

## **MYTHS, RUMOURS AND UFOS**



### **INVESTIGATIONS – SUMMER 2009**

**Welcome to the latest news, comments and selection of sighting reports from across the UK.**

**I would like to begin with an update from the NIC (National Investigations Committee).**

**The Investigators' Training Course (ITC) has generated many enquiries from a broad spectrum of the public. At the present time we have nine people enrolled on the ITC.**

**On behalf of the National Investigations Committee, I would like to extend my congratulations to both Matt Lyons and Chris Williams who have completed and passed the ITC of recent time. Matt Lyons has now become an accredited investigator, having investigated and completed two cases studies to a high standard. May I take this opportunity to welcome you both to the NIC and I look forward to working with you as sighting reports are received by BUFORA.**

## NIC Meeting – Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2009

A very successful NIC meeting was held in London, attended by many investigators, both fully qualified and those now enrolled on the ITC. It was an informal meeting in order for all investigators to meet each other in a comfortable and social setting. Many ideas, theories, case studies and photographs were discussed and the BUFORA NIC was able to welcome trainees at various stages of the ITC.

Another meeting will be organised for later in the year, which will have a more structured and formal agenda. Investigators will be informed of a potential date for this nearer the time.

## UFO Reality behind the Myths in 2009



Let us now look at the UFO subject in 2009. How far have we come since the heyday of the nineties where UFOs and aliens were being reported in abundance? In fact there was an extraordinary fascination with the subject during the

nineties from the media, the public, the witnesses and the investigators themselves. This was created, in part, by the enormous success of 'The X files' and the various sci-fi programmes and many books and magazines that played upon the rumours and myths that developed around the idea of alien encounters. The scene was set with imagery evolving from the sixties, seventies and eighties' obsession with reports of alien abduction, missing time and a host of mythology being brought forward to the nineties, with the added ingredient of hypnosis used as a method to reveal 'the truth' of the 'alien encounter', a protocol never used or suggested within BUFORA, in adherence to our Code of Practice.

Ufological politics was very prevalent during the nineties and caused damage to the integrity of the subject, both in the eyes of researchers and witnesses alike. Notwithstanding this, hundreds of sightings poured into UFO organisations, the majority of which were poorly investigated, particularly in regard to claims of encounters with aliens. The issues, social and psychological, pertaining to witnesses who reported these experiences were rarely addressed. Hence the subject became more and more sensational via the good offices of the media, the public and even the researchers themselves.

However, as the subject evolved into 2000 and beyond, sighting reports began to diminish as interest declined within the media and the general public, which begs the big question – is the subject, in part at least, socially driven? Magazines were folding and articles and books addressing the subject were in short supply as authors struggled to find publishers, the same publishers who had been only too willing to take on UFO-themed material in previous decades. There was a significant decrease in high strangeness cases being reported to BUFORA and other UFO organisations. This, in essence, was significant in what it revealed about

how the claims and reports of UFO/alien encounters were evolving from the relentlessly grim *grey alien* experiences of the eighties and nineties (with the iconic imagery drawn from the accepted *zeitgeist* of those years) to the contemporary trend of angels, benevolent galactic representatives and higher spiritual intelligences, who may or may not be perceived in conjunction with classic UFOs (most often not). This, in many ways, is a hugely vital component in what it tells us about human behaviour, beliefs and psychology; how we interpret and describe perceived anomalous, curious or unknown experiences. It would also suggest a modern day return to the less threatening contactee era of the forties and fifties.

Thus, in 2009 the UFO subject has progressed and changed. As technology has evolved it has brought with it the advent of Chinese/sky lanterns, the biggest culprit for UFO reports to BUFORA during the last couple of years. Chinese lanterns have replaced many of the laser light displays so frequently reported during the nineties. The common thread here between laser light displays and lanterns is the spectacular refusal by people to believe, even when provided with definitive evidence, that they have been observing 'Chinese/sky lanterns' on such frequent occasions. This disbelief has been supported and reinforced by the media and press resulting in the usual absolute nonsense being documented by the papers, specifically in relation to these lanterns. Another innovation (not really new, but more commonly seen nowadays) is the UAV, remotely piloted craft being deployed by the police and other agencies to monitor events, gatherings and "sensitive situations". One of these objects was seen by thousands of people at the recent solstice gathering at Stonehenge and it looked exactly like a UFO or "alien probe", if you didn't know what you were looking at. All the above serves to illustrate just how uninformed most people are about what can be seen in our skies. Add to that the consistent and persistent reports of

misidentifications of celestial objects and we come up with a huge percentage of spurious UFO reports.

