversity of the RERC archive: and of the wonders that await any intrepid explorer determined to uncover and examine its many and hidden treasures.

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Mark Fox is an independent writer, speaker and researcher.  
For more, go to [www.markfox.co.uk](http://www.markfox.co.uk)

## Recent US Government UFO Study Initiatives; a Brief Overview

Robert Moore

In 1969 the United States government believed it had finally demystified the UFO controversy, following the negative conclusions of the **University of Colorado study** project. This was instigated in 1966 when a wave of sightings in Dexter, Michigan generated congressional interest among various senators most notably future president Gerald Ford. The USAF had, since 1952, been running a UFO study effort called **Project Blue Book** but by the late 1960s it was widely viewed as institutionally negative and at administrative low ebb (having less than half a dozen permanent members of staff).

When the findings of the University of Colorado study were published in 1969, the project director, Dr. Edward Condon (ironically chosen for his reputation of being unafraid to confront officialdom) rejected the reality of UFOs, prefacing the printed version with a negative assessment of the subject. It did not however escape the notice of various commentators that a quarter of the sightings assessed by the project were deemed “unexplained”. Additionally, certain staff members left the project, unhappy at Condon’s negative approach.

Nonetheless, while flawed as a debunking exercise, its conclusions were deemed sufficiently sound to justify the termination of *Project Blue Book* in 1969. Thereafter, the US government resisted any further initiatives to instigate another official UFO study. When Jimmy Carter (who observed what he interpreted to be a “UFO” in 1969) was elected president in 1976 he asked NASA to establish a

study project on UFOs – a proposal the agency quickly rebuffed. Additional attempts, often involving prominent members of the American UFO community also failed.

Nonetheless, Col. John Alexander founded the **Advanced Theoretical Physics Project** in 1985, a semi-official group where UFOs, parapsychology and the consequences of exotic physics were discussed. They were careful not to generate paperwork that could be uncovered by Freedom of Information requests. It seems no significant conclusions regarding the subject were made, other than there was no official UFO “cover up” policy or any secret study. This effort is a little tainted in the eyes of some by its connection to Major General Albert Stubblebine (infamous for his unsuccessful attempts to pass through walls) and indirectly to Jim Channon and his attempts to found a hippy army unit with Jedi-like powers (the “1st Earth Battalion”).

Indeed, if there were any breakthroughs about UFOs and their relationship to US officialdom it came through the passing of **Freedom of Information** Act legislation which released a torrent of information of post 1960’s UFO events, although most of this documentation was often heavily redacted.

Time passed but the UFO issue failed to go away, especially in the United States. **MUFON** (Mutual UFO Network) became the default agency dealing with UFO incidents in America, although not always without controversy... And there the status quo rested. A notable event at Stephenville, Texas in January 2008 caused interest but, in its wake, everything was as it was before. While MUFON concluded the event was inexplicable, the USAF claimed the sightings were instigated by an exercise involving a mass formation of fighter jets.

Before that however in 2004 (unknown to even most informed people at the time) an event had occurred that would be a notable catalyst for change. On the 14th of November 2004 off the coast of San Diego, a training flight of F18 jets associated with the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz were asked to investigate aerial anomalies in their vicinity, most notably one described as resembling a “tic tac”. This was subsequently filmed by an aircraft vectored in to investigate this manifestation.

In December 2017 details of two “UFO” videos - informally known as **Gimbal** and **FILR** – were discussed by the *New York Times* and subsequently posted online. A similar video - termed **Gofast** - was leaked a short time later and promoted by *The Washington Post*. Notably, the **FILR** video capture was reputedly related to the 2004 USS Nimitz event, while the other two were filmed between 2014-2015 in other locations. All seemed to have been taken from a fighter jet cockpit, the display annotated with various technical read-outs that seemingly supported their anomalous nature.

It subsequently transpired these videos had been in the archives of a project called **AATIP (Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program)**. This little-publicised - but unclassified - study initiative had been commenced in 2007 and had received \$22 million of government funding over a period of five years. It had been initiated through the intervention of Democrat senator Harry Reid in conjunction with aerospace contractor Robert Bigelow.

The latter is known to have an interest in UFOs and has lobbied for the recommencement of official UFO studies for several decades. Around 2009-10 he sponsored a UFO study initiative in conjunction with MUFON, focusing on detailed data recovery in regard to potentially significant

events; some confusion exists as to the findings of this study. As with the so-called **MUFON STAR TEAM** project AATIP focused on data potentially of use in the development of better aerospace technology (including offensive technology).

The head of ATTIP was an individual with a colourful and contested past called Luis Elizondo, who resigned from the project in 2017 in protest over undue secrecy in relation to (and affecting) this study effort. It is widely believed (and claimed by Elizondo himself) that he leaked the Gimbal, FILR and Gofast videos to the US media as a response to his misgivings. While ATTIP was officially terminated 2012 it is suspected other initiatives continued its work. At least one assessment was published by AATIPP, including one (it is said) more than 400 pages, but has never been publicly released. Since that time Elizondo has been involved in various public UFO initiatives (most notably To the Stars Academy) and has assisted with various US UFO documentaries for the History Channel and other broadcasters.

Shortly after the videos were released (in December 2017) the existence of AATIP was formally acknowledged by the Department of Defence who confirmed that now famous three videos were authentic. A hint of what ATTIP may have concluded is possibly reflected in various interviews made by Elizondo relating to what he terms the “5 notable “Observables and Physics of the Phenomenon”, these being:

- 1: Anti-gravity lift (flight without wings and with little resistance from gravity/atmospherics).
- 2: Sudden and instantaneous acceleration (a noted attribute of UFOs since 1947).
- 3: Hypersonic velocities without signatures (reported high speed manoeuvres by UFOs generating no sonic boom).

- 4: Low observability (i.e. "cloaking")
- 5: "Trans-medium travel" (i.e. the ability to easily traverse between environmental mediums such as the atmosphere, bodies of water - and possibly space).

The use of the term **UAP** (unidentified Atmosphere Phenomena) instead of "UFO" in this and subsequent US government study efforts is notable. It has been suggested that this is due to the term "UFO" being equated with "alien spacecraft", while "UAP" is more neutral, rendering project funding less difficult. Equally, the term might have been adopted to frustrate Freedom of Information Act requests. The term was also used by the 1997 British **Condign** study (enacted on behalf of DI55 (tech) and has over the past decade seems to be popular amongst those conducting any official study, whatever the underlying motivation.

On June 24, 2020 as a consequence of these developments, the US Intelligence Committee made it an official requirement for selected government bodies to monitor and assess UAP events. Following this, on June 25 2021, the Office for the Director of National Intelligence publicly released a preliminary assessment of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena, now widely known as the **Pentagon UFO Report**. Various Government agencies contributed to this assessment (including the US Army, Navy, and Air Force along with the FBI, FAAM, NOAA, the NIC etc). Their main conclusion was that "limited data leaves most UAP events unexplained". This is comparable to the British Air Ministry's oft cited stance on the issue. While the MoD inferred that with further data input most (if not all) reports are likely explicable in prosaic terms, the Pentagon report adopted a different, more broad-minded interpretation. While it concluded these events could be instigated by objects such as drones from rival foreign

powers it considered this unlikely. It also alluded to a number of reports within the study dataset it considered difficult to explain in mundane terms; exhibiting to some degree the various 5 notable “Observables and Physics of the Phenomenon” cited by Elizondo. It is notable that, while three notable events contributed to this new wave of governmental concern (including the Nimitz event), the study assessed a further 141 account and of these only one could be given a mundane solution.

It also stated this overview was merely an overview and gave recommendations and objectives for future study. On its release there was controversy as to its actual composition with anything from 2 to 300 or more pages reputedly classified and not released to the public. Shortly afterwards a new official UAP study project - the **Airborne Object Identification and Management Synchronization Group** – was launched to continue the work initiated by the Pentagon UFO Study. On July 20th 2022 a new directive was released by the Deputy Secretary of Defence renamed and expanded this initiative, rebranded as the **All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO)**. Additional to this, on June 22, 2022, NASA announced the launch of their own UFO study initiative, unrelated to any of the UAP projects; its aim being to use the various tools available to modern science to shed more light on the UAP issue.

So, what is to be made of this? It is clear, despite the wishes of some in the US Government back in the 1960s, the UFO issue has not gone away. The topic has continued to linger in the public consciousness for decades, both in America and globally. It appears the US government’s renewed interest was instigated by a number of apparently inexplicable events involving service personnel (most notably the USS Nimitz incident) which have galvanised

efforts for a renewed assessment of the UFO issue. The influence of influential lobbyists such as Robert Bigelow has also been a factor. The DoD and NASA are both relatively new initiatives but do appear to be relatively impartial. The final conclusions of these studies thus could go either way and will doubtless be influenced by the quality (or otherwise) of the case studies they encounter. One hopes that they will be unswayed by ideological actors on either side of the UFO debate and provide some definitive answers, but also will not obsess over exotic technological solutions and take into account both psycho-social factors and the long history of encounters with “the Other”.

