

Investigations Diary 23

by Gloria Heather Dixon

In my investigations report for the forthcoming AGM, statistics show that the number of reports to BUFORA for 2000 are still falling. We received 163 reports last year and of those 23 would be categorised as reports with a high strangeness factor. Therefore 14% of reports coming into BUFORA are not just anomalous lights or objects, but have many components, which do not always actually include a UFO sighting. It is evident, therefore, that reports to BUFORA cover a vast range of anomalies and perceived strange experiences, which lie outside the normal parameters of observations of unusual aerial objects. This has been the case for many years in the modern day era of UFOs as interpretations change and evolve within the current day thinking and captivating images that surround us in our exploration of space. In addition to this are the effects of space age technology and imagery, which appear to create a direct link into how people perceive anomalous experiences.

In order to broaden the controversy surrounding the increasing number of extraordinary experiences that are reported to BUFORA, I would like take a general look at the issue of claims of alien encounters and abductions.

It is becoming increasingly evident that numerous people undergo extraordinary experiences at times in their lives, or at least experiences that they cannot define or even have the language or the capacity to explain. We live in an age with amazing potential and where anything seems to be possible due to our advanced technology. More and more information is accessible to an ever-increasing number of people, as they access the internet, where UFO and paranormal sites are in abundance. In addition to this are many magazines, books and television shows dealing with the subject and spreading the mythology to literally millions of people adding to the persuasive imagery of the reality of alien abductions. Furthermore, we live in a scary age of artificial intelligence development, medical technology and futuristic weaponry and aircraft that we possibly have yet to imagine. I believe it is no wonder that we look to those other worlds in order to explain this one and to possibly feel that we have elusive connections to something else out there that could either save us from ourselves or to guide us in other directions, as we question the meaning of life, who we are and where we are going.

The idea that there are some people, who believe they have been abducted by aliens has been downloaded into our consciousness and we cannot get away from that. Whether this is happening in the physical world is another question entirely and from my point of view, I see little evidence for this or at least no definitive proof that has ever been produced to give any credence to this idea at all. Of course the problem with many of the cases is that regression hypnosis has been used as a method to recover information about these experiences and there are major problems with this very controversial method, together with the fact that memory retrieval even from yesterday can be less than accurate. The brain is very selective about what it feels we need to remember about various events on a daily basis, therefore the use of hypnosis

will not enhance the memory from the point of view of an objective truth about the event.

However, all this aside, there are an increasing number of people including children, who contact UFO organisations about strange and disturbing experiences. We cannot just ignore this because it will not go away. There is no doubt at all that mental health issues are involved in some of these cases together with factors such as attention seeking, sheer hoaxes and misperception of confusing dreams etc. But beyond all the above explanations there remain reports from ordinary people, who undergo extraordinary events and look to UFO and paranormal organisations for answers because they perceive these experiences to be alien encounters. Can you blame them? The representations of what aliens may look like are contained everywhere, from science fiction to books, magazines and television notwithstanding all the promotional advertisements for various companies, which use the 'grey alien' face on our screens. In some ways it is deeply depressing because at this stage we do not even know what came first, the chicken or the egg. Was the alien imagery that we use based on what people conjured up from these experiences before the 'grey alien' image ever invaded our consciousness or do people use this imagery because we have constructed it from representations used in all the literature and media coverage of the UFO subject.

To complicate matters further, this is where the dangers can lie, as these reports normally fall outside the remit of UFO investigators. However, it is my belief that we must continue to support and listen to the witness with great care and sensitivity but that support must also remain totally objective during our investigations and research. We can also sometimes point them in the direction of psychology to help understand what these experiences may mean. We can look for parallels to their experiences from other accounts, as well as looking at the life profile of that person where, as many researchers are aware, we find that many people reporting the close encounter experience have in fact experienced other unusual anomalies in their lives often of a paranormal nature. The late Ken Phillips conducted work in this area on the Anamnesis Project together with the late Austrian psychologist Dr. Alex Keul. One of the conclusions of this project was that UFO experiencers are a reasonable cross-section of the population and not particularly fantasy prone individuals. There are certainly many patterns that emerge, but this still does not explain why people report that they have had an alien abduction experience. Cases of reported close encounters during altered states of consciousness prior to sleeping or awakening could be explained by 'sleep paralysis' and hypnagogic states during these altered states of consciousness prior to sleeping and awakening and other states of sleep such as false awakenings.