Interest in the UFO subject has increased exponentially with the release from the MoD of several batches of UFO files under the FoIA. This, of course, resulted in massive media coverage and BUFORA had journalists inundating them with the usual inane question of, “*Do you believe in UFOs?*”...which is not a question in the true sense of the words. Do we believe in unidentified objects and lights in the sky?...well, yes, we do....until they can be identified, that is. Does this translate to, “*Are there extraterrestrial craft inhabiting our airspace?*” Answer...there is not a single scrap of *definitive proof* to suggest this to be the case. What there is, however, is much anecdotal evidence from the public, pilots, astronauts and various perceived trained observers, who claim to have observed objects and craft that could not be of this earth. This is, I suspect, what gives all the UFO organisations and various high profile investigators and researchers the impetus to continue with their exploration of the subject.

However, all is often not as it seems, as we continue to weave our way through the ever-changing aspects of this subject and at the core of this lies the *human face* of ufology, our beliefs, perceptions and often our need to believe that we are not alone in the universe. Maybe Camille Flammarion, the French astronomer and author says it best...

*There exists in our cosmos a dynamic element, imponderable and invisible, diffused through all parts of the universe, independent of matter visible and ponderable, and acting upon it; and in that dynamic element there is an intelligence superior to our own.*

## Case studies from the 1960s

**BUFORA reclaimed, at the recent investigations meeting, several of our own case files from the sixties, courtesy of Dave Sankey (BUFORA AI) who had fortuitously retrieved them from parts afar. These case reports are over forty-five years old now, but several of them are rather interesting and therefore I am documenting two for this investigations article, straight from the original reports by the witnesses and the BUFORA investigators.**

### **Winkleigh Airfield May 1957**

**According to information on this wartime flying station, Winkleigh had been very active in World War II with a secret Royal Air Force unit flying camouflaged aircraft in which the squadron's elite pilots embarked on dangerous and clandestine missions delivering and collecting spies and secret agents into the heart of occupied Europe. They were known as the 'Black' Squadron. For more information access the following link.**

**[http://www.jackiefreemanphotography.com/raf\\_winkleigh.htm](http://www.jackiefreemanphotography.com/raf_winkleigh.htm)**

**In early May 1957, the witness, a long distance tanker driver from Yeovil, Somerset had a very unusual sighting and experience. He describes the incident in the following way...**

***“On the morning in question, it was fine, dry and a good light. I pulled on to the perimeter track at about 04.50 at Winkleigh Aerodrome, North Devon, a disused wartime Aerodrome, the idea being to have my flask of coffee.***

**<http://www.controltowers.co.uk/W-Z/Winkleigh.htm>**

***After some few minutes, I noticed what appeared to be a 'submarine' on the end of the runway. My first thought was how did it get up there. Also, it looked very new. I sat and***

*watched for some minutes and then thought I would take a closer look and got out of the cab and walked towards it. After getting to within some two hundred yards, it was impossible to go any further towards it. Just like walking into a 'cushion'. This was the very first intimation of anything out of the ordinary. Then this thing went straight up like an elevator for about 1200 ft and then went off towards the North Devon Coast. The speed was terrific. There was never any noise of any sort. There were no windows, no exhaust, no sort of movement that I could see. Possibly the tail fins were just a little more fluorescent when in motion.*

*No green men...nothing. Please, I am not a crank, just a lorry driver. There were many I believe who saw this in the air. One other saw it on the ground. I would not have come forward either, but my wife suggested I tell you of my one and only experience.*

*I make no claims as to its identity."*

The witness describes the object as solid and a fluorescent blue metallic colour, almost submarine shaped apart from tail fins. It appeared to hover and slightly change in brightness. He describes its size as the length of an airliner (of that time) and height of 28-30 feet, and was only 200 yards from him when he first saw it. He goes on to describe how the object disappeared from view when it went straight up vertically and then northwest until lost to sight.