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# Gravitation, Magnetic and Topographic Analysis of the St. Michael Line

Simon L Grace

## Abstract

*This paper reports the results of a gravitational, magnetic and topographic analysis of the St. Michael Line, a major ley running diagonally across southern England from Carn Lês Boel in Cornwall to Hopton in Norfolk. The analysis was performed to establish if there are any gravitational, magnetic or topographic anomalies and features that support or refute the existence of the ley. The analysis was performed at a high resolution over the Penwith peninsula and a lower resolution for the St. Michael line as a whole. The study was based on the Great Britain Aeromagnetic and Land Gravity datasets produced by the British Geological Survey (2022). Results found no physical or statistical evidence of gravitational, magnetic field or topographic features that support the existence of the ley. The role gravitational and magnetic field anomalies may play in the formation of leys cannot however be dismissed as the effect may be at a localised level well below the 'granularity' of the datasets used in this study. Field surveys will therefore need to be performed to establish if highly localised gravitational and magnetic field anomalies are present.*

## 1.0 Introduction

The subject of ley lines or leys is highly controversial; conceived in the 1920s, re-discovered by the New Age

movement of the 1960s - 70s and embraced by early earth mysteries researchers, the concept continues to permeate and underpin 'alternative' thinking to this day. The scientific consensus is that leys do not exist (are 'nonsense' and 'poppycock') and that the geometries and alignments they exhibit are, at best, by chance. This paper provides a gravitational, magnetic and topographic analysis of the St. Michael Line, a major ley running diagonally across southern England from Carn Lês Boel in Cornwall to Hopton in Norfolk in order to establish if there are any gravitational, magnetic or topographic anomalies and features that support or refute its existence.

The following terminology is used within this paper when referring to the St. Michael line:

- St. Michael line – the ley as a whole.
- Mary line and / or Michael line – the sinuous lines of yin and yang energy that are purportedly associated with the St. Michael line.

## 2.0 A Very Brief History of Leys

It is widely accepted that the concept of leys was developed by Alfred Watkins in 1921 (Devereux and Thompson, 1979 and Heselton, 1991). During a visit to Blackwardine in Hereford, Watkins noticed a straight line alignment between a number of ancient features (earth works, hill points, a Roman camp, etc.). Watkins believed that ancient sites were linked by trackways and markers in straight line alignments. Over the next decade or so Watkins further developed and circulated his ideas within a series of books; *Early British Trackways* (1922), *The Old Straight Track* (1925), *The Ley Hunter's Manual* (1927) and *Archaic Tracks Around Cambridge* (1932). Leys, as envisaged by Watkins, were simply

straight-line alignments formed between landscape features such as:

- Beacon hills.
- Bronze Age, Roman or Saxon mounds and barrows.
- Bronze Age camps and hill forts.
- Castles.
- Circular moats.
- Crossroads and road alignments.
- Notches where the skyline meets a range of hills or mountains.
- Pre-reformation churches.
- Standing stones and similar ancient monuments.
- Traditional or holy wells.
- Tree clumps.

Based on simplistic statistical analysis Watkins considered four or more aligned sites to be indicative of deliberate alignment.

The Straight Track Postal Portfolio Club was formed shortly after the publication of the *Ley Hunter's Manual*. The club allowed ley hunters to circulate research and undertake organised field trips. Falling interest and membership led to the Straight Track Club closing in 1948. Interest in leys re-emerged in the 1960s leading to the founding of the Ley Hunters Club in 1962 and publication of *The Ley Hunter* magazine from 1965 onwards.

More than any other book it was perhaps *The View Over Atlantis* (Michell, 1973) that presented the ideas of Watkins and the nascent Earth Mysteries movement to a wider audience for the first time. Included in the heady mix Michell drew on and made links between Watkins' linear concept of leys and Chinese geomancy,

specifically Lung Mei or dragon paths. In simple terms Chinese geomancy envisages sinuous currents of 'life force' termed chi (or qi) as flowing within the earth, the currents having yin (female, passive, negative) and yang (male, active, positive) characteristics.

Michell is widely credited with the discovery of the St. Michael line alignment across southern England in the 1960s. (The ley takes its name from the high number of churches and chapels named after St. Michael through which it passes). Miller and Broadhurst (1989) however report that the first indications of the existence of this ley were presented by Colquhoun in 1952 who made reference to a line of 'magnetic energy' extending from the east coast of England to the tip of Cornwall.

During the 1970s researchers including Tom Graves used dowsing to investigate the purported energy of ancient standing stones, stone circles and leys. See Graves (1978) for a comprehensive treatise from this period. Earth energies subsequently emerged as a special interest group within the dowsing community. Dowsing would appear to be one of the few tools available that enabled researchers to detect the energy present at ancient sites. At least one long term scientific study was performed at the Rollright Stones, Oxfordshire in an attempt to establish if there were any energies present at the site that could be detected and explained using conventional scientific instrumentation and paradigms. Findings were largely inconclusive although some anomalous events were detected using techniques such as infra-red photography and Geiger counters (Devereux, 1999).

In the late 1980s Miller and Broadhurst undertook what has become the definitive work on the St. Michael line. Miller, an accomplished earth energy dowser and the author Broadhurst used dowsing to track the St. Michael line along its entire length from Carn Lês Boel at the far southwest of Cornwall to Hopton in Norfolk. Their work was published as *The Sun and The Serpent* (Miller and Broadhurst, 1989).

What emerged from this undertaking was a picture of a ley as consisting of three components:

- A generally straight-line geometric alignment linking sites as conceptualised by Watkins.
- Two sinuous lines of 'earth energy' one yin, one yang that intertwine about the geometric alignment and cross each other at major points termed nodes. For the St. Michael line Miller and Broadhurst named the yin line the Mary line and the yang line the Michael line.

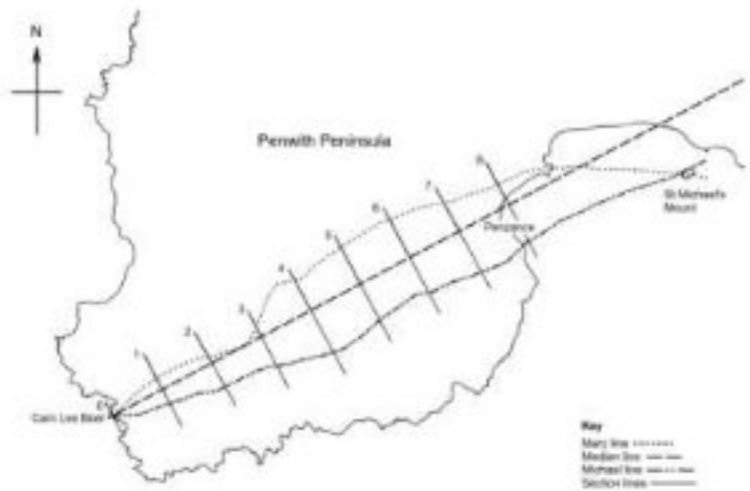


Figure 1 – The St. Michael Line from Carn Lês Boel to St. Michael's Mount

Figure 1 illustrates the path of the Mary and Michael lines as they cross the Penwith peninsula in the far southwest of Cornwall. Node points are located at Carn Lês Boel and St. Michael's mount. It has been reproduced with the kind permission of Penwith Press from reproductions of Miller's original marked up Ordnance Survey (OS) maps (Penwith Press, 2021).

The median line of Figure 1 is a straight line of best fit for the St. Michael line as a whole (590 km long). As a consequence the node located on St. Michael's Mount sits to its south.

The sincerity and honesty of the work conducted by Miller and Broadhurst is beyond refute. The question

that requires answering is what are dowzers detecting when they dowse energy lines such as the Mary and Michael lines?

## 3.0 Data, Area of Study and Method

### 3.1 Geophysical and Geographic Data

The geophysical and geographic data used as the basis for the study was as follows:

1. A copy of Miller's hand marked up OS maps (Penwith Press, 2021) charting the position of the Mary and Michael lines. These were digitised for use within a Geographic Information System (GIS).
2. Gravitational and magnetic anomaly data was obtained from the Great Britain Aeromagnetic and Land Gravity data sets (British Geological Survey, 2022). Both data sets are provided as Comma Separated Variables (CSV) files for loading to a GIS.
3. Geological data (bedrock geology and faulting) was obtained from the 1:625,000 digital geological maps published by the British Geological Survey (2022).
4. Base mapping data was obtained using the very comprehensive 1:50,000 digital map of the United Kingdom termed the Open Zoomstack (Ordnance Survey, 2021). This geopackage is again for use within a GIS.

Sources (2) and (3) contain British Geological Survey materials © UKRI (2022). Sources (2) to (4) contain public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. All GIS work was performed using QGIS 3.10 on a Linux Mint 20.3 operating system.

### 3.2 Area of Study

The Penwith peninsula (Figure 1) at the far west of Cornwall was selected for the high resolution element of this study for the reasons set out below:

- **Bedrock geology** – This very largely consists of the Godolphin granite intrusion from which the peninsula is formed. At the north west edge of the peninsula a band of Mylor slates extends from Porth Ledden to Portheras Cove. At the east of the peninsula the area encompassing Newlyn and Penzance is again dominated by Mylor slates. The path of the Mary and Michael lines across the peninsula largely occurs through granite, the only fundamental change being where the lines enter the Penzance area and the geology changes to slates. The fact that a large section of the path of both lines occurs in an area of homogenous geology (Godolphin granite intrusion) meant that the influence of changes in bedrock geology on the path of the line could likely be understood if required.
- **Geological faulting** – The Penwith peninsula is entirely free of major geological faults (British Geological Survey, 2022). This meant that the effect of geological faults on the path of the Mary and Michael lines could be eliminated from the study.

