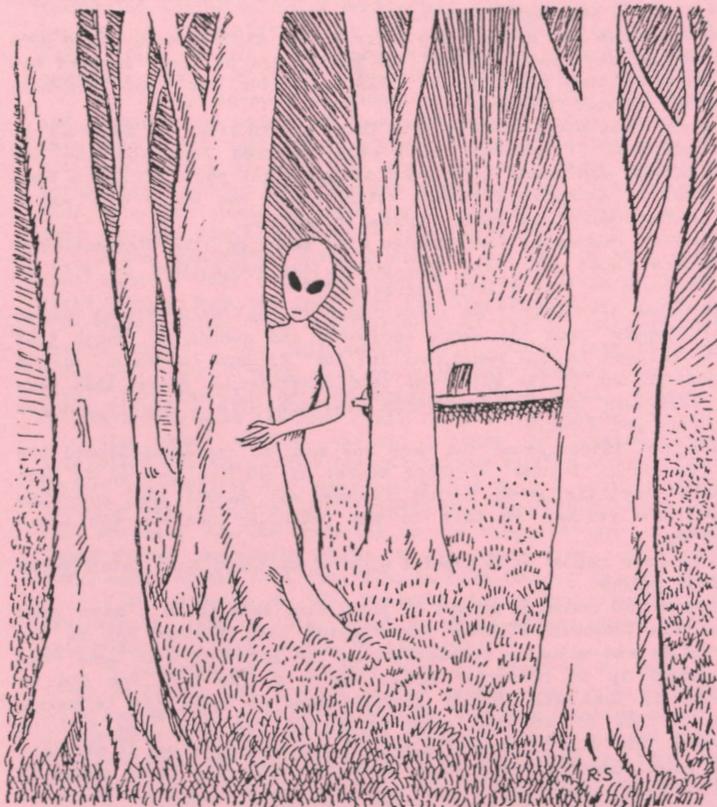


NORTHERN NEWS

UFO

129

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 88



Cheques, pos, to
NUFON please

NORTHERN UFO NEWS Subs: £6, six issues

Editor:- Jenny Randles Cover:-Roy Sandbach (NUFORA)

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NORTHERN UFO NEWS: 37 HEATHBANK RD CHEADLE HEATH STOCKPORT CHESHIRE SK3 0UP

J.R. Comments... In January 1988 there were more UK press cuttings about UFOs than in any other single month in the past quarter century. This utterly amazing media circus focused on two cases, one a dead duck, the other promising!

Everybody, but everybody (even Northern papers) featured the first case. Typical was *London Evening Standard* (5 Jan), "Ello, Ello, that's a UFO". It told how 16 year old amateur stargazer, Zena Sfeir, spotted a pink blob through her telescope on 2 January, called out the Met and eventually EIGHT officers arrived to peer at the stationary glow. This entourage spent half an hour around midnight staring into the sky above Kensington, London.

Of course, the nationals had a field day. *Daily Mirror* (5 Jan) said "'Ello UFO! Cops spy a jelly in the sky" and told how the police had at first laughed but then went stony faced as they realised the close encounter was 'real'. Meanwhile Patrick Moore 'guessed' it was Jupiter.

The serious media then accepted this into their hearts. After all, New Year is a slow time for news. BBC TV national news even featured Zena (by now the laughing policemen, having seen their error, were shunning all publicity). Loch Ness Monster hunter turned TV anchorman, Nicholas Witchell, told the world this was a genuine encounter... and, of course, the world listens to the BBC.

Leader writers were composing their pieces with headings like "Unidentified" and saying "There are those who have poo poed the possibility of life in space... that is an attitude we find a little arrogant."

Even the high class newspaper "*The Independent*" (6 Jan) with "Flying saucer squad prompts UFO dispute" took the story seriously and quoted at length that beloved UFO expert (beloved by the media, that is) "Dr" Richard Lawrence. I should add that when I pointed out to the editor of this prestigious outlet that they were promoting a religious cult and crediting Lawrence with a highly dubious doctorate, I never even got a reply.

Lawrence, having not investigated the case one iota of course, dismissed the Jupiter idea with the words "I know (Patrick Moore) of old. I've been on TV with him... he doesn't know anything about flying saucers and should keep quiet". He added that the police's refusal to talk to the Aetherius Society was clear evidence of a cover-up.

Actually, I would have called it a hopeful sign of at least some intelligence in the Greater London police.