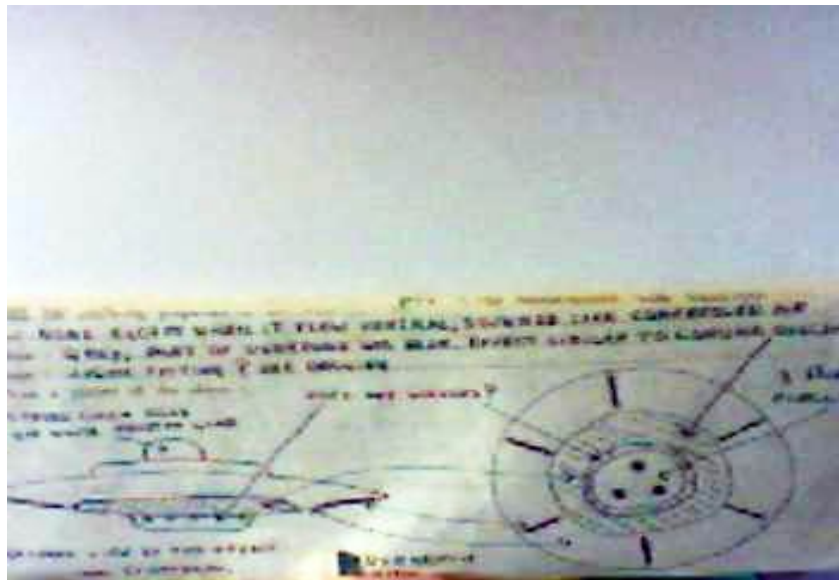
He remembers the weather conditions that morning as being warm and dry with a clear sky and light breeze.

The BUFORA investigator of the time was John Cleary-Baker and he comments in his evaluation that, "*The narrative has a ring of truth and is a most fascinating one. I think it deserves careful study. It is perhaps one of the most*

*significant BUFORA has received for a long time and it is a pity nine years had to elapse before the story was told.”*

*Commenting further he states that, “I am in no doubt that the witness saw a grounded UFO, which took off when he approached it. The ‘force barrier’ around the object is a noteworthy feature.”*

## Blackburn, Lancashire – August 1963



*Object as drawn by the witness on a BUFORA sighting form from June 1967*

**In October of 1966, BUFORA received a letter from the mother of a nineteen year old young man reporting some very unusual events experienced by him in August of 1963.**

**She writes of the incident in the following way...**

*“About 10pm that night I went out to the yard to get some coal and I saw a bright greenish light hovering over the wood at the back of our house. I thought it was a star at first, then all*

*at once I heard a high pitched noise just like a wireless oscillating and the light began to move westward: it was rotating, jumping up and down and yet it travelled forward. I came in the house and told my husband, daughter and son-in-law about this light. They all started laughing at me and said I was 'crackers'. I wasn't satisfied so periodically I kept peeping through the back kitchen window as I was making supper, but couldn't see any sign of the light by now. My son, who was nineteen at the time, was at his young lady's home, but he arrived home about 11.30pm. We all retired to bed about 12.15am.*

*At about 1.55am my son came into our bedroom and said there was a strange bright light hovering over the lawn at the back. I said it was nothing but couldn't help wondering about the light I had seen previously hovering over the woods at the back. He said the light had awakened him, but I told him to go back to bed and forget about it, although I felt unnerved at the time.*

*I must have fallen asleep very soon after...until my son came into the bedroom again at 4.30am. His face was ashen and he was trembling all over and was soaking wet through. I asked him where he had been at this time of the morning and what the matter was."*

### **The son's story...**

*"After being in bed about half an hour, I noticed that my room was much lighter, but I realised the moon was full, so I satisfied my curiosity and looked out of the window and noticed a sphere about one foot in diameter hovering about ten feet above the ground. I looked at it for a few seconds and I then opened the window (in case it was a reflection on the glass) and got a much better view.*

*I immediately got dressed and went outside. The sphere then moved away from me, so I followed it for about one hundred yards up a small steep hill and then across a field, where the sphere gradually reduced its size to nothing. It appeared like looking at a car headlamp in the fog, except that there was no fog. It was then I saw the object in the sky. It was then stationary. I looked at it for about ten minutes and it started to move in the direction of the quarry and then disappeared. Fifteen minutes later, I reached the quarry and saw the object hovering above the ground in the quarry. It stayed there for about five minutes and then it started moving towards me. I then left in a hurry and I hid in a shed, which was several hundred yards away. The object followed me and hovered above, about the height of a hundred foot pylon. It stayed there for about two or three minutes and I could see the bottom of it very clearly through the roof of the shed because part was missing. It then started climbing slowly, about the speed of a helicopter. I then left the shed, had another look to make sure that it was not following. I then jumped behind a wall and watched it climb in a vertical direction about fifty yards away.*