- Quality of mapping - The path of the Mary and Michael lines across the peninsula is documented to a high level of detail in the marked-up OS maps made by Miller in the late 1980s.
- Plethora of ancient monuments – The Penwith peninsula is rich in well preserved and well documented ancient monuments such as the Boscawen Un stone circle, Blind Fiddler standing stone and many others. The high number of ancient monuments through which the Mary and Michael lines pass was envisaged as supporting field work at later stages of a more long-term study. Further to this the ancient monuments present in the area were well documented by Michell (1974).
- Proximity – The Penwith peninsula is within a couple of hours travelling time of the author’s home enabling ease of access in the event that field work was required.

The low-resolution study considered the entire path of the St. Michael line from Carn Lês Boel in far southwest of Cornwall to Hopton on the east coast of Norfolk.

### 3.3 Method – Penwith Peninsula

The 17 km distance between Carn Lês Boel and St. Michael’s Mount was arbitrarily divided into 12 and section lines added, see Figure 1. Gravitational, magnetic, and topographic views were then developed for each section line based on geophysics and cartographic data. The completed section lines were then visually reviewed to identify if the Mary and Michael lines followed any

gravitational, magnetic field or physical anomalies. In the event only the eight section lines between Carn Lês Boel and Penzance were used due to the Great Britain Land Gravity dataset (British Geological Survey 2022) being restricted solely to the United Kingdom (UK) land mass, i.e.. analysis could not be performed for the section of the lines traversing Mount's Bay.<sup>3</sup>

Finally a **Student's t test** (see Appendix A) was performed to establish if there was a statistically significant difference between the gravity and magnetic field values associated with the Mary or Michael lines and a line with no geomantic significance, i.e. the purely geometric median line.

### 3.4 Method – St. Michael Line as a Whole

In order to analyse the St. Michael line as a whole a **Student's t test** was performed to understand if there was a statistically significant difference between the gravity and magnetic field values occurring at the St. Michael line's node points and similarly spaced node points on a line of no geomantic significance, i.e.. a pseudo ley. Nodes occur where the Mary and Michael lines cross each other, their positions are described within Miller and Broadhurst (1989).

The pseudo ley was produced by plotting a line approximately 4 km north of the St. Michael line across

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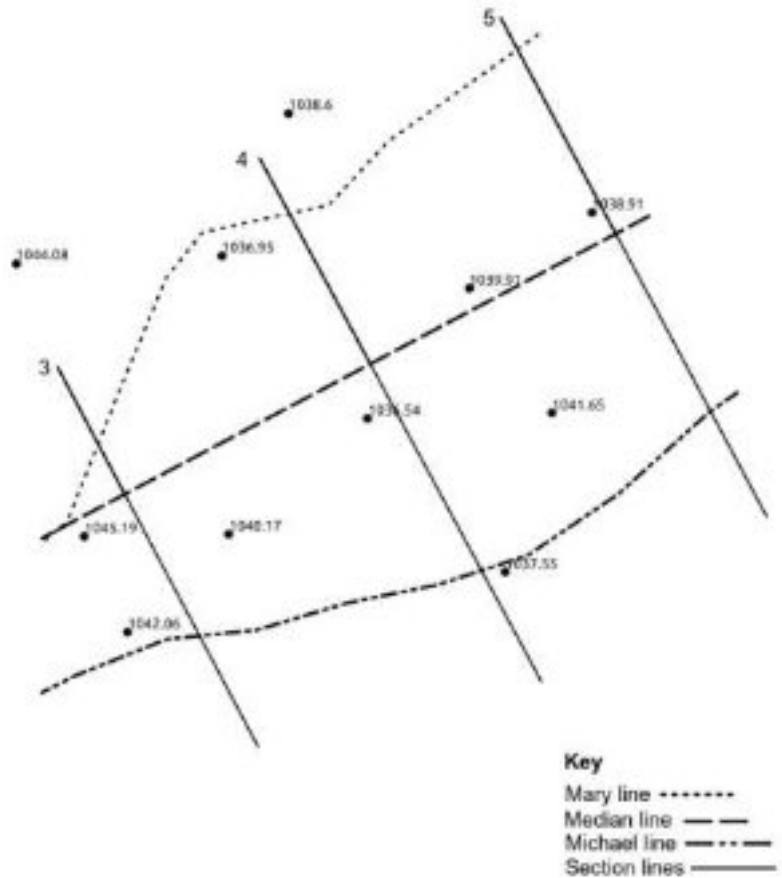
<sup>3</sup> Note: A gravity data set is available from the British Geological Survey that provides coverage of the sea area surrounding the UK. Its purchase is however prohibitively expensive for the self-financed researcher.

the full width of southern England. The pseudo ley therefore shares broadly the same bedrock geology as the St. Michael line. Node points were added to the pseudo ley at the same intervals as those of the St. Michael line.

## 4.0 Gravitational and Magnetic Field Cross Sections

### 4.1 Penwith Peninsula Gravitational Sections

Figure 2 provides a close-up view of Penwith peninsula section lines 3, 4 and 5 with the gravity readings from the Great Britain Land Gravity dataset (British Geological Survey, 2022) superimposed on the digitised Mary and Michael lines.



**Figure 2 – Example Land Gravity Data**

The Great Britain Land Gravity dataset (British Geological Survey, 2022) provides discrete readings typically spaced at distances in the order of 1 km to 1.5 km. The gravity readings are in units of mGal (milli Galileo) with the standard value for the acceleration due to gravity of 980,000 mGal (9.8 m/s<sup>2</sup>) subtracted in order that

anomalies can be more readily discerned. Each gravity reading is geo-located by a set of geographical coordinates (easting and northing).

In order to plot the gravity values along the axis of each section line a technique had to be developed to interpolate the gravity at any point of interest based on the value of the nearest adjacent gravity readings. The solution to this problem lay in planar geometry and is explained in full in Appendix B. The method assumes that gravity varies linearly between data points and will clearly not account for any localised anomalies present between the data points.

Figure 3 (overleaf) presents a series of plots illustrating the calculated gravity values along the axis of each section line. Gravity was calculated at 200 m intervals measured outwards from a 0 datum point corresponding to where a section line crosses the median line. Distances to the northwest of the 0 datum have been arbitrarily assigned a negative value and those to the southeast a positive value. The vertical lines labelled as Mary and Michael purely represent the position of each line along the axis of the section line

Insufficient gravity data was available within the data set to enable a gravity plot to be produced for section line 0. The gravity at Carn Lês Boel was however estimated as 1049.18 mGal by linearly interpolating between the two nearest data points.

