

Investigations Diary 22

by Gloria Heather Dixon

Someone asked an interesting question on UFO Updates recently, regarding statistics of how many UK UFO cases were solved. Andy Roberts forwarded this question to me to answer on behalf of BUFORA and he then posted a brief response on to the Updates list.

I sent the following response to him, which I would like to mention here, as it is a very valid question.

About 70-80% of perceived unidentified aerial phenomena can be explained by BUFORA investigators and about 90% plus can be explained when they are reported quickly (within a couple of days) and followed up immediately. The problematic sightings are those that are reported years after the sighting, sometimes twenty to thirty years, with unreliable witness testimony contaminated with all of the usual UFO imagery and of course the major problem with memory many years on from the event, notwithstanding an additional problem in some cases of hoaxes. Some of these are not able to be resolved in a definitive way, but only with probable causes due to misidentification because of a lack of knowledge by the public in general of the amount of technological and astronomical traffic that roam our skies. An additional problem can be atmospheric distortion, which creates unusual effects for the observer in the way they view an objects or lights in our skies.

The high strangeness and more exotic claims of UFO encounters, which at the present time are making up about 12% of reports to BUFORA are even more problematic due to the nature of the report, which may or may not involve an actual 'UFO' observation. Unless these experiences are caused due to a rather mundane observation of something that is misidentified and therefore perceived as a UFO because of individual belief systems, pure wishful thinking or possibly an outright hoax for whatever reason, then it is unlikely that they will be able to be resolved at all. Experiences like these can fall within a wide range of possible explanations, including those that have some elements of real mystery to them and cannot be resolved at this time.

There have been 143 sightings to BUFORA, as of the time of writing (30th November, 2000), therefore as I emphasised the last Investigations Diary, there has been a definite decline of sighting reports to BUFORA when taking on board statistics in recent years. As I also mentioned in the last ID, there are many local groups, scattered throughout the country and it may be the case that sightings being reported to some of these groups have not declined during 2000. Certainly Brian James, our chairman, has reported that there has been an increase in reports to his own local group APRA via their website, and I would be most interested to explore whether this decline is on a national scale or possibly due to the fact that we do not have enough information to look at this more closely.



It would also be very valuable to know whether there has been an increase in the percentage of reports of close encounter experiences reported to other groups and organisations. This is a trend that is very important to explore, and I would appreciate any BUFORA members, who belong to other regional groups, contacting me with any information on this from their local groups. Thank you.

Date of Sighting: 13th December 1996 Location: Oswestry, Shropshire

On Friday 13th December, 1996, TG had finished work for a client at Whittington Community Centre. It was 6.30pm and a freezing but clear night, when he heard a 'crackling' noise emanating from the sky. He then observed a dark object, which he perceived to be at a height of a light aircraft heading from the East to the North West (Llangollen) at a speed equivalent to a helicopter rather than jet speed. He reports sparking, which he speculates may have been due to the freezing weather conditions. He then observed a black unlit outline, either oblong or possibly delta against the clear sky. He describes this as a solid mass probably about as big as a twin rotor helicopter.

As stated already, this is an example of the problems, which result from sightings reported to us so long after the event, although TG had contacted BUFORA around the time of his sighting, but declined to complete a report form at that time due to the nature of his business contacts.

Should any of our readers live in this area or have any comments as to what TG may have observed please contact BUFORA.

Location: Northern Yukon, Alaska

JN from Anchorage Alaska emailed BUFORA to report puzzling images on digital picture he took while visiting Northern Yukon. He and a friend landed on a remote lake to stay the night and he reports that the Northern Lights were more spectacular than they had ever seen them. He took many digital pictures and when viewing them on his home computer he feels there are some anomalies captured within the pictures of the Northern Lights. He feels it is possibly a reflection or something on the lens of the camera, but that it has a distinctive shape, which he cannot identify and wonders if this can be looked at to determine whether it is a reflection or smudge on the lens.

This report is being followed up at the present time and JN will email jpegs of these digital pictures for assessment.