*When daylight came I went along with two of the neighbours' sons to the quarry to see if there were any signs of my strange experience. To my surprise the wall, where the flames appeared to shoot out of the object, was burned black. It is loose stonewalling and I brought a piece home with me. It is black and is luminous when held in the dark."*

The son described the object as grey coloured about 150 feet in diameter and 45/50 ft deep with part of the underside blue in colour, an effect similar to corona discharge and the top appeared like a *dome of frosted glass*.

He describes himself as an amateur astronomer and familiar with aircraft from that time.

**Mr. Hardy, the BUFORA Investigator for this report from the sixties makes the following comments:**

*“This is a first class report, which I feel compelled to take at face value, even though it has minor inconsistencies (perhaps because it has). There is no doubt, accepting the truthfulness of the report, that this was an unidentified flying object.*

*It is a great pity that the witness could not have been interviewed immediately after the sighting.”*

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**Huncoat, Accrington, Lancashire**  
**June 1985 – 4 am**

**I received a letter in March this year from Dave W, a retired police officer serving with the Lancashire Constabulary from 1965-1995.**

**His original letter had been sent to Jenny Randles via Fortean Times, last year, but unfortunately Fortean Times had forwarded this to Jenny’s address, omitting any further postage, so the letter was returned to Dave and he decided to contact BUFORA. In his own words he reports the following events:**

*“My UFO sighting occurred at 4.00am in June, 1985. I was on the night shift (10pm to 6am) and was stationed at Accrington.*

*I was working a mobile beat and was alone. After all this time I cannot member the day or date of the month. The weather was dry and fine, not a cloud in the sky and not even the hint of a breeze. The rays of light from the sun rising in the east lit up the area so I could easily see distant landmarks.*

*My observation of the UFO took place at the very limit of my beat area at a suburb of Accrington called Huncoat. I was on a garage forecourt on the A679. The garage was closed and I was checking to ensure it was secure. A few yards from this location is the village of Hapton, which is policed by Burnley Police Division.*

*As I was about to pull out of the garage forecourt, I looked to my left and saw what I can only describe as a dark blob, low down in the sky. I remember saying to myself, 'What the hell is that?' I estimate that it was only about thirty feet above the rooftops and that the object was twenty to twenty five feet in diameter. It was travelling at a leisurely speed somewhere in the region of twenty five miles per hour. It passed my field of view from the left to right and at its nearest point I was approximately half a mile from it.*

*The A697 runs between Accrington and Burnley. From my viewpoint, looking towards Hapton and Burnley, the ground rises steeply on the right-hand side of that road, suitable only for grazing sheep. No houses here, but the UFO remained close to the ground. The steep ground culminated in a 20 to 30ft rock surface, which was not far from being vertical. As the UFO reached this point, it almost stopped, keeping 20 to 30 feet from the ground and the near vertical rock surface. It then elevated vertically to clear the top of the rock outcrop. It then moved forward and out of my field of view.*

*The UFO travelled from the direction of Clitheroe, in front of me and if it didn't change its route, it would end up passing over the Todmorden area. From the A679 to Todmorden is mostly moorland with the odd road and farmhouse on the landscape*

*The UFO was a dark metallic grey colour. It didn't have any lights showing and it was not emitting any sort of glow. I*

*could not make out any detail as it was too far away from me. I did not hear any noise coming from the UFO. It was probably in my view for only about one minute.*

*You may ask why I didn't report this to my control room. Well, yes, I did have a personal radio and I was in contact with my Accrington control room. After the UFO had disappeared from view I was about to shout up and report the sighting but the UFO was not in my area and it was not going towards my area where it may have been seen by other patrols. It was going over the moors towards Yorkshire. If I had shouted over the radio that I had seen a UFO heading towards Todmorden and could you let the Yorkshire Police know it's heading their way, there would have been roars of laughter from the control room staff, not to mention every other officer in the division shouting comments as the radios are normally on 'talk through' allowing all to hear transmissions."*

Obviously, this report is now nearly twenty-five years old and Dave was just interested in logging this with BUFORA. I spoke with him on the telephone and he seemed adamant that this object was of unknown origin. Of course the problem is that this could not be investigated or followed up after so many years...and so it remains an unexplained sighting.