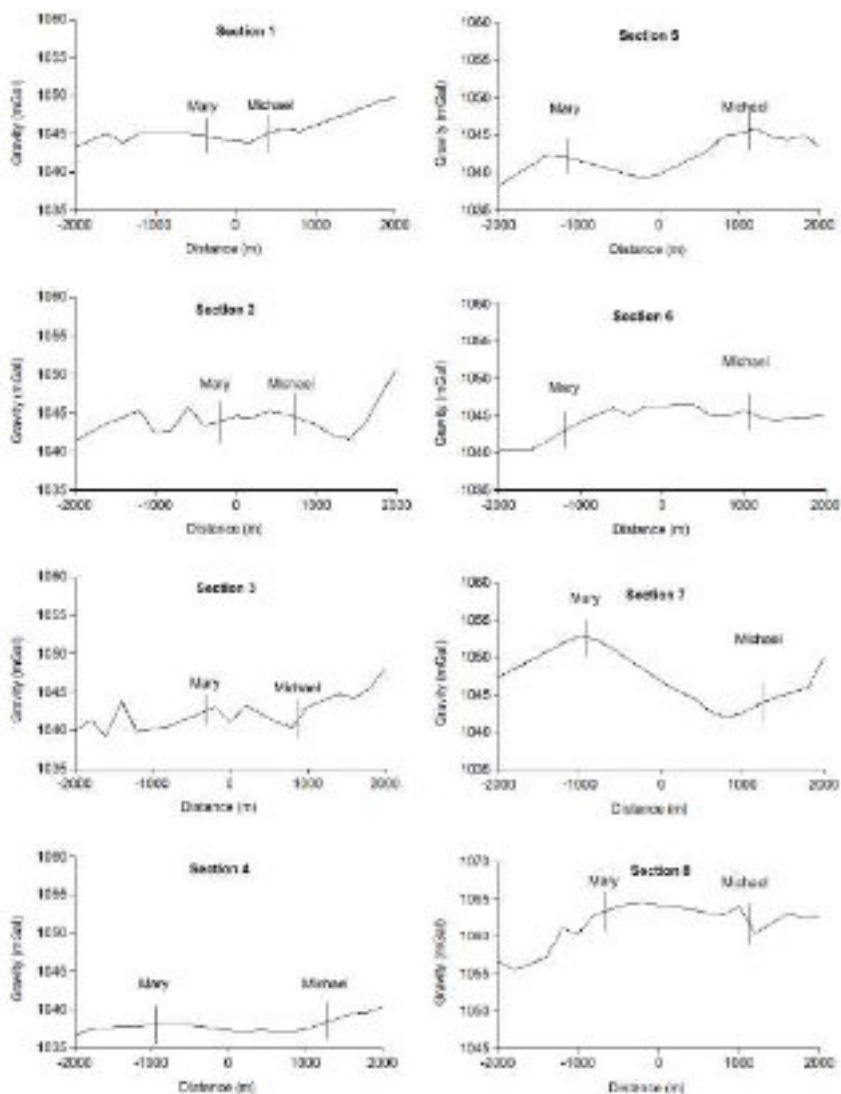


Figure 3 – Gravity Plots for Section Lines 1 to 8

## 4.2 Magnetic Field Analysis

The Great Britain Aeromagnetic dataset (British Geological Survey, 2022) provides discrete readings typically spaced at distances in the order of 200 m to 1000 m. The magnetic field readings are in units of nT (nano Tesla) with the International Geomagnetic Reference Field (IGRF) values for 1990 removed to enable local features to be readily discerned. Each magnetic field reading is geolocated by a set of geographical coordinates (easting and northing). When viewed in a GIS the data set is presented almost identically to the gravitational data (see Figure 2). In order to determine the magnetic field value along the axis of each section line the same planar geometry interpolation technique developed for the gravitational data was applied (Appendix B). The method again assumes that the magnetic field varies linearly between data points and will clearly miss any anomalies present between data points.

Figure 4 (overleaf) presents a series of plots illustrating the calculated magnetic field values along the axis of each section line. Magnetic field values were calculated at 200 m intervals from the median line which again formed the datum. Distances northwest and southeast of the datum are again assigned negative and positive values respectively. The vertical lines labelled as Mary and Michael again simply represent the position of each line.

Insufficient magnetic field data was available within the data set to enable a magnetic field plot to be produced for section line 0. The magnetic field at Carn Lès Boel was however calculated as -41.46 nT.

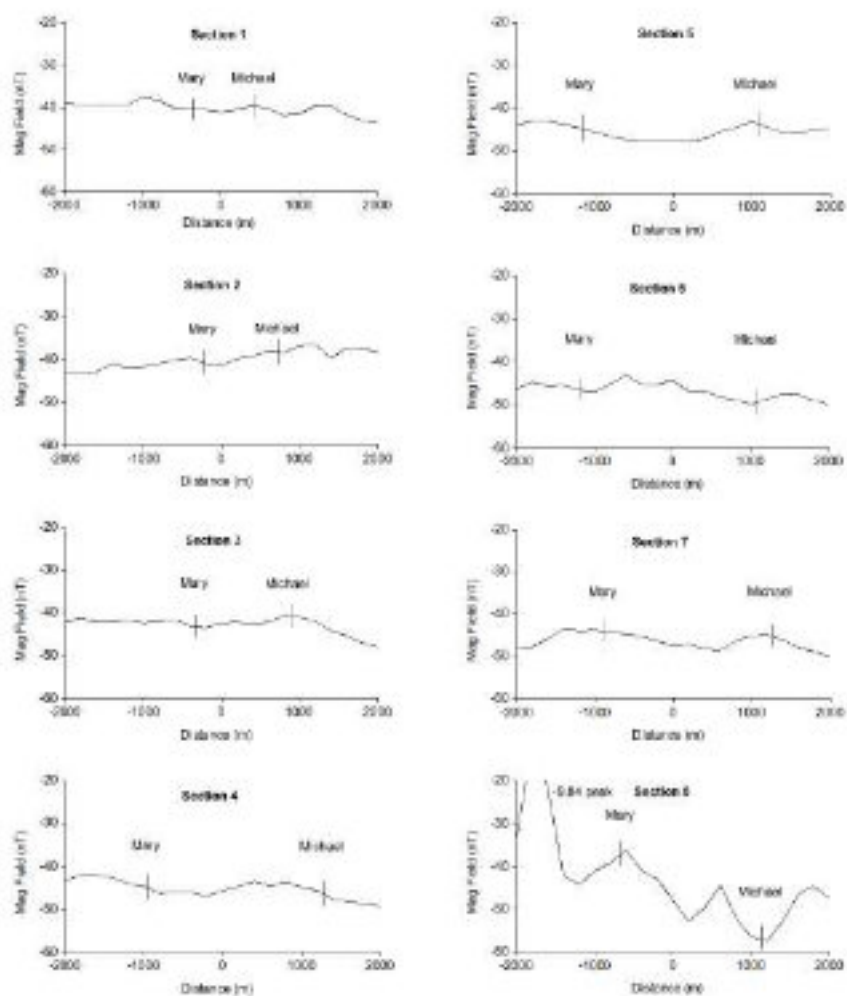


Figure 4 – Magnetic Field Plots for Section Lines 1 to 8

### 4 . 3 Visual Review

Visual review of Figures 3 and 4 indicates that there do not appear to be any features such as a gravitational or magnetic ridge line or gully that the Mary and Michael lines follow as they traverse from Carn Lês Boel to Penzance.

## 5.0 Gravity and Magnetic Field Statistical Analysis

The data used in the statistical analysis are defined in Tables 1 and 2. The points in each set of data occur where each line (Mary, Michael or Median) intersects a section line (see Figure 1).

**Table 1 – Gravitational Data for Statistical Analysis of Mary and Michael Lines**

Section Line	Mary Line (mGal)	Michael Line (mGal)	Median Line (mGal)
0	1049.18	1049.18	1049.18
1	1044.60	1043.80	1043.89
2	1043.28	1044.47	1044.64
3	1041.10	1040.66	1043.25
4	1030.05	1037.63	1037.39
5	1042.13	1045.57	1039.91
6	1043.03	1043.88	1045.10
7	1053.05	1043.99	1046.91
8	1063.48	1063.14	1064.28

**Table 2 – Magnetic Field Data for Statistical Analysis of Mary and Michael Lines**

Section Line	Mary Line (nT)	Michael Line (nT)	Median Line (nT)
0	-41.46	-41.46	-41.46
1	-40.37	-39.51	-41.07
2	-40.94	-38.37	-41.02
3	-42.50	-40.77	-42.47
4	-44.88	-47.42	-46.46
5	-44.78	-44.60	-48.00
6	-46.58	-48.64	-44.36
7	-44.07	-45.20	-47.47
8	-50.05	-57.11	-48.07

When calculating the Mary line t value (Student's t test) the Mary and Median lines were used as data set x and y respectively. Similarly when calculating the Michael line t value the Michael and Median lines were used as data set x and y respectively.

The following t values were calculated:

- Gravity:
  - Mary line t = 0.102.
  - Michael line t = 0.062.
- Magnetic field:
  - Mary line t = 0.365.
  - Michael line t = 0.186.

Each t calculation has 16 degrees of freedom. Referring the t values and number of degrees of freedom to a Student's t graph indicates that the results are not statistically significant, i.e., the gravity and magnetic field values determined for the Mary and Michael lines do not significantly vary from background values. This finding aligns well with the visual review of both the gravity and magnetic field cross sections which do not indicate the presence of any anomalous features in the vicinity of either line.

## 6.0 Topographic Elevations

The topographic elevations of Figure 5 (overleaf) were generated from the Open Zoomstack contour data, (Ordnance Survey, 2022) using typical secondary school methods. Distances northwest and southeast of the datum are again assigned negative and positive values respectively. The vertical lines labelled as Mary and Michael again simply represent the position of each line.

Visual review of Figure 5 once again indicates that there does not appear to be a topographic feature that the Mary and Michael lines follow as they traverse the Penwith peninsula.

## 7.0 Statistical Analysis of the St. Michael Line as a Whole

In order to facilitate statistical analysis of the St. Michael line as a whole a data set had to be created for comparative purposes. This was achieved by drawing a pseudo ley approximately 4 km north of the actual St. Michael line (Figure 6). The pseudo ley therefore passes through much the same bedrock geology as the actual St. Michael line but is of no geomantic significance whatsoever.

