

BUFORA

JOURNAL

In this issue

The Freshwater (Wales) photograph
Research group recommendations
Statistical analysis of northern UFO activity

Volume 4 Number 10 November/December 1975



Published by The British U.F.O. Research Association

The British Unidentified Flying Object Research Association (Founded 1964)

Incorporating the London UFO Research Organisation founded 1959 and the British UFO Association, founded 1962.

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Aims

To encourage and promote unbiased scientific investigation and research into UFO phenomena. To collect and disseminate evidence and data relating to UFOs. To co-ordinate UFO research on a nationwide scale and to co-operate with people and organisations engaged on similar research in all parts of the world.

Membership

The annual subscription is £4.00, \$10 in the USA and Canada. Membership is open to all who support the aims of the Association and whose application is approved by the National Executive Committee. Application/information forms can be obtained from any officer.

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BUFORA JOURNAL

Volume 4 Number 10

November/December 1975

Editor: Richard Beet
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Skystruck !

Do skywatches have any intrinsic ufological value? Statistically, at any rate, the odds seem weighed heavily against a genuine UFO being seen during the few hours duration of a skywatch; although some enthusiastic, but untrained, individuals will always insist that the satellite, high-flying aircraft or meteorological balloon they saw was really a 'scout ship' or 'mother craft.'

Ufologists seem to be divided into two distinct camps on the skywatch issue: those pro-skywatch, and those anti-skywatch. At one time I was very much pro-skywatch, but my views have been gradually hardening on the merits of sitting out in the cold all night, unless there is a strong possibility of a UFO being seen.

Selective skywatches seem desirable in places such as Warminster and Banbury, where sightings are continually reported. But do the BUFORA annual skywatches really help ufology, apart from presenting an opportunity to train the uninitiated in how not to mistake a conventional object, or natural phenomena, for something more unusual? Would not the skywatchers aid ufology more by, for example, discussing ways in which investigation

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ISSN 0306-798X

SKYSTRUCK

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techniques could be improved, and analysing sighting reports made by other people?

Indeed, if it can be shown that skywatches do little to further UFO research in general, apart from the rare occasions when UFOs seem to make several visits to one place, why not phase them out altogether? For UFO research is often synonymous with skywatches. And we all know only too well that there is far more to ufological research than spending a night on top of a windswept hill. There is something else to consider too. Skywatches usually attract publicity—of the wrong kind. Consequently ufologists, in the eyes of many people, are starry-eyed cranks always gazing heavenwards. It would be interesting to know how many skywatches J Allen Hynek has conducted recently?

The concept of an annual skywatch, the date of which is selected by nothing more than the anniversary of an inconsequential American sighting, is, I suggest, nothing short of ludicrous.

Perhaps we should consider holding selective skywatches in areas of high activity. Until such time as we have a national network of inter-connected monitoring posts—like the ROC—we should restrict our efforts to those activities which are likely to show some return.

RICHARD BEET

British UFO Society

The above-named organisation has no connection whatsoever with the British UFO Research Association. BUFORA established in 1964, is not responsible in any way for the publicity activities of the British UFO Society.

Conference proceedings

A number of technical difficulties have arisen in the transcription of the May conference lecture tapes into a presentable written form.

Not least of the problems is the conversion of colloquial anomalies in the spoken word into understandable reported speech. Interpretation is often difficult, and clearance with lecturers has led to unavoidable delays in clearing material.

In future, we *must* obtain written papers in advance from contributors to future conferences.

It is hoped that the first paper will be available for sale to members by Christmas. Details of the paper and its availability will be given in the next *Journal*.

RICHARD BEET

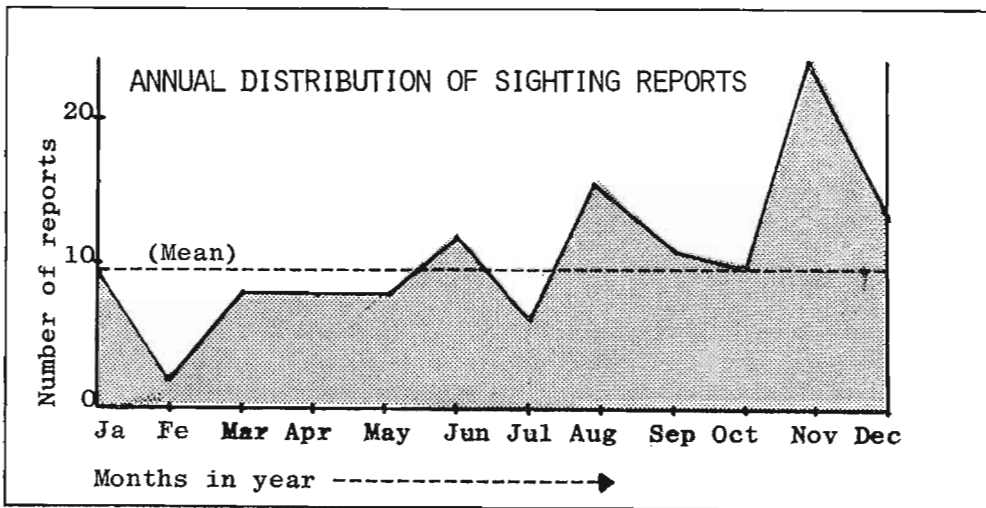
European link-up

To further BUFORA's aims of co-operating with other organisations, both national and international, the speaker at the November London lecture was Rudy de Groote, a leading member of GESAG. He spoke fluently and entertainingly about the European UFO scene.

Rudy is to be congratulated on his command of the English language. He emerged unscathed, if a little tired when I spoke to him, from an ordeal which would have un-nerved many a lecturer in his own country, let alone a foreign one!

His talk was refreshing and interesting as although we exchange magazines with many European countries, we still do not really know all that is going on—or at least we didn't until Saturday 1 November.

CAROL GODSELL



Graph 1

A statistical analysis of northern UFO activity—1970 to 1974

by JENNY RANGLES

One of the functions of NUFON is to freely produce any research results as carried out by associated groups and make these available. Several such contributions by single groups have been published already, but it was also found possible to produce a joint NUFON report on UFO activity as investigated in the north from 1970 to 1974. For the benefit of BUFORA members, I here intend to summarise the statistical survey which concludes the report.

This survey is based upon 118 reports and analyses them from various aspects. What follows are some of the results and speculations produced.

MONTH OF REPORT

Graph 1 shows the distribution of the reports by month of the year. It will be immediately apparent that two months, February and November, show signifi-

cant divergence from the average figure of 9.43. This result is somewhat surprising, although February has been found in previous studies to be a 'low' month. Naturally in a study taken over such a limited duration, the effects of 'flap' periods must be considered, *but* this does not seem to apply to November, when results are consistent throughout the years. One other interesting point is that if the months of April to September and October to February are taken as representative of summer and winter, there is no significant seasonal variation.

DAY OF WEEK

The results of this analysis will not be shown in graph form since they are less spectacular. Nevertheless, the one day which differs significantly from the average of 13.85 is *Wednesday* (with 20), which

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NORTHERN UFO ACTIVITY

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will not surprise devotees of John Keel. Interestingly the lowest total (10) is shared by *Thursday* and *Saturday* (a minor blow in the eye of those opponents of ufology who ascribe a psycho-social explanation—that is *Saturday* is the night people should 'see' things).

