

Investigations Diary 29

by Judy Jaafar

RUSTAVI LIGHT PHENOMENA

DATE OF SIGHTING: 3/10/02, 21.20 local time

WITNESSES: Georgian family of 4, neighbours and other people in the town

CONTACT: Zurab Kodlashvili, cameraman for BBC News, Moscow

Bufora was contacted via our website by Zurab Kodlashvili, a long-time friend of the witness who video-taped the phenomenon. Zurab had contacted several Russian UFO groups and media outlets, but no interest was shown. Zurab was coming to London on business anyway (he has a flat in London), so decided to contact a British group.

The film was taken on a JVC X4 mini DV digital camcorder, and lasts for around 10 minutes.

The story actually begins the evening before, 2/10/02, when the 13yr old son of the camera operator called to his family to come out and see the "flying disc" which was visible in the sky outside their apartment block. He was admonished for lying, and nobody went to check.

The next evening, the boy was outside on the balcony and called again. This time his father went to have a look, and immediately went inside for his camcorder. The boy had seen one light the previous evening, but this time there were seven altogether, although only five have been captured at the same time on film.

The witness estimates the distance from him to be around 1 and 1/2 k, and the objects were low in the sky, apparently hovering over a nearby hill. The first frames (without zoom) of the film show five brightly lit objects, which appear to "switch on" and "switch off" in a random pattern, disappearing and then reappearing in different positions. When zoom is used, the normal distortions are apparent, and are very reminiscent of the Bonsall, Derbyshire photos of last year, even down to the apparent concentric circular shape of the objects, and the pink hue. Occasionally, the objects cross each other, and definition is seen through the front object, suggesting that we are dealing with light phenomena and not structured objects.

I asked about the possibility of them being flares of some kind, and was told the this was not the case. Zurab had been an officer in the Russian navy in the 80s and had done many night-time exercises with flares, and this was not at all similar. He also added that during his military service on ships within the Arctic Circle, he and his comrades had seen many anomalous lights and craft, often pacing their ships. It became so common that people didn't bother reporting them anymore.

Interestingly, towards the end of the video segment, the sound of helicopter rotors becomes increasingly audible. The witness pans up into the sky to try and catch them,

but is unable to find them, although they could be seen with the naked eye. They were displaying no lights, and when they came within the vicinity of the anomalous objects, all the lights blinked out and did not return.

There is a an American military base called Ialguchi a few kilometres to the south east of Rustavi, and it was from this direction that the helicopters came. But could they have been doing night-time manoeuvres with flares?

All five spherical lights have dark spots at the centre, and dark spots at the right hand side, in exactly the same position. The right side dark spots assume the uncanny appearance of an alien face with black eyes, when viewed under zoom, and it's this I'm sure which has sent the witness on a quest for media involvement.

At one point in the film, you can just barely see an area of light on the ground below one of the objects. Naked-eye witness testimony says that a car had just passed by, and this light then appeared briefly on the ground, but with no intervening beam, suggesting a reflection. But if the lights were several kilometres distant, how could a ground reflection after a passing car be seen? Witness evaluation of distance is notoriously inaccurate.

The Republic of Georgia is in a seismologically active zone, with the last significant earthquake being around 12 years ago. Could we be dealing with a geo-physical or quake lights phenomenon?

Sadly, I could not take possession of the video footage, as the photographer, who is poor and lives on about \$20 a month, wishes to try and sell his footage to a TV company, or the press. Zurab is attempting to do as much during his visit to London. He has promised the original footage to me for scientific research, after he has approached all the press and media outlets. But if the photographer is so poor, how come he has a digital camcorder?

Matthew Williams' (who looked at the photos on computer) initial comments below:

"Classic out of focus camera. There are reticulation interference patterns from the focus problem present which gives it away. Also there are repeated lens effects present "

Addendum April 2003

Recently, Brenda Butler has sent us photographs of "orbs" taken in Rendlesham Forest, and Fortean Times has published orb photos from a school. In both cases, the point of interest has been not just the orbs themselves, but what appear to be faces within the orbs. The psychical researchers involved in the "Scole Experiment" also obtained photos of an orb which appeared to contain an alien-type face, an entity the researchers called "Blue", who manifested at several seances.



Photos courtesy of Dato Maraneli

So from what appear to be two distinct phenomena (UFOs and hauntings/spiritualism) we are getting pictures of a very similar nature. Perhaps we might postulate that all are artefacts of the digital photography process, or that the energy involved is similar in nature. Haunting orbs are not normally seen with the naked eye, but the Rustavi lights were, as were also the manifestations of "Blue". Intriguing!