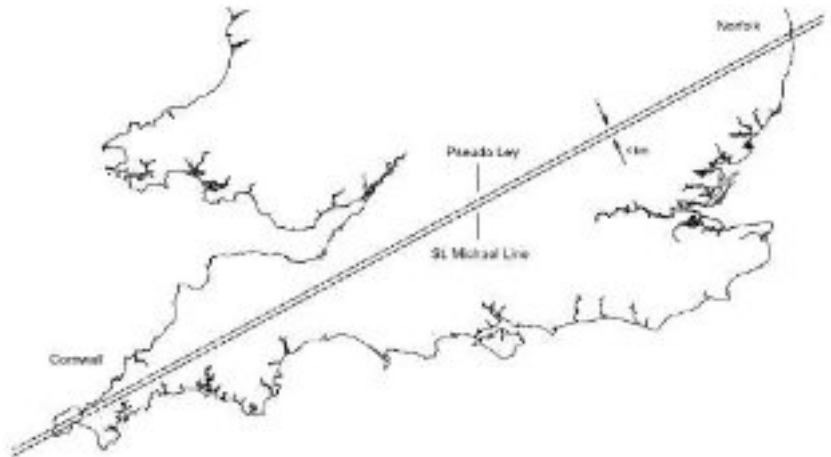


Figure 6 – St. Michael Line and Pseudo Ley in Relation to Southern England

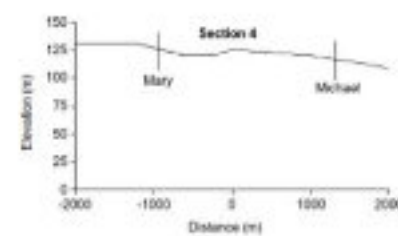
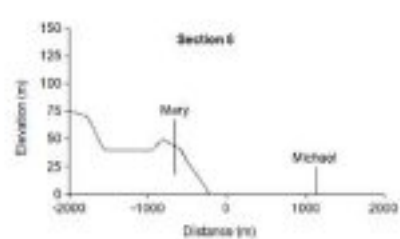
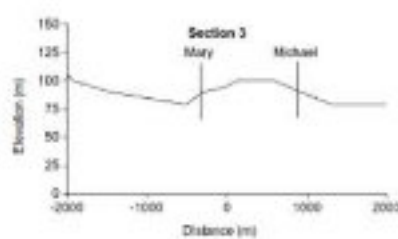
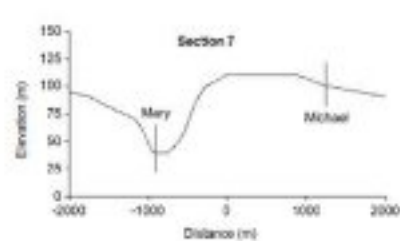
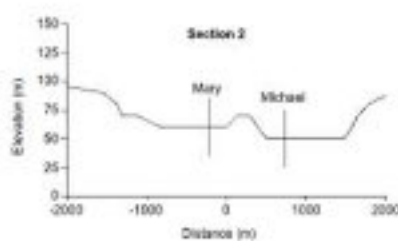
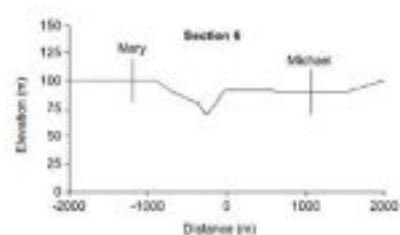
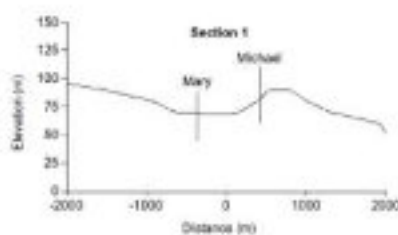
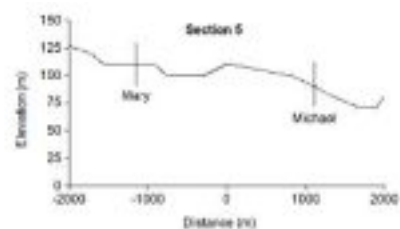
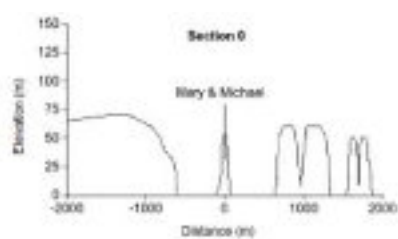
A Student's t test was performed to understand if there was a statistically significant difference between the

gravity and magnetic field values occurring at the St. Michael line's node points and equivalently spaced node points on the pseudo ley.

Table 3 details the St. Michael line node locations, their associated gravity and magnetic field values and the associated values for the pseudo ley. Gravity and magnetic field values were interpolated from the Great Britain Aeromagnetic and Land Gravity datasets (British Geological Survey, 2022) in the same manner as previously described.

Table 3 – St. Michael Line and Pseudo Ley Nodes, Gravity and Magnetic Field Data

Node Location	St. Michael Line		Pseudo Ley	
	Gravity (mGal)	Magnetic Field (nT)	Gravity (mGal)	Magnetic Field (nT)
Cam Lids Boel	1049.18	-41.48	1055.14	-46.13
St. Michael's Mount	1062.42	-46.67	1041.94	-46.00
Rouge Castle	1062.42	-43.11	1054.74	-40.39
St. Bartholomew's Church Lostwithiel	1065.97	-36.63	1076.61	-12.68
The Hutens Stone Cross	1036.86	-3.31	1044.10	10.96
North Buntor	1067.41	152.88	1107.64	118.39
Crediton Parish Church (an cathedral)	1141.82	80.19	1145.73	61.73
Church, Creach St. Michael	1170.01	16.00	1155.66	20.72
Burne Mump	1170.48	10.74	1171.02	7.67
Glastonbury Tor	1161.76	6.52	1166.90	21.14
Bower Hill (spring)	1164.02	-26.09	1165.01	-21.84
Oliver's Castle	1134.85	15.74	1157.07	5.53
Windmill Hill (earth work)	1142.91	36.24	1142.77	35.55
Avebury, Node 1	1141.49	47.11	1141.70	43.75
Avebury, Node 2	1141.72	46.50	1141.33	44.02
Ogbourne St. Andrew (mound in churchyard)	1149.68	100.14	1150.66	106.96
Ogbourne St. George (mound in field)	1145.82	114.26	1145.19	135.43
Snodun Hill Part	1178.03	170.00	1185.39	289.97
Rayston Cave	1208.14	16.06	1204.03	9.42
Bury St. Edmunds (abbey ruins)	1259.32	-31.29	1296.06	-19.70
St. Margaret's Church Hopton (ruin)	1294.68	-37.64	1298.46	-38.49



**Figure 5 – Elevation Plots for Section Lines 0 to 8**

The following t values were calculated:

- Gravity  $t = 0.0934$ .
- Magnetic field  $t = 0.2970$ .

Each t calculation has 40 degrees of freedom. Referring the t values and number of degrees of freedom to a Student's t graph indicates that the results are not statistically significant, i.e.. the gravity and magnetic field values determined for the St. Michael line do not significantly vary from background values. This finding aligns well with the higher resolution analysis performed for the Mary and Michael lines within the Penwith peninsula.

## 8.0 Summary and Conclusions

The analysis presented within this paper was based on the British Geological Survey (2022) Great Britain Aeromagnetic and Land Gravity datasets supported by Ordnance Survey (2021) digital mapping. Gravity and magnetic field data points occur on a non-regular grid at spacings in the order of 1000 m to 1500 m and 200 m to 1000 m respectively. This effectively defined the study's resolution. Whilst it was possible to use planar geometry to accurately interpolate gravity and magnetic field values for points of interest located between the survey data points, interpolation could not account for the presence of localised anomalies that were undetected or unreported in the survey datasets.

Within the limitations of the datasets used for this study it can be concluded that:

- The analysis of the Michael and Mary lines found no evidence of gravitational, magnetic field or topographic anomalies that either line appeared to track across the Penwith peninsula. Statistical analysis confirmed that there are no significant differences between the gravitational and magnetic field associated with the parts

of the landscape through which either line passes and the landscape in general.

- The statistical analysis of the St. Michael line as a whole again found no evidence for the gravitational or magnetic field at its node points being statistically different to the landscape in general.

The role gravitational and magnetic field anomalies play in the formation of leys cannot however be dismissed as the effect may be at a localised level well below the 'granularity' of the datasets used in this study. Field surveys will therefore need to be performed to establish if any highly localised gravitational or magnetic anomalies are present.

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## APPENDIX A – STUDENT’S T TEST

Student’s t test (Mowforth, 1979) can be used to establish if there is a statistically significant difference between two sets of data, set x and set y. Student’s t test is defined by the equation below:

$$t = \frac{|\bar{x} - \bar{y}|}{\sqrt{\frac{\sigma_x^2}{n_x} + \frac{\sigma_y^2}{n_y}}}$$

Where:

$\bar{x}$  is the mean of data set x.

$\bar{y}$  is the mean of data set y.

$\sigma_x$  is the standard deviation of data set x.

$\sigma_y$  is the standard deviation of data set y.

$n_x$  is the number of data values in data set x.

$n_y$  is the number of data values in data set y.