Footnote: Should readers have any knowledge of the above sightings, please feel free to contact me at [stheatherd77@aol.com](mailto:stheatherd77@aol.com)

**Ditchling, East Sussex**  
**26<sup>th</sup> April 2009**  
**Investigator – Matt Lyons**



**The thicket line as observed from the bay window from the top of Ditchling Beacon.**

**At 1.45 am the witness looked out of his window across the South Downs near Ditchling Beacon and observed what he thought was a torchlight on the Downs halfway up the hillside. He then realised the light was moving too fast up the hill to be handheld and thought it maybe a light on a bike or a car. When the light reached the top of the Downs, it started travelling west along the top and then began to rise into the sky while still travelling west and also turning to a very bright orange. At this stage he grabbed his binoculars and went outside to see if he could hear any sound, but there was complete silence and the light had become a very intense orange colour. There was no flashing and it was consistent, climbing and travelling west.**

**After considerable investigation by Matt Lyons, covering all possible causes for the sighting including an on-site visit with the witness to ascertain how this light had been viewed and the topography of the land from the witness's home, he concluded that the witness had been observing a sky lantern. Matt comments below:**

***“This was a sky lantern which had been lit at the foot of the hill and had progressed steadily to the top of the South Downs. The colour of the lantern had changed as the burner at the base became hotter as it fully ignited, providing the lantern***

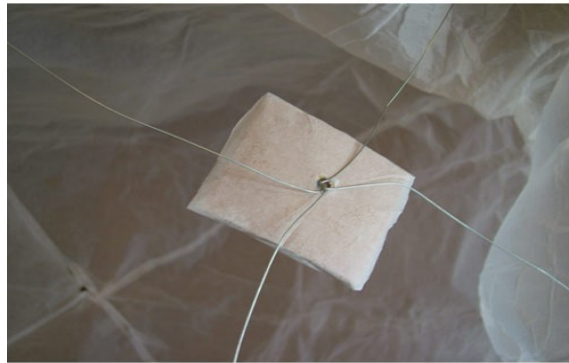
*with a change from the pale colour to the darker orange as it progressed.*

*This sky lantern will have been subject to some wind speed and directional changes as it reached the top, hence the change in direction to move away from the Downs and head over the lower ground, whilst maintaining its altitude.*



*The wind will also be responsible for increasing the normal burner intensity at the base, allowing it to climb further. The light appearing to go into infinity was caused by the burner reducing its glow as the fuel cell begins to finally use up its remaining flicker of light energy. Although the light may have begun to fade completely to nothing, the lantern itself will still have enough hot air inside it to continue upwards.”*

*Matt states that the, ‘..configuration of the wires at the base of the lantern supporting the burner will have been highly detectable through his binoculars.’*



**Photos: Sky lantern colours and wire skeleton images illustrating burner and upper support wires, which demonstrates conclusive likeness to colour image sketched by witness on original report form:**

*“Although this seems an unusual sight at this time of night, there is no street lighting in the village. This will make the lantern’s appearance on a moonless night with no light pollution far more striking than when lit in towns and cities. The steady and generally continuous glow from the light source also adds confirmation to this being a lantern.*”

*The unusual time for the sighting is not unlike the same reasons that many people have for lighting up noisy fireworks at anti social hours, although the lanterns are obviously silent by comparison.*

*Lanterns are often sold in red and orange heart shapes in addition to the more typical balloon and cylindrical types, or even given as romantic gifts by entertainment venues (“make a wish and light one”).*

*Sky lanterns are easily purchased on the internet and are starting to become more commonplace in U.K. shops. It is quite possible that the lantern may have been lit by passing travellers and not necessarily anyone from the locality.”*