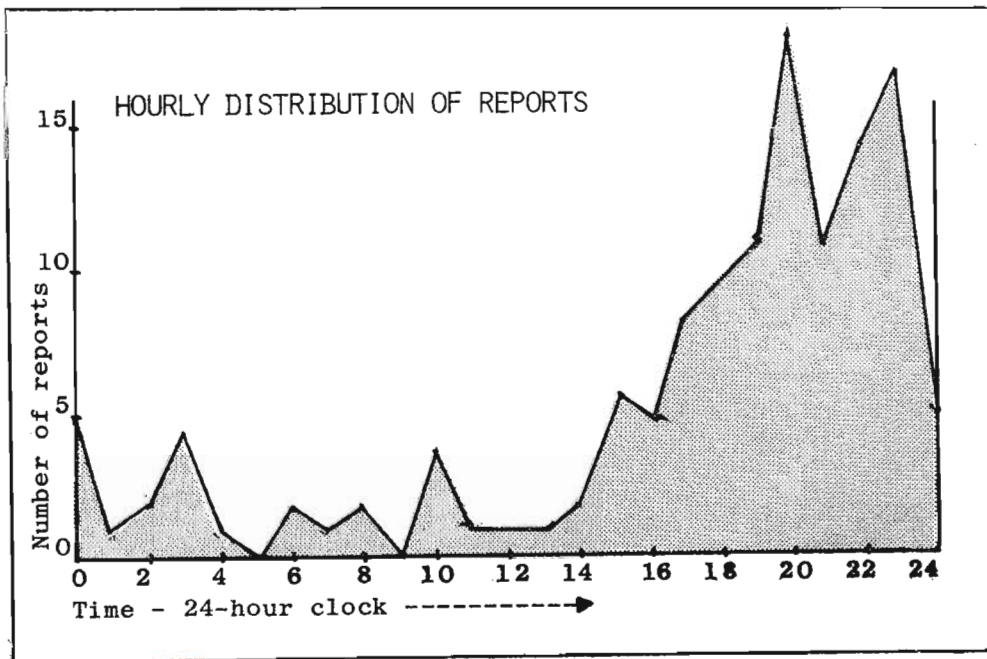
TIME OF DAY

Studies which relate the frequency of UFO reports with the time of day are quite common and a well-defined curve shows up. Graph 2 indicates that there is no exception in our case. All features commonly noted are present, such as the decided lack of daylight observations and the sharp increase during mid to late evening. There is even evidence for a secondary peak between 02.00 and 03.00, which interestingly has also been shown

by other reports of this nature. Landing reports, though small in number in our study, show a definite clustering in early evening (around 16.00 to 17.00) and none occur after 21.30.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE STUDY

It is not possible to record all the different things which were examined, owing to lack of space, but one or two comments will suffice. Colours showed a definite preference, aside from white, for the red/orange end of the spectrum, accounting for 11 times as many reports as the blue/green end. Five out of the seven cases which recorded a predominant colour change noted this as being to the red end, usually from white. Sounds were only described in four per cent of cases, over half being 'humming type.' There were



	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Probable</i>	<i>Possible</i>
Stellar object	2	1	5
Satellite	7	3	6
Aircraft	1	6	5
Balloon	1	—	2
Meteor	2	1	1
Meteorological	1	2	8
Optical	—	2	4
Floodlights	1	—	—
Hoax	2	—	1

also three 'smelly' UFOs. One was ozone-like and two sulphurous. What may be a significant result for the psychologist is that in 12·8 per cent of reports, witnesses recorded a calming influence, of varying degree, while observing the object.

EVALUATION

For the purposes of evaluation, reports were classified in the following categories: *Positive* (where a conclusive identification was made)—14·4 per cent of cases; *Probable* (where final identification could almost be made)—12·7 per cent; *Possible* (where the evidence was not sufficient to decide positively, but certainly suggested an identification)—27·2 per cent; *Insufficient Data* (where there was simply not enough evidence to decide either way)—25·4 per cent, and finally, *Unidentified* (where the more likely explanation was of unknown phenomena)—20·3 per cent.

It is to be strongly pointed out, however, that this last figure is a *maximum* one and subject to decrease with time, as further follow-up work is done on cases of value.

The figures below illustrate the number of reports identified under various categories.

CONCLUSION

It is of course, fully recognised by NUFON that the numbers used in this study are not sufficient for really meaningful results, but reports are to be compiled with each subsequent year and the cumulative figures will be of interest. Plans are also under way to prepare standard statistical summaries in more depth by each individual group in order that any geographical variations can be sought.

Message for Investigators

INCOMPLETE REPORTS

The following reports remain incomplete: 74 / 038 / 046 / 048 / 070 / 073 / 074 / 075 / 076 / 077 / 078 / 079 / 086 / 087 / 090 / 091 / 093 / 096 / 097 / 098.

For the sake of time and economy, there will be no more reminders about these reports, therefore if no further action is taken by the respective investigators, the cases will be considered closed and the

numbers given above allocated to other reports.

This system of allocating numbers to reports before investigations commenced, was abandoned by general agreement of RICs at the recent Staffs Conference; the system was considered impracticable.

KEN PHILLIPS

Vice-Chairman's Column

by LIONEL BEER

The Tungus Saga—continued

My column in the July/August issue on the Soviet scientific attitude to the Tungus explosion aroused some interest. A further Soviet press release dated 17 September, give more information about the cometary explanation. Academician Georgi Petrov and physicist Vladimir Stulov are convinced that the explosion which occurred in the Siberian taiga on 30 June 1908, was not caused by an iron or stoney meteorite, since no sizeable crater was found. They calculate that a 'loose clod of snow' from space about 600 metres across with a low density of 0.01 gm per cubic cm, entered the dense layers of the atmosphere at considerable speed. After an angular descent to an altitude of 40 to 60 kilometres, the leading surface evaporated rapidly. A gaseous cloud quickly built up around the clod of snow, which resulted in strong atmospheric breaking. The frontal wave then broke away from the body and surged ahead, carrying along the heated air. At an altitude of 10 km the whole body vapourised, losing most of its kinetic energy. But the shock wave reached the ground, felling trees over a vast area, evidence of which still remains to this day. The multi-explosion shock-wave effect was widely reported and the scientists maintain that present theories on cometary nuclei do not contradict their hypothesis.

This month's word

In the last issue I told you about *Astroarchaeology*, as practised by Erich von Daniken and authors of that ilk. At the Specialist Publishers Exhibition held in London on 2 October, my eye was caught by a largish book published by the University of Texas, on *Archaeoastronomy*. The full title of this illustrated work is

Archaeoastronomy in Pre-Columbian America. I must have been the first enquirer, as the London office had to advise me subsequently in writing that the price was a mere £9.80. I have long suspected that American University presses publish at high prices to keep their books out of the popular market!

The book itself contains selected papers from a symposium of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, held in Mexico City in June 1973. Topics range over early American rock art, astronomical orientiations of buildings and native American calendars. It seems some early 'natives' recorded astronomical phenomena on the walls and ceiling of caves, such as the supernova in the Crab nebula in 1054. 'Star ceilings' at the Canyon de Chelly, Arizona, are included. Papers in addition to the symposium include, *Native Astronomy in Mesoamerica* by Michael Coe, and *Astroarchaeology: The Unwritten Evidence* by Gerald Hawkins of Stonehenge fame. Perhaps it could be said that Archaeoastronomy is a specialist and more scientifically exacting branch of Astroarchaeology?

Group co-operation pays off

On Saturday 11 October, the television 'Open Door' programme invited the Disablement Income Group, The English Nationalist Party, Chickens' Lib and the Northern UFO Network (NUFON) to present their aims. We learnt that there were about 600 organisations on the waiting list. The NUFON feature was recorded the same afternoon for BBC2, at the Shepherds Bush Television Centre. I was sitting in the control room watching it all happen on about 12 different screens including the captioning machine.

After two run-throughs, the producer at last got down to the final take, by which time I was getting rather twitchy, particularly when it became clear that I was going to miss *Dr Who*. All told it took over 90 minutes of studio time to record just over nine minutes of actual programme. Jenny Randles, NUFON co-ordinator, originally wrote to the BBC, and came over very well, having memorised her script. The programme opened with Trevor Whitaker of BUFORA's Yorkshire Branch introducing the ATV Banbury colour film taken on 26 October 1971. Roger Stanway, BUFORA Chairman, who has published a detailed study of this case (price £2.50) answered questions about the ATV film. Peter Warrington of the Manchester UFO Research Association presented facts and figures, and Michael Dean of the Wirral UFO Society mentioned that he was doing a *Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme* project on UFOs. The session finished with Peter giving the NUFON address and telephone number for sighting reports.