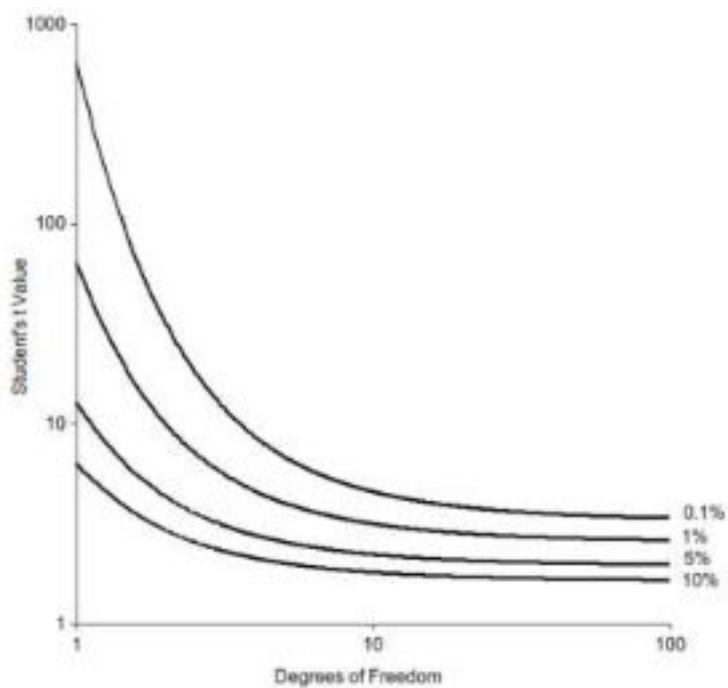
The t test’s degrees of freedom (df) is defined as:

$$df = (n_x - 1) + (n_y - 1)$$

To determine if a t value is statistically significant it has to be referred to a Student’s t graph such as Figure A.1. (overleaf)

The percentage lines of the Student’s t graph indicate the percentage probability that the differences between the data sets determined by the t value could have occurred by chance. Mowforth (1979) states that results are interpreted as follows:

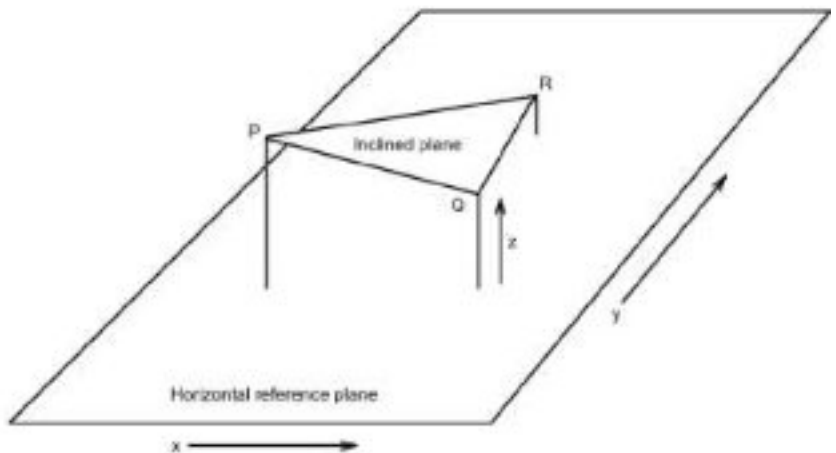
- Above the 0.1% results are highly significant, ie. very unlikely to be due to chance.
- Between the 0.1% and 1% lines, results are significant.
- Between the 1% and 5% lines, results are probably significant.



**Figure A.1 – Student's t Graph**

## APPENDIX B – GRAVITATIONAL AND MAGNETIC INTERPOLATION

A plane can mathematically be defined using three points each of which has three coordinates, an x value (left, right), a y value (back, forward) and a z value (up, down). This can be visualised with the aid of Figure B.1.



**Figure B.1 – Planar Geometry Concepts**

Figure B.1 shows a flat horizontal reference plane from which coordinates are measured to define an inclined plane with corners P, Q and R. For this arbitrary example the inclined plane has corner coordinates of:

- Corner P, (1, 5, 4).
- Corner Q, (8, 5, 3).
- Corner R, (8, 10, 2).

A plane is defined by a mathematical equation of the form:

$$ax + by + cz + d = 0$$

Where a, b, c and d are numeric values and x, y and z are coordinates.

If the coordinates defining the three corners of the plane (P, Q and R) are known then parameters a, b, c and d can be found as follows:

Step 1 – Form Two Vectors on the Plane

$$\overrightarrow{PQ} = (8, 5, 3) - (1, 5, 4) = (7, 0, -1)$$

$$\overrightarrow{PR} = (8, 10, 2) - (1, 5, 4) = (7, 5, -2)$$

Step 2 – Calculate the Normal Vector

The normal vector ( $\vec{n}$ ) is calculated from the cross product of PQ and PR.

$$\vec{n} = \overrightarrow{PQ} \times \overrightarrow{PR}$$

$$\vec{n} = (7, 0, -1) \times (7, 5, -2)$$

$$= (0 \times -2) - (-1 \times 5), (-1 \times 7) - (7 \times -2), (7 \times 5) - (0 \times 7)$$

Step 3 – Solve for d

Substituting in the x, y and z values for a known point on the plane allows d to be found. This can readily be achieved using points P, Q or R. Substituting in point P:

$$P = (1, 5, 4)$$

$$(5 \times 1) + (7 \times 5) + (35 \times 4) + d = 0$$

$$5 + 35 + 140 + d = 0$$

$$180 + d = 0$$

$$d = -180$$

Step 4 – Finalise the Equation of the Plane

$$5x + 7y + 35z - 180 = 0$$

If we are now presented with a new point that lies somewhere on the plane but only its x and y coordinates are known then the z coordinate can be found by rearranging the equation above to give:

$$z = (180 - 5x - 7y) / 35$$

For a point located in about the middle of the inclined triangular plane with x and y coordinates of 5.5 and 6.5 respectively the z coordinate works out to be 3.06 using the equation derived above.

This mathematical technique was applied to the gravitational and magnetic interpolation issue as follows:

- The easting, northing and value of each gravity or magnetic field reading are analogous to an x, y and z coordinate respectively.
- The three gravity or magnetic field readings immediately surrounding the point of interest were used to define a gravitational or magnetic plane and solve the equation of the plane thereby determining parameters a, b, c and d.
- The equation of the plane was then used to calculate the gravity or magnetic field value for the point of interest based on its known easting and northing.

# George Adamski: The Luxury of Disbelief

Dr John Tate

## Abstract

*My focus will be on Adamski's claimed initial encounter in 1952, on the witnesses to that and recent evidence backing up his narrative. To claim that the entire story was "a probable hoax" (Moore, 2021b, page 167) is, I feel an over - simplification of a complex story; it is of course the standard perspective these days, at least in the UK. Robert is not alone in taking this particular position. I do not know the truth any more than anyone else but there are certain features of the Adamski story that he either plays down or ignores completely. In this respect, the recent research work of Michel Zirger, Maurizio Martinelli and Rene Erik Olsen must be in the forefront (Zirger and Martinelli, 2016; Zirger, 2017; Zirger, 2018; Olsen, 2018; Zirger and Goldstern, 2020).*

I was introduced to George Adamski's story by my father back in 1953 when Desmond Leslie's and Adamski's book "Flying Saucers Have Landed" was first published (Leslie and Adamski, 1953) and have kept a cursory watching brief ever since. This has been a purely personal thing, and this is the first time I have ever put pen to paper (or should I say fingers to keys) on anything to do with what was alleged to have transpired. To be honest, I had never completely written Adamski off and it was a pleasant surprise to attend the late Robert Moore's webinar on the subject (Moore, 2021a) and to see that it has been reproduced in the latest issue of Anomaly (Moore, 2021 b). Let me first say that the following is written in a

humble fashion; I am no expert ufologist, to put things mildly, but there are aspects of what was said that give me concern.

It may be true that Adamski cast a long shadow over British Ufology; he could well have been a bootlegger for example, (during Prohibition and the grinding poverty of the Great Depression, who can blame him?). He may well have been something of a conman, if so, he was a good one; he managed to con his co-author, George Hunt Williamson, whose name was later changed to Michel d'Obrenovic and who was a primary witness to the initial contact.

Adamski was undoubtedly a philosopher, having an interest in Theosophy. One of his lost essays, dating back to 1932, has been recently analysed by Gerard Aartsen (Aartsen and Adamski, 2019). Furthermore, the premises near to Mount Palomar seem to have been rather more than a hamburger joint, but a “beautiful café” with guests including General Jimmy Doolittle (leader of the famous raid on Tokyo in 1942) and Charles Lindberg (first man to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean) (Zirger and Goldstern, 2020, page 127).

My own problems with Robert's narrative initially concerned the reported “fireflies” (Adamski, 1955), the Darbshire photograph and the number and quality of the witnesses to the initial event. Adamski reported observing what he described as fireflies in space many years before their existence was confirmed by astronaut John Glenn. How could he have known this? Can anyone throw any light on this? In addition, there is also Adamski commenting on the starless, blackness of deep space, later confirmed by Neil Armstrong to Sir Patrick Moore years later in 1970 (Zirger, 2017, page 6; Zirger and Goldstern,

2020, page 158). As for the Darbishire photograph, I suppose it is plausible that, unbeknown to their parents, the two lads purchased a gasoline lantern, carted it up to the top of Coniston Old Man (a bit of a climb), chucked it in the air and managed to get a snap of it but I do find that difficult to swallow. Photographic technology was crude by modern standards in the mid-1950s yet no-one to my knowledge has conclusively demonstrated fakery. As for admitting this latter, given the media publicity, the situation must have been overwhelming for the youngsters and I would suggest that they might say anything to escape the position they found themselves in.