**This lantern sighting is one of many coming into BUFORA and they remain the main culprit for UFO sightings at this time. Even though much has been written in the press and internet on the Chinese lantern sightings, it appears that**

these novelties still confuse the general public and endless debate appears on various blogs and sites determining the reasons why these sightings could not have been lanterns. In some ways this is understandable when you are viewing these at night with little frame of reference to determine height and speed, and particularly when the lanterns appear as though they are flying in formation...which they actually *are* sometimes, simply because they are following the same air currents or are tethered. Sometimes, they can break away and then travel and move as a single light looking even stranger. And so within the forum of public debate, the mystery of Chinese lanterns continues unabated, with many people still unconvinced about the explanation for these sightings, and there is certainly a direct correlation between the disbelief from the nineties in the laser light displays and the modern trend today of disbelief that Chinese lanterns are common culprits. The central theme of this appears to be that when people want to believe something, they *will* believe it no matter what the evidence!! Hence the huge influence of belief systems when reporting a UFO sighting.

## Solar Balloons

Another popular misperception for UFOs is the solar balloon. We have had several sighting reports to BUFORA, which have very obviously been solar balloons. They work very much on the principle of hot air balloons and can be bought or made in all shapes and sizes using black plastic bags. I suspect that these will become more and more popular during the summer months and will be continue to be misidentified by some people. A couple of links below to illustrate the idea of these, the second one being video footage of one being actually made and launched.

<http://www.thisissomerset.co.uk/bridgwater/news/UFO-s-99p-balloon/article-727141-detail/article.html?logout=true>

[http://images.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://www.grand-illusions.com/images/articles/toycollection/solar\\_balloon/mainimage.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.grand-illusions.com/toycollection/solar\\_balloon/&usg=\\_\\_Iioho0zPYJstlVhs4QfjBxck3p0=&h=440&w=595&sz=34&hl=en&start=3&um=1&tbnid=zvG\\_YINjn7q8SM:&tbnh=100&tbnw=135&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dsolar%2Bballoon%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-GB:official%26sa%3DX%26um%3D1](http://images.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://www.grand-illusions.com/images/articles/toycollection/solar_balloon/mainimage.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.grand-illusions.com/toycollection/solar_balloon/&usg=__Iioho0zPYJstlVhs4QfjBxck3p0=&h=440&w=595&sz=34&hl=en&start=3&um=1&tbnid=zvG_YINjn7q8SM:&tbnh=100&tbnw=135&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dsolar%2Bballoon%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-GB:official%26sa%3DX%26um%3D1)

These novelties are available, ready made and cheaply, from Argos, the Science Museum and many toy shops.

### High Strangeness Cases



BUFORA have received several of the more exotic claims of UFO/alien encounters of recent time, specifically a lady with whom Judy Jaafar and Robert Rosamond conducted a face-to-face interview this year, culminating in an “agree to disagree” situation, where everything the woman described suggested she had experienced the “moon illusion”, well known in psychology and the occult, and a French gentleman in some distress with whom Robert Rosamond dialogued via email urging him to contact a UFO organisation in France. In the last few days, head office received a letter from a man in northern England, claiming repeated, unnerving experiences since his youth. Robert Rosamond immediately phoned the correspondent and after

two long and protracted calls, with input from the witness's wife, it was firmly established that the man was suffering from serious mental health problems, medically diagnosed, but with the individual having refused to take the prescribed medication. It would have made a great alien story, at face value and without further investigation. Several such cases over the years have entered the ufological annals as real encounters, unfortunately.

It appears that contact/high strangeness experiences are increasing slightly at this time. This may be a reflection of the increase in sighting reports and media interest in the subject, due to a number of factors, particularly the release of the MoD UFO files, the saga of the wind turbine incident in Lincolnshire, now resolved (metal fatigue), and the many Chinese/sky lantern reports coming into spectacular focus via the internet. Or it may be something else altogether.....

To conclude this Investigations Diary, I would like share a couple of thoughts that have little to do with UFOs...or do they?

Several years ago a programme addressed the *notion of time*, where the contributors set out to probe what we mean by *time* and whether time is a figment of our imagination...an illusion....a collection of moments, or as a contributor put it '*time is nothing but an aspect of relationship between events*'. In the world of quantum physics, time takes on very strange characteristics where all things that *could* happen *are* happening at the same time. And so *time*, ever elusive and illusionary rushes on, and therefore I would like to take this particular moment...*somewhere in time*...to wish all our readers a magical summer under a very blue and mysterious sky.

Gloria Heather Dixon  
July 2009