Judge for yourself the success of the NUFON - MUFORA - WUFOS - BUFORA co-operative effort. Less than a week after the first screening, 60 letters and a similar number of telephone calls had been received, and a further nationwide repeat was scheduled for the following Saturday.

The Nazca Lines

The May 1975 *National Geographic* magazine, turns out to be particularly interesting and starts with an article on the mid-Atlantic ridge. At the back, there is a 13-page article on the Nazca lines found on the tableland of southern Peru. The lines, 'runways,' animals, birds and assorted geometrical shapes scored on to the desert floor, as though by giants, are superbly illustrated by aerial photos. The article leaves the origin and purpose of the markings open, but passes on suggestions made by field-workers. The pictures are well worth a visit to your local library!

Lecture summaries

Satellite Tracking

by *TIM CHILDERHOUSE*, 5 April 1975.

Mr Childerhouse is the senior scientific consultant at Farnborough, engaged in tracking satellites. His talk covered a subject which is often neglected, but is none the less of extreme importance to the ufologist. Tim made it abundantly clear there is a vast array of merchandise floating around in earth orbit. A great number of these satellites are visible from the ground, and unless one is well acquainted with the many puzzling facets of behaviour these objects exhibit, then they can be very misleading indeed. I am sure most experienced UFO investigators would heartily endorse Mr Childerhouse in his opinion that many UFO sightings can in fact be traced to satellites.

Apart from much information of general interest about methods of tracking an important aspect of the talk centred on specific examples of how satellite phenomena can be misinterpreted. For example, the brilliant spectacle of satellite decay, as the object breaks up into many pieces on re-entering earth atmosphere, is becoming more and more frequent as the number of objects 'up there' increases. The sight of masses of debris and gas burning in multi-coloured profusion, can lead to many a headache for the investigator. Similarly rocket launches can be confusing while the separating stages are still within the atmosphere. Mr Childerhouse did not reflect his opinions on the UFO subject, except to say that after many hundreds of hours sky watching, he has never seen anything he considers to be a UFO. However, he is of great assistance to SIGAP in attempting to correlate sighting reports with satellites and he says,

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LECTURE SUMMARIES

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although ninety per cent may be identifiable in natural terms, he does not know what the other ten per cent are.

A short talk followed the main evening's lecture when John Cleary-Baker spoke of 'Clearing away the Debris of UFO Research.' In many respects, this followed on from the previous lecture. He expressed the view that too many people were entering the subject with fixed minds. It was no good accepting something as unidentified *without* a fully detailed evaluation. He also felt that a good many of our research schemes fail because we have the wrong premises. It was most unwise, he insisted, to base research on the idea of the extra-terrestrial hypothesis. There were too many other possibilities. His opinions seemed to be shared by a good percentage of the audience.

The wilder shores of ufology

by BETTY WOOD, 3 May 1975

This was a most entertaining talk. Although she approached the subject matter in a reasonably serious manner, Betty Wood injected a pleasingly personal atmosphere into the proceedings. She admitted that she *hoped* that the answer to the mystery would lie in the ETH, or certainly the nuts and bolts side, but clearly illustrated that the so-called psychic aspect could not be forgotten. Indeed, one was left with the feeling that faced with so many unanswered questions, as posed by Miss Wood, the subject of UFOs had to be related to parapsychology. She drew the interesting parallel between the old days, when contactees such as Adamski had such wonderfully straightforward stories to tell, and the modern contactee. She asked whether the subconscious element in these reports could be more important than acknowledged. Even so, if it is a subconscious

phenomena, it has to be of great importance to us all, otherwise the dawning of the modern UFO era would not have caused such a tremendous emotional upheaval on the world. Some interesting anecdotes were related of the experiences of psychic people in connection with UFOs. Why do such people see huge objects flying past when other 'mortal' beings with them at the time see nothing? Why are dream experiences of UFOs often as complex and as detailed as supposedly 'real' contactee cases? Could it be, that UFOs are in some ways personal visions, dredged from the subconscious to act as warnings of impending changes in a person's life?

It is certainly true that many contactees have had their lives dramatically altered immediately after their experience. This is true also of many 'ordinary sighting' witnesses. Of course, no sighting is 'ordinary' to the witness, since its effect was strong enough to make him want to tell his story. Whether we like it or not, it would seem that the psychological aspect of the UFO subject is a very important one indeed.

UFO tracking

by PETER THURGOOD, 3 May 1975

The second part of the evening programme was taken up with a very useful practical demonstration by Peter Thurgood of his equipment to track UFOs by rangefinding (see article in *BUFORA Journal*, Autumn 1974). He illustrated not only the simplicity of the technique, but its importance. As he pointed out, a knowledge of the range of UFOs, to within the level of accuracy his equipment allows, leaves the door open to calculate rapidly and simply its height, velocity and size. Accurate measurements of all these parameters would be a valuable asset to the scientific understanding of the subject. Such equipment would be a vital part of any UFO group, and would come into its own on a skywatch should any unusual observation be made.

Research and investigation group meets again

Another successful meeting of the Research and Investigation Sub-Committee took place at the home of the Chairman at Haughton, Stafford, on 27 and 28 September. Present were Roger Stanway, Chairman; Ken Phillips, NIC; Charles Lockwood, Projects Officer; Tony Pace, Research Director and a local BUFORA member, John Lovatt. A wide range of topics were discussed principally concerned with field investigation and current and future research projects. The more important of these topics are described briefly below.

INVESTIGATOR'S HANDBOOK

The production of the long awaited Handbook was given top priority. A number of BUFORA members have been contacted with the aim of contributing various sections by the beginning of November. The Handbook is to be produced in loose-leaf form to aid constant revision and expansion. A firm announcement on its availability will be made at the AGM in December.

TRAINING OFFICER

Roger Stanway was pleased to report that Trevor Whitaker (Yorkshire Branch) had agreed to take on the essential task of Training Officer. The main aim is to assist and advise BUFORA investigators in improving standards of field work in the UK. Trevor is to proceed with more detailed proposals and a suggested training programme.

NEW SIGHTING QUESTIONNAIRES

The format for the new questionnaires has been finally agreed and these should be ready by 6 December, the date of the AGM.

VEHICLE INTERFERENCE PROJECT

This project is now proceeding more rapidly—particularly the 'historical' research aspect. We shall be announcing the publication date of the results at the AGM.

RESEARCH GRANTS

The sub-committee agreed to award research grants to suitable applicants. Details of these grants will appear in the next *Journal*.

ESSAY COMPETITION

Details of a new cash prize essay competition will be in the next *Journal*.

CATALOGUE OF BRITISH CASES

Second on our list of priorities, is the cataloguing of all British cases on BUFORA files and a search in other sources for additional UFO sightings not represented. This project is now under way with the help of the Staffordshire Branch.

Help from Members

In line with the more progressive policies adopted by BUFORA, we decided that it was time to advertise for specialist help from our members in order to improve not only the quality of research work in general, but also the services to the members provided by the Association. Members are therefore urged to read the following appeals for help. If you feel you could fit the bill, please do not hesitate to write to the Research Director with biographical details and experience relevant to the particular specified task.

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RESEARCH GROUP

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FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

We require a 'foreign correspondent' whose basic job would be to research all incoming foreign publications and reports to keep us informed and abreast of research developments and UFO sightings in other parts of the globe. The job would not entail travelling and exchange journals and other publications would be made available to the successful applicant. A good knowledge of French and Spanish would be essential as it may be necessary in certain circumstances to enter into correspondence with overseas groups.