This was Darbishire's position in a letter he wrote in 1986 (Good, 1988, page 373). However, maybe Darbishire tumbled to the gasoline lantern plot earlier than anyone else and decided to play a trick? Was he in cahoots with Adamski? In the pre-digital 1950s when most households would not even have a landline and when long distance telephone calls were expensive this possibility can surely be ruled out. One conspirator was in California and the other a fourteen-year-old in the Lake District in north-west England!? Robert's position rests on the 'discovery' by someone called Carpenter; the text reference is vague for such an important plank in his case, and there is nothing in his list of references! Between 1954 and "the early 2000s" is getting on for fifty years. Darbishire must have been really ahead of the game.

There is, incidentally, a formal comparison between the gasoline lantern photograph and that of an Adamski saucer on the Adamski Foundation website – if this is anything to go by, it should lay to rest once and for all what appears to be an invalid comparison. There is no reference to this in Robert's text. Similarly missing is the reference to Cramp's major work (Cramp, 1954) in which is

contained the orthographic projections demonstrating the apparent identity between the Adamski craft and that photographed by Darbishire. Why reference the later books by Cramp (Cramp, 1996, 2001) but not this one? Is this latter too inconvenient for the sceptics? It should not be forgotten that Darbishire and friend were apparently invited to Buckingham Palace by none other than the Duke of Edinburgh.

I now turn to the witnesses of the 1952 event, and their photographs - here we must return to the list of recent publications, referenced above. Like all good historians and researchers, Zirger, as the prime mover, goes back to primary sources, including original documents, letters, and tape recordings. Unlike many of Adamski's critics, he checks on his facts with an apparent high level of diligence. How many of the critics have done that?

Let me give one example, Adamski's claim to be a "professor" – self-styled in Robert's analysis. As Zirger points out, Adamski was born in Eastern Europe and in many non-English speaking countries this term has a much more broad and imprecise meaning; Zirger cites Japan where he is resident (Zirger, 2018). Adamski never claimed to have held any university post and while he did use the term, it was initially conferred upon him by his companions (the Baileys and the Williamsons) in an interview for the *Phoenix Gazette* on 24th November 1952 at which he was not even present (Zirger, 2018, page 138, Note 11). The term was repeated by Len Welsh, the journalist who wrote the initial article, and hence got into circulation. It was a term of respect and admiration, nothing more. The same can be said about his involvement with the Palomar Observatory; this again goes back to the *Phoenix Gazette* article and confusion on Len Welsh's part.

One fascinating piece of evidence can be found in the files of none other than *Project Blue Book*, originally discovered by Richard Ogden and published by William Moore in 1985. (Moore, 1985). A copy of this, a teletype message, is reproduced in Zirger (Zirger, 2018, page 67). Now one would think the *Blue Book* files would be an obvious place to look for any researcher worth his or her salt, but clearly, none of the sceptics have ever bothered! The teletype is a communication from the pilot of a USAF B50 Super Fortress aircraft to ATIC/Blue Book concerning a stationary object observed at 16,000 feet changing colour from white to red to green on 20th November 1952, pretty well above the location of Adamski and companions' claimed encounter and at the time that they were preparing to pack up and leave the site. The object then proceeded to move in a northwesterly direction before vanishing as if a light was turned off. It is claimed that this is the only UFO report for that day in the entire United States on file with *Blue Book*. (For evidence of this and more USAF involvement, see Zirger, 2017, pages 250-251 and page 260).

The whole Adamski saga hinges upon the validity of the claimed events of 20th November 1952. The exact location close to the Coxcomb Mountains is in no doubt, having been identified, surveyed, and photographed in recent years, notably by William Crowley and Paola Harris. Details, including photographs, can be found between pages 137 and 153 in Zirger and Goldstern, (Zirger and Goldstern, 2020). There is also a map in Zirger (Zirger, 2018, Page 36). In addition to Adamski, there were six others involved in 1952 – Adamski's secretary, Lucy McGinnis; a friend of both, Alice K. Wells; George Hunt Williamson; his pregnant wife Betty Jane, and Alfred C. Bailey together with the latter's wife, another Betty. In some senses, Williamson is more important than Adamski

in what is claimed to have occurred, yet for some strange reason this later distinguished person (he was at the time a postgraduate student of anthropology) has been virtually airbrushed from history, his life story only recently resurrected by Zirger and Martinelli (Zirger and Marinelli, 2016). One does wonder why this is so – for the sceptics, is his presence in the narrative too inconvenient?

Six witnesses, none of whom ever went back on the story. What is more, they later swore affidavits before a Notary Public confirming their previous statements. Williamson was later, in his lectures, adamant that everything stated in his Affidavit was accurate (Williamson, quoted in Zirger, 2017, page 352). Sorry sceptics, but such evidence would surely hold good in court of law. Before turning to the photographs taken, (not all by Adamski, some were by the Williamsons), it is worth pointing out that Alice Wells, an amateur artist, drew a sketch of the ‘visitor’ at the time. This appeared in *Flying Saucers Have Landed* (Adamski, 1953) and is reproduced in Zirger (Zirger, 2017, page 334). Many of the photographs taken are reproduced in Zirger (Zirger, 2018) and the reader is referred to this work and to that of Olsen (Olsen, 2018).

Rene Erik Olsen is a Danish photographic specialist, who, unlike the sceptics, took the trouble to secure copies of the original prints taken by Adamski on the afternoon of 20th November 1950. These were supplied by Glenn Steckling, Director of the Adamski Foundation. These were not the first photographs of UFOs taken by Adamski, incidentally, nor was it his first trip into the desert. Adamski took seven shots with a German Ihagee-Dresden Grafles camera attached to his telescope and three with a handheld Kodak Brownie. Using modern technology, and without any pixel manipulation, Olsen has enhanced and cleaned up these with remarkable results. Removal of

noise and increase in contrast aided the process. The final output is reproduced in his recent book (Olsen, 2018) and makes remarkable viewing.

The reader is invited to examine pages 17 to 37 in Olsen, where the techniques used are described and the cleaned-up photographs displayed. Now the current writer is no photographic expert, and one can easily claim all this work to be a fraud, no doubt many will. However, much seems to be revealed which was not visible on the originals. These, remember are actual prints, the original negatives having apparently gone missing decades ago. We have a close-up image of the original saucer, we have a landscape in which appears the image of Alfred Bailey, together with pieces of kit and, importantly a bright object hovering over the mountain tops, together with another that is less visible. A further shot shows a large, cylindrical shaped craft with three smaller objects in the foreground. Further procedures (“levels”, “sharpness”, “dodge and burn” etc.) applied to the closest of these reveals something remarkably like the saucer shown close up earlier on but surrounded by some sort of energy field. Further enhancements of the saucer hovering above a nearby ridge are illuminating, the dome, cabin and two ‘balls’ beneath being clearly visible. It should be stressed that these images have only just come to light.

Of more import is a Brownie image (“Brownie Image 4”) taken by Adamski immediately prior to claimed contact (Olsen, 2018, page 33). It initially appears to be a landscape, but a zoomed version, technically cleaned up for blur, dust and scratches, clearly shows two objects, one the turret of the saucer, the other, quite clearly, a person standing nearer to the camera. The image, plus two further enhanced versions, appears between pages 33 and 35 of Olsen (Olsen, 2018). Olsen is certain that this

photograph cannot be fake. Here we seem to have “Orthon” in the flesh so to speak. The image is reproduced in Zirger (Zirger, 2018).

It may be instructive to compare this with the sketch done of the visitor by Alice Wells on the day, the likeness is remarkable. Coincidence, or more evidence to confound the sceptics? This, and a range of other photographs claimed to have been taken on the day, were made available to Olsen by Glenn Steckling. All these had lain untouched since the 1950s. Why did recent quick on the draw sceptics not think to enquire and to do their own analysis? The evidence was under their noses! Modern photo imaging, not involving pixel manipulation, has been around for some years now, yet again and again such individuals jump to conclusions, fuelled by what seems to be pure prejudice rather than objective science. As Zirger states, the photographs taken by three separate people “form an absolutely perfect coherent whole” (Zirger, 2018, page 129). Is all this fakery? Having examined the relevant documents, I doubt it.

Of the witnesses, arguably it was George Hunt Williamson who was of most significance. He was not a friend or accomplice of Adamski, having only met the latter some two weeks beforehand. Nonetheless he seems to have been the instigator of the trip into the desert, witnessing the meeting with Orthon, albeit at a distance, and making the plaster casts of the latter’s shoe prints afterwards. It would seem that the ‘visitors’ had prepared well for the event, having designed and made the shoes, and chosen a place where the imprints would form in the alluvium. The plaster used was standard fare for Williamson in his field work in anthropology, though the group had to wait some time for it to set. Plate 32, page 58 in Zirger (Zirger, 2018) shows the making of the casts which had been encircled

by stones for protection. Later, it was Williamson who broke the story to the Phoenix Gazette. Adamski was unhappy about this and blamed Williamson for “blabbing” to the press (Zirger, 2018, page 69). Had Williamson not done this, Adamski was adamant that he would have kept quiet about the whole affair. Their relationship lasted only a further month or so, the Williamsons living in Arizona, not California and there being major philosophical differences between the two men.