Date of Sighting: 25th November 2000 Location: Edinburgh, Scotland

Inv. George Niedzwiedz

NB was walking home from the supermarket on Saturday, 25th November at 7.15pm when he observed what appeared to be a satellite in the eastern sky. To the left of this satellite appeared to be another one. The two moving lights then appeared to move closer together visibly picking up speed and appeared to cross each other's path several times. The two star-like lights then arced across the sky at a tremendous speed, dropped down and disappeared into the horizon.

George Niedzwiedz BUFORA AI in Scotland is following this up this sighting report and explanation for this sighting will be documented in a later issue of the Bulletin.

Location: Liverpool Inv. Tony Eccles

Date: 1996 and 1997

A report came in via BUFORA enquiries recently relating to two experiences, which were perceived to have time discrepancies.

KS tells of her first experience together with her young daughter in November of 1996 at 9pm when she was driving on the M62 motorway between Liverpool and Manchester. At the time they were travelling along the M62 out of Liverpool toward the exit to the M6 motorway back to Birmingham where they lived. It was very dark and KS' estranged husband had driven them to Liverpool to collect a new car, which she had bought from a garage in Liverpool. They called at her parents' home in north Liverpool for an evening meal before setting off back to Birmingham with her husband driving his car in front of them She had her daughter in a baby seat in the back of her car.

As they drove past the new Gemini Business and Shopping Park which was to the right of them on the other side of the motorway, they all saw a strange vertical cigar shaped white object that was hovering just above the roofs of a row of houses, in the fields and countryside. KS describes this as a bright white vertical light, stayed there for a while and she noticed other motorists in their cars were observing this light. KS got back to Birmingham an hour later than they should have done. The journey is a 90 minute drive in moderate traffic and 120 minutes in heavy traffic .The motorway that night was clear with little traffic. When they returned to Birmingham and found that they had lost an hour they phoned a National Tabloid Newspaper and told them of their experience, and were told that they were one of several people who had phoned in and whom had seen the same thing. Checks with Manchester International Airport said that they had no aircraft flying in that area at that time. In 1997 KS and her daughter were travelling from Birmingham to Liverpool along the M6 motorway northbound. They left Birmingham at 7pm and the motorway was clear and with little traffic congestion.. They should have arrived home at approximately 8.30pm. As they

travelled down the M5 motorway the sky was bright orange and KS turned off the M6 motorway onto the M62 motorway towards Liverpool and then onto the M57 motorway towards Maghull. She drove the full length of the M57 through to the slip road that slopes up onto what is called "Switch Island" in Aintree, Liverpool. As she reached the top of that slip road to Switch Island her daughter awoke asking what time it was. According to the clock on her dashboard, it was 8.45pm. KS then drove around the Island onto the A57 which runs straight into Maghull where the other side of the island meets and eventually on toward Ormskirk in Lancashire. The journey from Switch Island to their home in Maghull is about 5 minutes and KS felt they should have arrived home that night at 8.50pm

Whilst driving along the A57 , she became mesmerised by a strange object which was hovering over the Church in the distance to her left, in the middle of the countryside. She describes the object as a dark triangular craft with three beams of bright cobalt blue light shining down over the spire of the church. There were 3 cars in front of their car with one behind them and KS describes the events in the following way.....

It was weird because it was like all of the drivers in the cars in front and behind us were wooden, transfixed and looking to their left at what we saw, it felt like we were moving really slowly on a car conveyor belt, and as if we could not function normally. I was just stunned and it hovered there for a while but I must have still continued to drive because we reached the set of traffic lights with car showrooms replacing our view left, of the church and the fields and we turned left at the traffic lights and immediate right off that road along a slip road adjacent to the A57 and first left into the road we lived on (Broadwood Avenue) I drove up onto my driveway at the front of my house and was astonished to see my car clock reading 10pm. Where had that hour gone to?

KS continues.... We got into our house and the phone rang, it was our Birmingham relatives frantic and worried as to why we had not got home and phoned them, thinking that we had an accident. We looked in our mirrors when getting changed into night clothes and our faces were mysteriously tanned and with a distinctively orangey-red tinge. Could the bright orange sunset seen on the M6 earlier that evening have tanned us? We phoned a local newspaper the next day (The Maghull Advertiser) and we were told we were one of several people who had phoned in having seen the same thing that night and all of them claiming to have lost an hour of their lives.