STATISTICIAN

We would like to hear from members who are familiar with, and have experience of, with basic statistical analysis. This job will become more and more relevant to BUFORA research work as other 'historical' research projects are developed during the next twelve months.

REFERENCE LIBRARIAN

BUFORA is looking for a member who can boast an extensive library and a good general knowledge of UFO literature. We need someone who would be willing and able to help members by providing reference sources as well as general guidance for new and inexperienced members. You may be aware that we are still hoping to find someone to take on the responsibility of the BUFORA library itself. If a suitable candidate could be found we might find it advantageous to combine both jobs.

EQUIPMENT OFFICER

It was decided to recommend the appointment of an equipment officer who would be responsible for advising on all types of recommended field investigation equipment. He or she would be concerned

with testing, recommending and equipping investigators rather than developing UFO detection prototype devices. If you think you are interested enough in this important aspect of research and would like a specific responsibility in BUFORA, please send details and any experience of handling field investigation equipment to the Research Director.

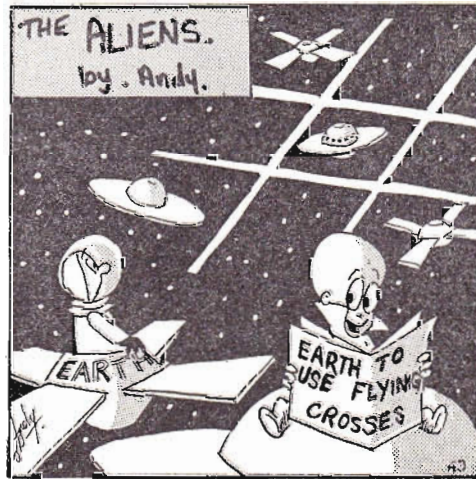
CONSULTANTS & ADVISERS

Tim O'Brien is currently producing an updated list of BUFORA consultants and advisers. He would be very glad to hear from members and others who have specialist knowledge and experience and who would be willing to take on a specific advisory responsibility. Please write to Tim O'Brien at Claypitts, Thaxted, Essex, giving brief biographical details, qualifications and experience.

ANTHONY R PACE
Research Director

Season's greetings

The National Executive Committee extend greetings and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.



"And it's about time. We get a bit fed up playing on our own!"

Controversy!

A question of 'why'

JOHN E SCARRY

One of the most common questions asked in the field of ufology, not only by ourselves, but also by non-members of UFO research groups is, 'Why are they visiting us?' I do not profess to be able to give a specific answer to this question, but by very simple analysis I would like to knock the why from the 'Why'.

Firstly, we must put some small but important things into proper perspective. For the sake of this article, I think that it is safe to assume that a certain percentage of unidentified objects are controlled, or piloted, by intelligent, thinking beings. One thing that we are sure to have in common with these, or any other beings, is a language.

A language can, of course, be verbal or telepathic. The words 'yes' and 'no' (or their equivalent) must mean the same thing throughout this entire universe. In one sense alone, we must at least have this in common with our 'ufonauts'. By using this relatively simple method of comparison, we can press on to our original question—why does anybody go anywhere? We ourselves go to the pictures to see a film, we go to the fun-fair, we go to see somebody. No matter how hard the question is analysed, there are only two answers to the question. The first is to go and see or do something.

And the second is to go and get something.

We can safely say that our visitors arrive here for only two reasons. Instead of us being 100 per cent wrong about the UFO, as we are at the moment, we can safely give one of these answers and be only 50 per cent wrong, or 100 per cent correct. Normal people do not go anywhere to do a fellow human being any harm. The only three things that a ufonaut can take besides a mental impression, are, samples of atmosphere, life and minerals. One thing is certain, they do not take liberties! On the other hand they can give help in some form or other. It may be evolutionary help or the help of mental influence. Agreed they may accidentally give the occasional fright, but there is very little evidence of people in numbers being committed to 'funny farms' because of them.

What are we to conclude from this? An ant cannot comprehend a man. They are worlds apart. The only thing that is relative with these two forms of life is their intelligence. This is why the human being has no more sense than a 'fly in the air'. Once we can cross this bridge of 'Intelligence Relativity' we may then begin to see how the other half (of the universe) lives.

We may not be able to think on such a high level as them, to contact them, or they also may not be able to think on an ultra-simple level to contact us. Who knows? One day an earthly genius may meet an extra-terrestrial idiot, and presto, the 'bridge' will be opened.

In the next issue:

'The future of British Ufology'

by JENNY RANGLES.

Have you an ufological axe to grind? An idea to improve UFO investigation or research? A 'way-out' theory that could be the 'answer' to all our questions? Or just a moan about our methods?

If so, *Controversy* is your column. It is a chance to air those views you may have held privately, but never expected to be openly discussed, let alone published. Write to *Controversy*, BUFORA Journal, 316 Pinewood Park, Farnborough, Hants, GU14 9LJ.

Directory of members

by JACK WEBBER

The object of the directory is to enable members to locate easily the whereabouts of colleagues in their vicinity. It is hoped that members will contact each other, and in doing so, feel that they are part of the Association and not just isolated units receiving only the *Journal*. Personal contacts and interchange of ideas are essential if the aims of the Association are to be pursued. Such a link-up could help the Research and Investigation teams, particularly during 'flap' periods.

The directory is just a start to make the whole Association more operational and is aimed at harnessing the enthusiasm of members. It must not be allowed to stagnate, and steps are being taken to keep it up-to-date so that complete re-printing should not yet be necessary. This is essential in these times of financial stringency. It is planned to issue amendment sheets from time to time and furthermore to enlarge its scope, by indicating the operational officers of the Research and Investigation chain. Prompt transmission of press and other sighting reports to Area or Regional investigators could be invaluable. It would also be possible, by means of a symbol to indicate whether a member was on the telephone.

A few errors have already been noticed in the directory, and it is probable that there are more not so obvious. I would be grateful if members could advise me of any corrections. The simplest, cheapest, and most direct method for members on

AGM reminder

The AGM will begin at 6.00 pm on 6 December in the Lecture Theatre of Kensington Central Library. The time shown in the lecture card is wrong.

STD exchanges would be to phone, preferably after 6.30 pm or at week-ends.

From a private phone on STD in the cheap rate, the cost of calls for a distance over 35 miles would be 3p for one minute—ample time to log the information if given at writing speed.

The alternative would be to write, either direct to me or when notifying the Secretaries or Treasurer of a change of address, enclosing a separate slip with the appropriate details which could then be passed on to me.

I do hope the directory will be useful and used frequently. I am sure it can be extended and improved, and I welcome any ideas to this effect.

(Phone: Kingsbridge 3420: STD code 0548).

The Freshwater phot

This interesting photograph taken in October 1973 near Freshwater West in Wales, has been the cause of much speculation. The photographer gave only brief details of the circumstances and the camera—a Kodak Instamatic.

At the time the photograph was taken, no object was visible in the sky. Did the photographer miss the object in concentrating on the group? It seemed unlikely that a disc of such a size would not be seen and this gave prominence to another question—was it a hoax?

The group of people were distinctly arranged on the right of the photograph, which could have been a safeguard if a double exposure was to be attempted on



ograph

the left hand area of the scene. However, it was decided that because of the difficulties involved, some other explanation must be sought.

LIGHT REFLECTION

As there had also been a suspicion that the object was a light reflection in the lens, we sought the opinion of an optical physicist, John Adams, BSc, FRMetsS who is a consultant to BUFORA. He commented that the lack of information was frustrating and in studying the 'saucer', he noted there was a lack of shading, although the light came from the left. It was too sharp for a cloud and the emulsion showed no sign of a defect. John also agreed that to 'doctor' an

instamatic slide would be a difficult task and so the mystery deepened.

Finally the slide was submitted to the RAE Farnborough for a thorough examination. This produced the following response:

The Kodachrome slide exhibits a relief image of the scene. Although this is present for all of the general scene, there is no sign of any relief in the region of the oval blemish. This suggests a fault in the film emulsion rather than a processing fault.