Williamson produced several books on esoteric subjects (see, for example, Williamson, 1953; 1954; 1958; 1959; 1961) and can justifiably be regarded as the father of what is now known as the ancient astronaut theory. He did major work in Peru and Mexico and, unlike some of his successors, was an academic of some standing; working with Maria Reiche on the Nazca Lines in Peru and being the first to draw attention to them in the scientific community. He was instrumental in excavating the ruins of what could have been the Lost City of Paititti, now a major tourist attraction and discovering a fabled place he called “The Rock of the Writing”, deep in uncharted territory in the valley of the Rio Sinkibenia. His ideas and works predated Erich von Daniken by many years; his views on the latter are contained in Appendix 2, Page 337, to Zirger and Martinelli (Zirger and Martinelli, 2016). He stresses that von Daniken was a chronicler of the ancient astronaut concept but not its originator. When the latter developed an interest at a young age, Williamson was the only writer to have developed this theme (Williamson, 1952, 1953). His main complaint was that von Daniken failed to acknowledge sources and presented Williamson’s ideas as his own though he does not actually use the word “plagiarism”. One point that Williamson was adamant on – he did not himself develop the theory – it was given to him! Williamson was a channeller and a psychic.

Yet Williamson has been completely ignored for many years. In addition to signing the Affidavit back in 1952, he stuck to his story of the landing on 20th November of that year to the end. If Adamski was a hoaxer, conman, and conspirator, then so was he. Where is the evidence for that? And what about the other witnesses? There is something very wrong here.

One twist in the tale. Bizarrely, according to Zirger (Zirger, 2017, page 359) both Adamski and Williamson are buried in Arlington National Cemetery, just outside Washington DC, their graves (Williamson's was his ashes), amazingly being merely some one hundred yards apart, despite their both passing away in different years and presumably on the West Coast. Adamski's grave is in Section 43, Grave 295. Arlington is predominantly a national military cemetery, its seal emblazoned with the words "Our Most Sacred Shrine", its website describing it as "Our Nation's most hallowed ground" (Arlington National Cemetery, 2021). This seems a strange place to inter two hoaxers, conmen, and conspirators – weird or what?

So, there we have it. Does Robert's "probable hoax" assertion stand up to scrutiny? The reader must be the judge. My focus has been on the initial event in 1952. Later, Adamski claimed to have had further contacts, one on December 13th, 1952, and others, during which he was allegedly taken into space, observing the fireflies and the utter blackness. Did he visit a dying Pope, as claimed? Did he deliver a package to the same? Was he given a medal? Did he hold a high US security clearance? I do not know but neither do his detractors. He certainly visited the Dutch Royal Family. I would respectfully submit that there is now enough evidence to absolve Adamski from many of the charges made against him, often by writers who have

not bothered to examine the evidence. And that is what it comes down to – evidence. I personally can no longer afford Robbie Williams’ “luxury of disbelief”, any more than he can (Williams 2021). Michel Zirger and Maurizio Martinelli, especially the former, seem to have pulled together an immense collection of documents, especially letters, original tapes of Adamski’s and Williamson’s lectures and interviews, plus photographs and original copies of their books. What other UFO incident can claim six witnesses, sworn affidavits, photographs of the saucer and of the occupant, plus photographs and casts of prints left in the soil and a sketch of the occupant drawn at the time by a witness? And be recorded in Project Blue Book? On the surface, the events of 20th November 1952 seem an almost perfect case. I will conclude with the title of an article in a recent edition of *Flying Saucer Review*: “Adamski – time to look at him with new eyes?” (*Flying Saucer Review*, undated) or in the words of Warren Aston “the tide is turning” (Aston, 2018, quoted in Zirger 2018, page 130).

Surely researchers should be investigating the unexplained, not explaining the uninvestigated?

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## REVIEWS

Ralph Blumenthal, *The Believer: Alien Encounters, Hard Science And The Passion Of John Mack* New Mexico, High Road Books, 2021. ISBN 978-0-8263-6395-4 [pbk] £17.95

Mark Fox

Once upon a time, way before UFOs became a hot topic within academia, there was John Mack. Mack, himself, was an academic: an outstanding Harvard psychiatrist who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1977 for his celebrated biography of T.E Lawrence, *A Prince of Our Disorder*, beating 92 other entrants to win the much-coveted award. By the early 1990s his reputation was impeccable, his academic credentials outstanding, and the respect he had garnered from the Harvard hierarchy unshakable. All his professional ducks in a row, then, until his interest - no, *belief* - that human beings had been abducted by aliens became common knowledge.

And then...well...things changed, somewhat.

Belief is a problematic word within science. And Mack was, above everything, a scientist. I was going to write 'above and beyond', and yet, in presenting his views on the reality of alien abduction, John Mack was, as his critics averred, going well beyond science itself. A showdown with his Harvard superiors was inevitable and occurred, eventually, in the summer of 1994. Though he would emerge from it with his reputation intact he would be forever after remembered as the man who had 'gone off the rails' in pursuit of a worldview which many of his scientific peers could neither endure nor endorse.

He has a fine biographer in Blumenthal. After all, in presenting, assessing, and properly contextualising Mack's extraordinary life Blumenthal is forced to supply the reader with nothing less than a history of Ufology and its place within the wider world of anomalistics: no easy path, and one which a less sure-footed writer would have found it much more difficult to traverse. Not so the author of this compelling and highly readable biography who skilfully weaves together *two* narratives within *The Believer*: the story of Ufology, with its emergent 'sub-plot' of abduction, and the story of Mack, whose own 'abduction' by the Ufological sub-field of abduction studies is charted meticulously and in detail.

Blumenthal is clearly much taken with certain contributors to the field of Ufology: Jerome Clark, in particular, whose magisterial two-volume *UFO Encyclopaedia* he references throughout. He charts all of the major trends and developments within the field, from the coining of the term 'Flying Saucer' in 1947, through the US Air Force's various attempts to investigate - and in some instances to suppress - the thousands of reports sent to them in ensuing decades, and all the way, eventually, to the seminal Betty and Barney Hill abduction of 1961 and the subsequent emergence of UFO abduction research as a field in its own right. He correctly lingers on this latter 'phase' as he attempts to chart Mack's own entry into the field, making detailed reference to researchers David Jacobs and Budd Hopkins and highlighting the massive influence of the latter upon Mack's own thinking (even if they disagreed fundamentally on certain aspects of the phenomenon and fell out for a while).

So why *was* Mack so taken with UFO abductions that he would risk so much in order to examine them so deeply and, ultimately, so publicly? Blumenthal leaves the reader

in little doubt as to how Mack would have answered this: the evidence. As awareness of Mack's interest - and eminence - within the field spread, so too did so-called 'abductees' seek him out. And the stories they told him - over two-thirds in full or in part as a result of regressive hypnosis - appeared, at least to Mack, eerily consistent: abductees' experiences would begin with the sighting of a craft, followed by their 'transportation' on board in the company of beings who would 'switch them off' before examining them, sometimes removing sperm from males or, from females, foetuses, to be used in some sort of human-alien hybrid breeding programme. As his research developed Mack became aware of other features too, such as visions of planetary destruction vividly-communicated to abductees. A warning, perhaps: either of what awaits the human race or a lesson to be learned from what had already befallen the aliens.

Critics were not slow in coming forth. What he was uncovering was a purely psychological phenomenon, surely? A 'screen memory' of some sort, or a shared, cultural narrative consciously or unconsciously absorbed and reproduced within the psychotherapeutic context? Not so, averred Mack. The stories were too consistent, for one thing. And what to make of the reports of young children; too young to have absorbed any such shared, culturally determined set of memorates? And what of the disappearances of abductees, as vouched for by others? And the 'scoop marks' and implants, left on abductees as a result of the procedures carried out on them by their abductors? And the fact that so many of them had 'come to' after their experiences in places unfamiliar to them and improperly dressed?

As strange as this all sounds, none of it was particularly original. Beginning in the early-1980s, Budd Hopkins had

been saying very many similar things as a result of his own abduction research and David Jacobs had undergone much the same academic censure as a result of his own, similar, findings. Yet nobody else in the field had Mack's eminence: a fact explaining his own popularity and, some would say, notoriety.

Perhaps inevitably, Mack's abduction research would lead him to other things, including an increasingly spiritual quest for the underlying reality beyond that of 'mere' appearances. After all, having shaken off the "super-Western-science-y" paradigm, as he put it on one occasion to his therapist, he was free to explore, even to embrace, just about anything. And this he did, as Blumenthal shows, steadily and without let up until he was run over and killed in an accident during a visit to London in September 2004. Mack's legacy is a compelling, if controversial, one.

Abduction research is nowhere near as popular nor widespread within the Ufological field as it was during Mack's lifetime but questions about the Western scientific paradigm still remain. Indeed, the words of William James, as quoted by Blumenthal, remain as true today as they did during the lifetime of Mack:

*'I am convinced that we stand with all these things at the threshold of a long enquiry, of which the end appears as yet to no one, least of all myself.'*

Mark Fox is an independent researcher, writer and speaker with a wide range of interests in all things anomalous. You can find him at [www.markfox.co.uk](http://www.markfox.co.uk)

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URL [http://www.parapsych.org/mission\\_statement.html](http://www.parapsych.org/mission_statement.html)

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Thalbourne, M.A. (2005) 'The Pros and Cons of Being a Parapsychologist'. *Society for Psychical Research: Paranormal Review*, 36, 21-22

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