Obviously this is a comprehensive report which is being investigated by Tony Eccles. There will be an update as to any conclusions or explanations for these sightings in a future issue of the Bulletin. If any readers are aware of this report or explanations, could they please contact BUFORA.

**Location: Colwyn Bay, North Wales Date of Sighting : 5th
October 2000**

Inv. Nicholas Kern

GW was out walking at 8.40pm in Colwyn Bay at the junction of Elian Road and Lwyd Grove, near to the Fire Station, when he looked up and observed three bright lights in a triangle travelling from the north east to the west.. Two lights were ahead with one behind and he reports that they were very high and travelling very fast. His initial thought was that these were aircraft. However, one light moved across to the other one and then returned to its original position. The manoeuvre took about one second and the light then disappeared into cloud. He waited to see if they would re-appear, but he did not see them again. His observation time was twenty seconds and all three lights were the same size.

In a summary of Nicholas Kern's investigation he makes some comments in his assessment of this sighting....

The area is well lit and the lights observed were almost directly overhead from this location with no apparent obstruction to the witness' view.

The area in question is subject to regular air traffic both day and night. The nearest main civilian airports are Chester, approximately 31 miles east, and Caernarfon, approximately 25 miles to the west. There is a large RAF station based at Valley on Anglesey, approximately 32 miles to the north west.

This base is one of the RAF's main fast jet training sites with frequent flights of its Hawk aircraft. Also situated about 5 miles north of Colwyn Bay is an air corridor, designated for civil airline traffic at an altitude of 24,500 feet. This corridor runs roughly parallel along the North Wales Coast.

In his conclusions Nicholas makes the following observations....

After examination of the complete questionnaire by GW, my initial thoughts were that it was probable he had observed one or more aircraft.

In his written account GW states that he initially thought he was observing aircraft. (This is always an interesting remark by the witness as this is normally exactly what they have actually observed...GHD)

It was only when one of the light moved over towards another one and then back again that GW thought otherwise. When I questioned him about his familiarity with observing aircraft, he stated that he was used to seeing them and in fact he seemed quite knowledgeable about various aircraft types. However, this doesn't preclude him from misinterpreting what he has seen (absolutely!). A number of factors could have contributed to this.

1. He was wearing spectacles at the time of the sighting.
2. The presence of street lighting together with other lighting at the scene may have caused a reflection or distortion, which could have affected his observation.
3. It has just begun to rain. As he was looking directly upwards towards the lights, it is almost certain some drops would have landed on the lenses of his spectacles again causing possible distortion.

4. Even if the witness had clearly observed the three lights, his description of the unusual manoeuvre of the one light is easily accounted for if more than one aircraft was present.
5. If a single aircraft was responsible for his sighting then the movement of the light could possibly be explained by the aircraft being viewed from different angles as it moved across the sky.
6. Further cloud may have obscured his vision when he felt the light disappeared into the cloud without reappearing again.

Although RAF Valley informed GW that they had nothing flying that evening, this does not rule out the possibility that there were aircraft from any one of a number of bases flying that evening.

Nicholas goes on to refer to the NOSS (Naval Oceanic Surveillance system) as a possible culprit for GW's sightings, where he comments on Tony Eccle's article in an issue of the Bulletin earlier this year. In this article Tony cites NOSS as a responsible for a case he investigated at Thingwall on the Wirral, Merseyside, coincidentally exactly one year earlier than this current sighting. However, there are several aspects of GW's sighting which may diminish the case for this being due to NOSS, two of these being due to the faster speed and brightness of the lights that GW describes.

Nicholas also points out that Tony Eccles' article 'shows the value of investigators sharing information', as he would never have considered the possibility of this sighting being due to satellites prior to reading it. (you and many others Nicholas - GHD))

I would like to thank Nicholas Kern for his comprehensive report on this sighting and although this is not a definitive explanation, in my view I would say that aircraft are a highly probable cause. Maybe Tony Eccles might like to comment on this?

To finish the Diary, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to all investigators for the time and energy they give to the BUFORA NIC. Investigation remains at the cutting edge of the UFO enigma and without objective, thorough and sceptical investigation, we cannot identify the residual of sightings and high strangeness reports that may lie at the heart of the true UFO mystery..

I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.