This then appears to be the solution to the mystery—or is it?

OMAR FOWLER.

Uforum

Readers are invited to comment on any article appearing in *BUFORA Journal* or on any other relevant topic. Letters should be kept as brief as possible. The editor reserves the right to publish and to extract from letters where necessary. Letters of some length may be considered by the editor to be suitable as features.

Royal Observer Corps

Dear Sir

I refer to the article in the Sept/Oct 75 issue of *BUFORA Journal* on the Royal Observer Corps and their suitability to observe UFOs. You may be interested to know that in the early 1950's the Air Ministry arranged for UFO sightings to be reported to the ROC. This requirement lapsed when the role was changed to that of reporting nuclear bursts and the resulting radio-active fall out radiation to the UK Warning and Monitoring Organisation in 1955.

Yours sincerely

STUART CAMPBELL.
Edinburgh University UFO Research
Society
4 Dovecot Loan
Edinburgh EH14 2LT

From a former editor

Dear Sir

As a past editor of the *BUFORA Journal* I must congratulate you all on its contents and professional look—it seems a far cry from the time when those of us who founded the London UFO Research Organisation hared around the city with duplication sheets and rough artwork ready to print for our 100 or so members!

Unfortunately I have had to drop out of active work with *BUFORA* due to pressure of making TV documentaries and I thought your readers might like to know that I am producing two fifty minute documentaries entitled *Into the Unknown*,

which looks at many aspects of parapsychological activities and includes a meeting with Jacques Vallée in America. This turned out to be a fascinating meeting and I wish we could have included more—but that's another film in itself. The documentaries will be transmitted in the first two weeks of December this year, and will include a live ESP test which we hope will bring intriguing results.

Jacques confirmed my own feelings that there are many more aspects to UFO research than I feel many contemporary researchers will admit to and that it is most important to keep one's perceptions open as often as possible. What we really need is a team of psychologists as well as our excellent astronomers and physicists!

Many of the scientists we met—Targ and Puthoff at the Stanford Research Institute for instance—agreed that paranormal phenomena certainly exist (they bracketed UFOs in this category) and the major question facing scientific research now was the need to change investigative disciplines—that possibly physicists are not necessarily the right people for the job—this view was also developed by Dr J B Rhine and astronaut Ed Mitchell amongst others. Jacques Vallée added that the problem with UFO investigation was coping with the immensely subtle act of perception and that ideally, investigators needed to spend more time with witnesses than checking out on the more physical aspects of a sighting report. What I feel is most encouraging is the enormous number of scientists now prepared to investigate UFO reports and the

paranormal in general—ten years ago, those of us involved in UFO research felt we were consistently up against the brick walls of bureaucratic red tape—but certainly in America and France, these barriers appear to be gradually fading.

Yours sincerely

LAWRENCE MOORE
536 Fulham Palace Road
London SW6

Editor's note: the programmes will be shown on ITV on 2 and 9 December.

SateLITS ?

Dear Sir

With regard to *BUFORA Journal* May/June 1975, and the report 'Low-flying LITS' on page 23, I am writing to point out that the objects reported were almost certainly artificial satellites.

Checks with satellite prediction tables indicated that the times of sightings tied in very well with known satellites, one of which was, in fact, Skylab. The direction of travel is also consistent.

That the objects were 'below cloud layers,' I think, is not conclusive evidence that they were not satellites—in this case the apparent magnitude of the satellites would have been fairly high, and they would have been visible through thin cloud layer, perhaps giving the impression of being below cloud.

What impresses me most of all is that the reported times and trajectories tie in so well with satellite predictions; it seems a pity that BUFORA had seemingly not made an elementary check of this sort.

Yours sincerely

MARK STENHOFF, FRAS
Department of Physics
Royal Holloway College
Egham Hill, Egham
Surrey TW20 0EX

Editor's note: Reports in the 'Sighting Summaries' section of the 'Journal' are summarised from the report forms used by BUFORA. Cases of the type mentioned by Mark in his letter should—hopefully—be evaluated correctly at a later stage and published in the 'UFO Sightings Catalogue.'

Loch Ness 'football' deflated

Dear Sir

While I do not wish to disappoint Mr Hughes (*BUFORA Journal*, May/June), I feel that I should tell him that on 11 January I received, from a friend, the cutting from the 7 January issue of the *Western Morning News*, about the Dartmouth UFO.

A few phone calls the next day, including one to the Dartmouth police, confirmed that the object was one of three illuminated toy balloons released by a local resident (who either had a strange sense of humour, or was seeking publicity).

It was *not* seen by 'dozens of people,' but by 'several residents'. I reported this information direct to the NIC on 13 January for the record.

As a foot-note, the incident provided an opportunity for publicity for BUFORA, since the 17 January issue of *Kingsbridge Gazette* carried a third editorial article headed 'Identified Flying Objects'. This was too good to miss, and I'm happy to say, a letter from me to the editor mentioning BUFORA was published a fortnight later. I caught no fish, however.

JACK WEBBER
4 Embankment Road
Kingsbridge
Devon TQ7 1JZ

Unbiased . . . or gullible ?

Dear Sir

Inside the front cover of *BUFORA Journal* there is a tiny section which states the aims of the association. An extract

continued overleaf

from these stated aims, runs thus: 'To encourage and promote *unbiased* scientific investigation . . .' This is a very worthy aim, yet, unfortunately, it seems to be an aim which our Vice-Chairman has chosen to ignore. I refer to the 'Vice-Chairman's Column,' in the July/August issue.

In this column, Mr Beer refers to the Tungus Saga as a 'pot boiler.' Is this unbiased? Mr Beer also refers to the 'mini black hole' theory as highly improbable, and so discards it. He also states that Soviet scientists have confirmed that the Tungus meteorite was the nucleus of a small comet. Scientists studying readings taken of our own planet from an orbiting satellite have also 'confirmed' that life cannot possibly exist here! Scientists have also 'confirmed' that UFOs do not exist which cannot be explained normally.

Finally, our Vice-Chairman takes a dig at Von Daniken and followers because of their suggestion that the Tungus explosion was caused by a spaceship. Does Mr Beer have evidence that they are wrong? Or is this attitude merely an attempt to keep up with the times? It is fashionable now to knock Daniken, and Mr Beer seems to have jumped on the bandwagon.

Yours sincerely

P BOTTOMLEY
377 Portway
Woodhouse Park
Manchester M22 6FL

Editor's note: I asked Lionel Beer for his reaction to Mr Bottomley's letter. His reply was as follows:

I feel that one must balance unbiased against gullibility. BUFORA aims 'to encourage and promote unbiased scientific investig-

ation' and not 'unbiased speculation'. I feel the latter would leave us open to ridicule.

The Tungus saga has been used by so many authors to pad out potboilers on strange facts, that in my opinion it has itself become a potboiler. Many authors plagiarise from each other outrageously and frequently fail to refer to original source material. The suggestion that the Tungus 'thing' was an alien spaceship breaking up excites the imagination, but alas I have not heard of any wreckage being found in the area.*

Von Daniken is a charming fanatical romantic and I have collected a fair amount of revealing biographical material about him. Some of the material he presents is fascinating, but some is misleading, and I object to the use he makes of it. Some of his more solid evidence for instance, ancient batteries in the Baghdad Museum and the so-called 'computer' found in the Mediterranean Sea are readily explainable. However, if Mr Bottomley is a Von Daniken enthusiast, I should be happy to supply him with a set of books personally autographed by Erich. Alternatively there is a more down to earth book entitled 'Some Trust in Chariots'. To answer every point would require the best part of the 'Journal', but Mr Bottomley is entitled to his opinions.

*Books produced to make money as distinct from those of great merit and painstaking research.

Do you live or work in Bromley?

Would the BUFORA member who posted a £4 postal order from Bromley, Kent, please contact Arnold West (address on inside back cover).