The questions surrounding these reports are of course, a loaded gun with the immense controversy surrounding it by the international UFO community, but it is obvious, to me anyway, that we need to examine consciousness in a far more complex way in order to begin to understand the human condition and the fragile area of these reports. I think in a way Dr. Peter Fenwick's statement in his book *The Truth In the Light* gave an insight into these issues when he wrote 'science still does not understand the conversion of the objective world outside to the subjective world of meaning.

I believe that there is no doubt that abduction claims are part of a profound and important phenomenon, but mystical experiences have taken place since the dawn of

mankind. It is just the interpretation that has changed to fit the models and images that we see in today's culture. It is my feeling that many of these claims will tell us more and more about the human condition as our beliefs and modern-day mythology unfold.

During December 2000 and January 2001 I have logged 39 reports showing quite a dramatic increase in comparison to the amount of sightings recorded for last year. Some of these reports are once again observations from several years ago. I would like to begin with the following sighting from SK, which occurred in August 1978. This report was originally recorded with BUFORA in the 1986 and the original investigator was past BUFORA investigator Mike Wootten. Mike could not find any other information for this sighting. SK has now contacted BUFORA again and I would like to record his sighting, although it was nearly 23 years ago.

Date: June/July/August? 1978 Location: Fordwich Lake, Sturry Village, Kent

SK writes the following account of the incident in his original report form sent to Mike Wootten...

On the particular night in question, myself and two others were fishing for carp at Forwich Deep, an extensive area of lakes about three to four miles east of Canterbury. The sky was very clear and conditions were warm and still.

At about 1-1.30am Phil mentioned that a star was acting oddly. Richard and myself ignored him and carried on fishing. At about 10-20 minutes after his first comment, which we had forgotten, Phil mentioned the star again and with some urgency drew our attention to it. This time we watched and we observed what appeared to be a large star at about 35-40 degrees above the horizon. It appeared to be moving in an eccentric way, making short darting movements and stopping. As we watched we gave different accounts to explain the object.

The star then began to swell until it appeared to be the size of a ten pence piece held at arms length. By this time our attention was riveted on the star. We also realised that the object was not swelling, but approaching us in a shallow dive. Then the star changed its apparent form. It abruptly became like three or four neon bars held horizontally and it was also obvious that the object would pass very close to us. The lights appeared white. By now we were confused and as the object got nearer still we could finally see what appeared to be solid bars of light were in fact single clusters of light. The lights appeared to be constantly changing in colour. The colours had a strange quality about them. They appeared to be alight in a way which cannot be easily described. They had a warmth and intensity about them. Some of the colours had no name.

By this time the object was directly overhead. It was about the size of a 45rpm record disc (remember those anyone... GHD) held at arms length. Also we had a chance to see the object. It was solid and dark against the sky and appeared to be the shape of an inverted shell with rows of light ringing it. It was difficult to measure size because it

was like nothing we had ever previously seen. I would say it was approximately the size of a semi-detached house at maybe 500-700 feet altitude. As it flew above and away from us in an easterly direction we could see other characteristics we could not previously see. At no time was there any noise. It appeared to be part of the night.

As it flew away, it appeared to be bobbing slightly and in a matter of perhaps half a minute it had disappeared, heading roughly towards Ramsgate. I would say it's speed varied at times from 200-500 mph (this would be very difficult to judge..GHD).

By this time we were most agitated. One of my friends was on the verge of running the mile or so to Sturry village and leaving his fairly expensive gear. My other friend ran up the path in pursuit of the object.

About 5-10 minutes after the object disappeared, two aircraft flew overhead in the same direction. I do not know whether the objects and jets were connected in any way, but we had fished in this area at night frequently and it was the only time I can recall seeing aircraft in this area.

Obviously, this case is a major problem because it is now close to 23 years old. SK does not have a specific date and on his original report form has put the month as late June/early July with a further possibility now of August, so what we probably do know on this is that it was summer 1978.

If any readers have further information on this observation please contact me via BUFORA Central Office.