Is there really . . .

Life on Mars?

The successful launch from Cape Canaveral on 20 August of the Viking spacecraft marked the start of one of America's most ambitious unmanned space projects. The year long, 505 million mile journey will culminate with the landing of an automated laboratory on the surface of the planet in the summer of 1976. Viking will take pictures and conduct a detailed scientific examination of Mars, including a search for life.

The project has fired the imagination of millions of people, not least of all, those of us studying the UFO enigma. Is Mars inhabited by intelligent life forms? Was Mars inhabited by intelligent life forms? Or is Mars a base, an intergalactic staging post, for interstellar explorers? Viking may supply answers to these questions, questions which man has been asking for decades. Here we trace man's continuing fascination with Mars . . . the Red Planet.

Mars has excited man's imagination more than any other planet in the solar system. It's unusual reddish colour, which the ancients associated with fire and blood, gave rise to it being named after the Roman God of War.

The invention of the astronomical telescope by Galileo in 1608 opened a new era in the observation of Mars. Instead of appearing merely as a tiny disc, its surface features could be resolved.

Christian Huygens made the first sketch in 1659 of the dark region, Syrtis Major ('giant quicksands'). Able to observe a distinguishable feature, Huygens could show that Mars rotated on a north-south axis like Earth, producing a day that was about half an hour longer than Earth's.

DUSTSTORMS

In 1666, the Italian astronomer Giovanni Cassini observed and sketched the Martian polar caps. Observers in the early 1700s noted changes in the surface appearance in a matter of hours, probably caused by dust storms, now known to rage periodically. In 1783, William Herschel observed that Mars axis of rotation is inclined to its orbital plane at about the same extent as Earth's, revealing that

long-term changes were often associated with seasons that would result from such inclination.

'CANALI'

In the 17th and 18th centuries, it was commonly accepted that Mars and the other planets were inhabited, but the real excitement was created by Giovanni Schiaparelli and Percival Lowell between 1877 and 1920. As a result of extensive observations, beginning with the favourable apparition of 1877, Schiaparelli constructed detailed maps with many features, including a number of dark, almost straight lines, some of them hundreds of kilometers long. He referred to them as 'canali' or channels. Through mistranslation, they became 'canals' and the idea of civilized societies was propagated.

Lowell's firm opinion that the canals were not natural features but the work of 'intelligent creatures, alike to us in spirit but not in form' contributed to the colourful literature. To pursue his interest in the canals and Mars, he founded the Lowell Observatory near Flagstaff, Ariz., in 1894, and his writings about the canals and possible life on Mars created

continued overleaf

LIFE ON MARS

continued from p17

great public excitement near the turn of the 20th century.

Speculation about intelligent life on Mars continued through the first part of the century. It was fed, first by Wellsian concepts, and followed, after the second World War, by the increase in reported UFO sightings throughout the world. But scientists remained sceptical.

This scepticism was reinforced by the results of two Mariner flyby missions in 1965 and 1969. The limited coverage of only about 10 per cent of the Martian surface by flyby photography indicated that Mars was a lunar-like planet with a uniformly cratered surface.

In 1971/72 the Mariner 9 orbiter revealed a completely new and different face of Mars. Whereas the flyby coverage had seen only a single geologic regime in the cratered highlands of the southern hemi-

The scientific goal of the Viking missions is to "increase our knowledge of the planet Mars with *special emphasis on the search for evidence of extra-terrestrial life*". The scientific questions deal with the atmosphere, the surface, the planetary body, and the question of bio-organic evolution. This goal ultimately means understanding the history of the planet.

The physical and chemical composition of the atmosphere and its dynamics are of considerable interest, not only because they will extend the understanding of planetary atmospheric sciences, but because of the intense focus of interest in contemporary terrestrial atmospheric problems.

The physics of the atmosphere is to be studied to determine its density profile. The atmosphere down to the surface will be monitored daily and seasonally. From

"The discovery of life on another planet would be one of the most momentous events of human history."

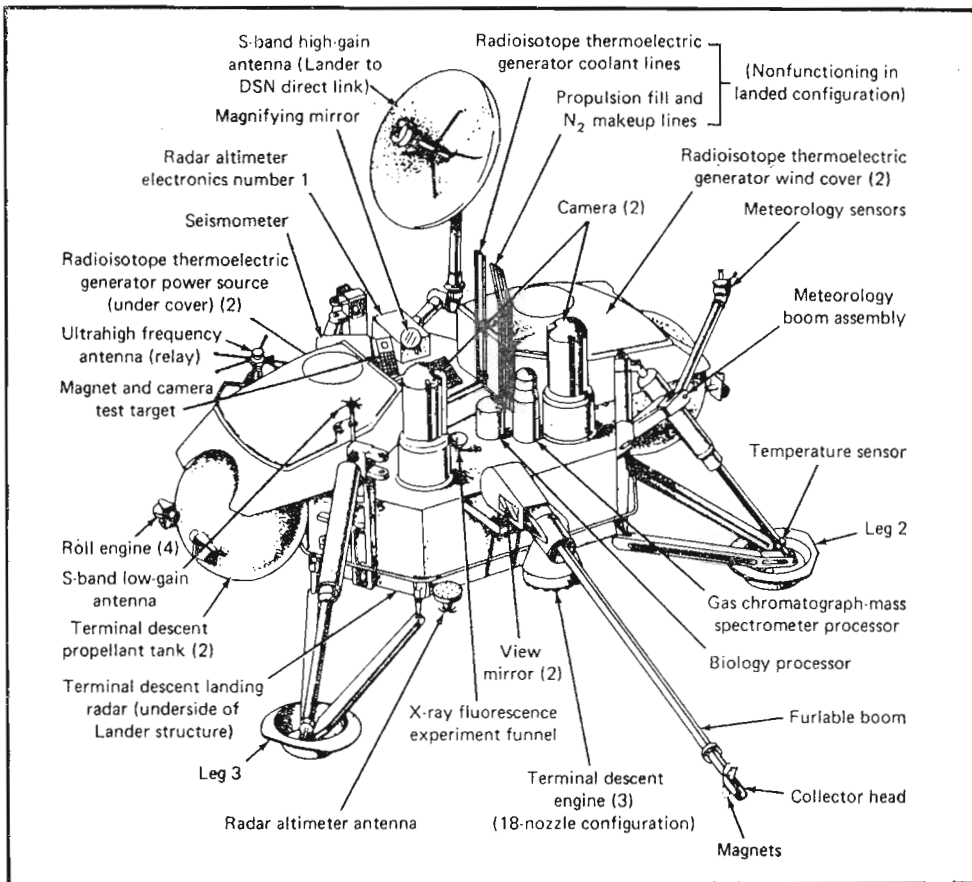
Dr N H Horowitz, Professor of Biology, California Institute of Technology.

phere, Mariner 9 revealed gigantic volcanoes, a rift valley that extends a fifth of the way around the planet's circumference, and *evidence of flowing liquid water sometime in the past*. Also revealed were layered terrain in the polar regions, and the effects of dust moved by winds of several hundred kilometres an hour.

In short, Mariner 9's 7000 detailed pictures revealed a dynamic, evolving Mars, completely different from the lunar-like planet suggested by the flyby evidence. That eminently successful Orbiter mission showed a fascinating subject for scientific study and also provided the maps from which the Viking sites have been selected.

these data may come clues to the atmospheric processes that have been taking place and determining the planet's character.

Of special interest is the question of water on Mars. Scientific literature is sparse in data and rich in speculation. It is known that there is water in the Mars atmosphere, but the total pressure of the atmosphere (about one per cent of Earth's) will not sustain any large bodies of liquid water. Nevertheless, the presence of braided channels suggests to many geologists that they are the result of previous periods of flowing water. Mars seems to be a very dynamic planet.



The Viking Lander. After landing, the Lander's cameras will take pictures of the terrain—some in colour and some employing both cameras to produce three-dimensional stereo pairs. Other instruments will collect atmospheric and meteorological data, and a seismometer will record Martian quakes and learn about the planet's interior. Surface geology will be examined with the cameras, the soil sampler, and inorganic analysis of soil samples to determine what elements are present.

There is the final question of life on Mars. This may be one of the most important scientific questions of our time. It is also one of the most difficult to answer.

A negative answer does not prove there is no life on Mars. The landing site may have been in the wrong place, during the wrong season, or we may have conducted the wrong experiments. Many scientists still think that life could exist on Mars.

How can this extensive effort to perform the search be justified? First, it must be acknowledged that there is no evidence at present, pro or con, of the existence of life on Mars. And what we seek is evidence. The remarkable thing is that we live at a time in which we can make this first test for life, and also assemble a great store of knowledge of the planet.

RICHARD BEET

Sighting summaries

Summarised by JENNY RANGLES

CONE-SHAPED FLARE

73-092 October 1973 06.15
Warminster

A young schoolboy, about to deliver his morning round of papers, observed a yellow cone-shaped flare in the sky over Battlesbury Hill. It left a trail of smoke, and went out suddenly.

RADIO 'SQUEEKS'

74-103 January 1974 21.00
Belfast

Two schoolboys were listening to their pocket radio when it began to make an odd 'squeeking' sound. They looked around for a cause and saw a hazy, white oval above opposing rooftops. The radio was turned off and the sound remained for a few minutes, fading slowly out. A similar phenomenon, in reverse, was noted when the radio was switched back on almost immediately. The object moved in a straight line, swerved to one side, and then returned to its original path. It was in view for two minutes.

MOONSHINE?

74-122/123 30 December 1974 18.15
Wysall, Notts

A young man and his girlfriend were tending to a pony in a field. They caught sight of an orange ball in the north east, similar to the sun setting. It was later ascertained, however, that sunset had been over two hours earlier. The ball of light appeared hazy through cloud and obscuring trees but was in view for fifteen minutes, during which time it appeared to grow bigger. The two witnesses found a better vantage point at a nearby house, where a dog was barking furiously. They momentarily looked away and the object vanished. *Note—The investigator speculates that this might in fact have been the Moon. Checking astronomical records I find that the Moon was rising between 5 and 10 degrees elevation at the time of the observation. It was roughly in the recorded position and had been full only the previous day. It seems quite probable, therefore, that this WAS an optical distortion of the Moon—Jenny Rangles.*

DIAMOND SHAPES

75-037 13 May 1975 12.50
Newport Pagnall

Two schoolboys out birdwatching, caught sight of a couple of brilliant white objects hanging

motionless in the sky. At first they assumed them to be birds, but through binoculars, they resolved into metallic diamond shapes. Their outlines were flickering constantly. One of the objects disappeared almost immediately, but the other remained in view for a further few seconds, streamlining into an oval shape before vanishing.

HAMPSTEAD UFOs EXPLAINED

75-038 10 June 1975 22.45
Hampstead, London

A young student reported two bright lights crossing the sky very fast. One appeared stationary at first before accelerating away, and the other moved steadily on a west-east course. It is the opinion of the investigators that these sightings are most likely misinterpretations owing to several factors, including the lengthy discussion the witness had had about UFOs immediately prior to the observation. It is pointed out that the area is in the middle of busy air lanes and that oncoming aircraft can appear stationary. Skylab crossed the sky, west-east, between 22.42 and 22.48 and almost certainly explains the second object.

SKYWATCH SIGHTINGS

75-039 6 July 1975 03.00 to 04.30
Glastonbury Tor

A cigar-shaped object, flashing and changing colour in sequence white-green-red, was seen first of all in the south. Five similar smaller disc-shaped objects were then noted, following a similar colour change pattern. One was seen for eight minutes moving south-north and another appeared to land briefly in a field. The cigar-shaped object finally moved away at 04.30 as dawn broke. Five photographs of the incident were apparently taken, though these have not so far been analysed.

MYSTERIOUS BLACK TRIANGLE

75-041 18 June 1975 17.30
Clayton, Staffs

The following report is just one of many investigated by BUFORA Staffordshire Branch of a mysterious hovering object. It was seen at first as a black triangular shape, which seemed to rise, fall and drift in the air for 15 minutes. Its shape altered according to its orientation and it was variously triangular and elliptical. A Phantom jet aircraft came into the area and began

to circle around. After a time, it moved away in the direction opposite to that from which it came. The presence of this aircraft was 'officially' admitted, but no reason for its manoeuvres given. The witness, who feels the object *may* have been a weather balloon, went to call BUFORA but when he returned, the object had vanished.

YELLOW TRIANGLE OVER BELFAST

75-042 25 May 1975 21.15 to 22.30
Belfast

The witness saw a small, bright starlike object appear in the north west. It moved a little way towards her quite fast, then moved back and stopped. It subsequently moved forward, a little in advance of its previous position, and remained stationary for about 20 minutes. It now appeared very large and triangular in shape, with rounded edges. It was yellow/white with an outlining of yellowish light which appeared not to come from a single source. A similar object now appeared and described an arc around the first object. This was only in view for four seconds, moving very fast. Eventually the first object moved back the way it had come and grew slowly smaller until just a point source. After half-an-hour, the observation was discontinued.

Although the fact is noted by the area investigator that Venus was bright in the north west at the time, he would like any further reports of this sighting to be made known to him.

GOLDEN ELLIPSE

75-043 3 July 1975 20.00
Belfast

After taking some 'O' level examinations earlier in the day a student with a very high IQ was relaxing on the college field with a telescope and a science fiction book. He spotted a golden ellipse-shaped object moving fast on a north east to south west course. Upon following it through his telescope, he could see that it was not an aircraft, but could not resolve more detail. It went into a bank of cloud and failed to reappear.

BLACK ELLIPSE

75-044 21 June 1975 17.15
Craigavon, Co Armagh

While out sunbathing, an 'A' level student noted a matt black ellipse shape moving very fast across the sky, perpendicular to the normal air routes. It was very small and slightly blurred in outline. Its height was estimated at 3000 to 4000 feet and its distance as three miles, though it appeared to be closer than it actually was. No sound at all was detected, except distant traffic in the calm air. The path of its motion seemed peculiarly straight, not following the line of the earth's

curvature, and it gradually diminished in size to a point source and faded from view.

BEAM OF LIGHT

75-045 1 June 1975 01.20
Worcester

A Worcester man was listening to his tape recorder in bed, when his attention was caught by a bright light shining through the curtains. He got out of bed and saw that it was coming from an inverted dish-like reflector moving west to east. The beam of light was shining vertically downwards, and was at first too bright to look at directly. Even as it moved away between television aerials on opposing rooftops, he could make out no structure to the object. There was no sound at all.

ORANGE SPHERE WITH RAYS

75-051 3 June 1975 21.50
Hainault, Essex

A school teacher and her husband observed a large orange spherical object through the window of their home. It hung motionless, glowing brightly and emitting rays of light. After two minutes it reduced in size to a point source and moved out of sight to the south very rapidly.

WALTHAMSTOW FLASHING UFO

75-052/061 12 June 1975 22.30
Walthamstow, London

A woman, her 20 year old son and 11 year old daughter, were witness to a sighting for over an hour. The yellowish round light hung in the western sky about 1000 feet up. It changed colour and flashed. One such flash seemed to strike a van, parked outside the house, and for several days afterwards its radio would only give static. Eventually, the police were called in and a young WPC observed the phenomenon as it moved silently to the north east, fading and descending. She estimates it was about twenty miles away when last seen, and her opinion is that the object was a lighted balloon.