Location: Hornsey, London Date of sighting: April 2000

JK was hanging out washing in her garden at about 3pm , when she heard a clash of thunder. She looked at the sky for clouds, when she observed a very unusual aircraft to the north west. At the bottom of her garden is a block of flats and this object was over the height of the flats. She states that it was hovering and appeared to be made of 'iron-like material, not like you see on aircraft'. She goes on to describe three circle patterns underneath similar to a manhole cover, only larger. She watched it for about ten seconds and became frightened and backed up her garden to the back door, when it disappeared very fast. She ran through to her front door, but saw no sign of it.

She reported that there was no noise. Weather was clear and mild, no clouds and no wind. The lady concerned is sixty- two years young and I did check whether she wore spectacles. She does, but only for close work. Her distance vision is not affected.

Can our London readers come up with an explanation for what this lady saw?

Location: B3277 between St. Agnes and Chiverton Cross, Near Truro in Cornwall.
Date of Sighting: 8th December 2000

LS was the driver of a car travelling south between the village of St. Agnes and Truro at 6pm when he observed what he describes as an object to the south-west, near the town of Falmouth and possibly over the sea in that area. He describes the elevation of approximately 30-40 degrees and that it was travelling in an easterly direction. LS said the object had an appearance of about 6/7 lights moving in a straight line, white in colour and no noise or vapour trail.

Weather is described as clear, dry, no clouds at all.

Date of sighting: 8th February 2001 Time of sighting 7.35 pm

Location: Helsby, Cheshire

The witness was looking out of her kitchen window when she observed through the half drawn curtains an orange ball of light with a brilliant jade green tail. There seemed to be a gap in between the tail and light. It was travelling horizontally and disappeared behind a tree line very close by. She appears to think it was fairly close and that it actually landed, but obviously her line of vision was somewhat obscured. Observation time was about 2/3 three seconds.

This report certainly ties in with a wide area of sightings of a spectacular bolide on 8th February. There were reports to various UFO groups and sightings in the Sheffield, Liverpool, Cheshire and Lancashire and as far south as Gloucester, in addition to being covered by some of the local press. These sightings have been confirmed as a bolide meteor by Jodrell Bank.

Another report to BUFORA came in from Scotland, although this was on 9th February 2001 at 8.30pm. The witness describes observing what he describes as 'a comet with a long red tail flowing behind it and the ball itself was bright green with a very small flashing light emanating from it. His observation time was 10-15 seconds. It would be interesting to know whether his dates were accurate.

In addition to this George Niedzwiedz, BUFORA AI in Scotland had six people working at the Torness Nuclear Power Station report their observations of this bolide to him. They observed this on 8th February and report that it was a very low altitude and left a smoke trail, so as can be seen, this brilliant bolide was observed in areas right across the UK.

There has also been recent speculation about the Peak District being in the centre of a UFO flap, specifically the village of Bonsall, near Matlock in Derbyshire. This has been triggered by a recent two page spread in the Daily Mail and as is so often the case when a specific area is targeted as an area for an upsurge of UFO reports and covered by the national press, things snowball until a specific area becomes a centre for a UFO flap. Often this is not the case at all, but there will be a continued upsurge in reports in that area, as people perceive odd lights and objects in the sky as being something other than the rather mundane objects they often are.

There was also an incident reported on Radio 5 Live and the local Scottish Press, where pupils from Laird Primary School in Sutherland reported something falling from the sky in the form of a powder, which made the pupils itchy. The school was closed for a short time. Contrary to other speculation and reported by the local press, the source of this powder was from a light aircraft that had been spraying crops nearby. It was tested and declared non-toxic and the school was opened again with no further ill effects being recorded. This is not something we want to happen to our children, but there was no more mystery to it than this.

To conclude this diary, I would like to let investigators know that there will be an NIC meeting in May/June 2001, which will be held in Ealing, London, at the home of Judy Jaafar. The date is to be arranged, but it will be held during a weekend. We hope that this will be another informal meeting akin to the meeting held in Doncaster last September. This summer NIC meeting will focus on current investigations, but I would appreciate investigators contacting me with any specific items they would like added to the Agenda. I will be in touch with all investigators, as soon as we have a specific date arranged. The weather will be warmer (I hope) and the days will be longer and for those travelling by train, we hope that rail services will be a great deal better by then.

I do hope that as many of you can make it as possible.