IMPLODING ORANGE SPHERE

75-053 17 July 1975 21.40
Mazoe, Rhodesia

The witness, a former RAF pilot, was aroused from bed by a noise 'like a petrol can imploding.' He went to investigate and observed an orange sphere in the western sky. It was about half the size of the full moon, and was moving slowly westwards. He watched it for two minutes before it went out of sight behind a hill. The sighting occurred during a 'flap' of reports and several people subsequently came forward to corroborate the details of this case.

continued overleaf

SIGHTING SUMMARIES

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WARLITS

75-054 4 August 1975 22.22
Warminster

During a 53 minute period a group of witnesses on a skywatch recorded five white lights from their vantage point on Cley Hill. They travelled from south to north, in batches of two (with the final one alone), and were in view about 22 seconds each. One object appeared to make an instantaneous change of direction and climbed rapidly before vanishing.

SLOW DARK OBJECT

75-059 January 1975 18.20
Aldridge, Staffs

A young shop assistant was perplexed when a UFO she was watching suddenly vanished without trace. It was a large, round object, dark with flashing lights all along its body. It flew over her house very low and silent. It was moving north west and its speed was not in excess of ten miles per hour. It went out of sight for a few seconds as it passed overhead and when the witness rushed into the garden to continue observing, it was nowhere to be seen.

The exact date is unrecorded, but it brings to mind the multiple witness case of 9 January, at a similar time of day (see *BUFORA Journal* May/June 1975).

UFO Sightings Catalogue, 1974 – part 3

No	Date	Time (GMT)	Location	Investigation	Evaluation
74010	7/1	16.00	Chingford, Essex	I Vinten	Insufficient Data
74021	13/6	22.10	Cirencester, Glos	Rodney Lloyds	Mars
74062	2/3	20.10	Lincoln	Prelim Form	Possible Satellite
74063	8/8	20.45	Madley, Salop	M R Rowley	Probable Astronomical
74065	23/8	18.30	Ards Penn, N Ireland	Prelim Form	Probable Aircraft
74066	27/8	17.50	Ballyholme, N Ireland	Prelim Form	Probable Aircraft
74067	24/9	23.10	Eggardon Hill, Dorset	P A Hill	UFO
74068	21/10	19.45	Kinson, Dorset	F J Wood	UFO or Hoax
74069	July	Night	Oxford	Prelim Form	Probable Astronomical
74071	30/9	13.15	Heanor, Derby	D Wilde	Poss Meteorological
74072	15/8	19.32	Winton, Dorset	R J Nash	Perseid Meteor
74081	16/9	Daytime	Glastonbury	O Fowler	Film faults
74083	14/6	02.10	Brighouse, Yorks	T Whitaker	Helicopter
74084	17/8	21.25	Whittington, Staffs	P W Hogben	Skylab & Debris
74085	Aug	23.00	West Drayton, Middx	M Wink	Insufficient Data
74086	Nov	Daytime	Loch Ness	S Campbell	Insufficient Data
74092	5/10	19.20	Bury, Lancs	K Phillips	Possible Aircraft
74093	Dec	Darkness	Haverfordwest, Dyfed	Press Cutting	Bolide
74095	30/10	20.15	Annsley, Notts	D Wilde	Insufficient Data
74099	15/11	23.00	Liverpool	Prelim Form	Possible Aircraft
74100	24/11	16.10	Haslingden, Lancs	Ross Astro	Probable Aircraft
74101	17/11	04.00	Manchester	Miss J Randles	Meteor
74102	5/10	18.20	Rochdale, Lancs	Miss J Randles	Insufficient Data
74103	17/8	22.30	Abersoch	Miss J Randles	Insufficient Data
74104	8/4	03.40	Monkton, Dyfed	Press Cutting	Possible Helicopter
74105	19/8	21.15	Horning, Norfolk	Peter Johnson	Satellites & Meteors
74106	27/12	15.50	Cirencester, Glos	Prelim Form	Insufficient Data
74107	8/10	19.40	Hayes, Middx	John Shaw	Probable Aircraft
74108	28/9	23.30	Hursley, Hampshire	M Handley/ N Maloret	UFO
74109	5/9	22.25	Portsmouth, Hampshire	I Tamplin	Insufficient Data
74110	6/8	23.32	Southsea	M Handley	Tumbling Satellite

This catalogue is intended as a list of UFO sightings which have been recorded by the Association. Similar lists are to be published in subsequent *Journals*. Earlier cases, previously listed as 'under investigation,' have been included where investigations have been completed. Missing numbers relate to reports still 'under investigation.'

This fatal subject . . .

HOW A SCIENTIST WAS DESTROYED BY HIS INTEREST IN UFOLOGY

Is there any other profession where personal reputations are as fragile as they are in science? Let a scientist utter an incautious statement or embrace too warmly an unfashionable idea and the hatchets emerge, newly honed. The ambitious young are haunted by fear all the way up the ladder and even at the top, though laden with honours, men must still be wary lest a whispering campaign implying senility—the raised eyebrow, the tight smile when the august name crops up in conversation—be mounted in the sacred name of truth. This situation is most distressing. Of course there are occasional charlatans, basking in the awe of the ignorant laity (which can turn nasty, too). And now and then a great man tragically slips into Shakespeare's seventh age without being aware of it. But there are cases such as that of the late Dr James MacDonald, an American physicist, who came to the conclusion after years of study and rigorous investigation of sightings that the extra-terrestrial explanation was the only one that fitted the UFO phenomena. His story is told in an excellent book—*The UFO Controversy in America* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington and London, £6.90)—by Professor David Michael Jacobs, who teaches history at the University of Nebraska.

It is a scholarly—but highly readable—account of the period through its various phases going back to the “airship” scares of 1896 and 1897. Professor Jacobs deals exhaustively with the reaction of the scientific community, the scuffles in the Condon Committee, and the strange games played by the US Air Force and our old friends the CIA. Whether any serious attempt was made to get to the bottom of the eye-witness reports back in the 1960s we may never know.

Professor J Allen Hynek's Centre for UFO Studies is carrying on a serious study. But to return to MacDonald. He was the senior atmospheric physicist at the University of Arizona's Department of Atmospheric Sciences. After 10 years' private study of the UFO phenomena, he emerged in 1966 as something of a public figure, touring the country giving lectures. He obtained NAS support for further study and when this was withdrawn with the setting up of the Condon Committee, he carried on using his own money. Jacobs says he was responsible for uncovering “some of the best substantiated and strongest cases known.” On one occasion he descended on Hynek, having discovered that the latter was aware of a vast store of Air Force reports that had not been made public. How could he, MacDonald demanded, sit on this information for so many years without alerting the scientific community? Hynek later described the visit as “like a breath of fresh air.”

So far MacDonald had escaped the hatchets. Then in 1971 he was called as an expert witness before the House Committee on Appropriation which was examining the supersonic transport. As a member of a NSA panel on weather and climate modification, he had deduced that the SST could reduce the ozone layer and might thus cause an extra 10 000 cases of skin cancer in the US. Right away a congressman brought up the matter of UFOs. Hadn't MacDonald suggested that power failures in New York were caused by these flying saucers? No, said MacDonald, he hadn't come to that conclusion. But he did think there was a correlation between sightings and power failures that was worth looking into. Committeemen and audience

continued overleaf

People

We extend a welcome to the following, who have recently been admitted to membership of BUFORA:

London :

G W Draper, 110 Plumstead Common Rd, Plumstead, London SE18 3RE

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THIS FATAL SUBJECT

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laughed. Later the same congressman tried to link MacDonald's views on the possibility of skin cancer with his views on UFOs—"as if," says Jacobs, "both of them were somewhat deranged." Despite an attempt the following day by the director of the National Center for Atmospheric Research to re-establish MacDonald's considerable reputation in his own field, the damage had been done. The congressman who had started it all was later in full cry: "A man who comes here and tells me that the SST flying in the stratosphere is going to cause thousands of skin cancers has to back up his theory that there are little men flying around in the sky. MacDonald did no more scientific work. In June 1971 he committed suicide at the age of 51.

Credit: New Scientist, 4 September 1975.

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