Lest any overseas UFO research groups be pencilling this in as a major case I should point out the following. BUFORAs investigator Mike Wootten was on the scene within minutes. He was actually reconstructing the sighting with Zena when the BBC cameras rolled up to interview her. It was a simple task for him to discover these facts. (1) Zena was totally inexperienced in using the telescope and had only had it out of the box once before, (2) the lens was full of distortions that would blur any point source, and, (3) she was pointing it straight at Jupiter (indeed even sheepishly admitting that the 'UFO' was there again in the same place the next clear night she looked). A quick computer check of astronomical sources persuaded Mike instantly that this had to be a misinterpretation of that planet... End of story.

Except, of course, that he had chance only to tell this to a few thousand on LBC radio, and I on two other local radio stations who called me for interviews (BBC Bedford and LLR Leeds). Millions of readers of those inadequate dailies, who treated it as a humorous item and not real journalism, and millions more television viewers, still regard this as a genuine UFO sighting.

What is worse, I have noted certain UFO investigators (who are sometimes not worthy of that term) associated with press stories that promoted this case without offering an explanation. I'll name no names, but if you are with the 'world's leading UFO magazine' then you should at least recognise how a long stationary blob of light that recurs the next night is a very obvious UFO.

But if this was a momentary aberration the fuss that greeted the 'UFO Hijack Terror' (quoth the *Daily Star*, 22 Jan) was unbelievable. Easily (by a million, light years) the most publicised UFO case in living memory. Virtually every newspaper in Britain carried it, including almost every Daily. The aforementioned *Star* devoted three entire pages to it, including the whole front page with a banner headline.

Our friend "Dr" Lawrence was back in action, babbling on about aliens, and Australian ufologist Colin Morris was cited a few times. Walter Andrus also was said to be calling it one of the most important cases of all time. But only the *Star* (who in all that space pretty well had to!) showed any interest in comments from serious UFO research in Britain. But therein lies a tale!

My few paragraphs of quotes citing possible links with the Maralinga case and previous car hijack stories looks tepid enough in its final form. You should have seen draft one! After approaching an hours interview the reporter read me his distillation of what I'd told him about earth lights, UAPs, Persinger's mind scrambling theories, Budd Hopkins research and Alvin Lawson's experiments... "So this is a fair quote on what you are saying... Spacemen are kidnapping people so that they can fiddle with their private parts?"

A few expletives later I finally got him to tone this down to something that more or less resembled what I actually said. But it was a hard and tough fight. Judging from the fact that the *Star* carried major UFO stories for the next four days, credited them mysteriously to BUFORA (without once talking to me or anyone else) I can only assume they decided that they would rather talk to folks who wouldn't mind what was said about them, so long as their name got spelt right (this included Mark Birdsall and Steve Balon)... Suggest someone belongs to BUFORA anyway, what the heck. What's another lie between the cod and chips.

The other dailies varied in size of treatment, although nothing like this. Today was the second biggest feature, talking about a "close encounter of the spongy kind". Whilst the *Guardian* carried only a short factual paragraph, the racy tabloids were predictable, if nothing else. "Egg-Counter: 125 mph UFO bashed up our car" screamed *The Sun*, referring to the supposed egg-cup shape of the object. The *Daily Mirror*, meanwhile, spoke of "The pong from outer space", focusing on the awful smell of the fine dust said to have invaded the car under attack.

I am grateful to UFO Research Australia's Vladimir Godic, who sent me a preliminary report less than a week after these press stories hit our shores. Here's a brief precis of the case:-

It occurred on 20 January 1988 and involved Mrs Faye Knowles and her sons (aged 24, 21 and 18) driving across desert country to Melbourne overnight. About 30 miles west of Mundrabilla a light that was "jumping about" appeared ahead, then disappeared and returned behind or above them. It seemed attracted to their 1984 FORD. Sean, who was driving, accelerated away, burst a tyre and lost control, but screeched to a halt. Mrs Knowles put her hand on the roof and saw nothing, but felt a 'spongy' substance. A thick black mist came through the open window leaving a foul smelling ash behind. Their voices also changed pitch as the thing flew over. They fled from the car into the bush, with the object still nearby (they could hear it humming). After 15 minutes they dared to return, changed the tyre, drove to Ceduna to report it. Ceduna police called in UFORA immediately. Total duration of the event was about 1½ hours (commencing around 5am local).

Theories have been proffered that it was a dry electrical storm, and whilst several papers quoted a Professor Schwertfeger claiming that, most did not refer to meteorologist Mike Manton explaining that no such storms were in the area at the time. Certainly, on first glance, the long duration, violent nature, pressure changes evidenced by the voice effects and the whipped up dust do point towards some odd sort of natural wind-based phenomenon. UFO seems a pretty emotive description as it stands. But will we ultimately learn the truth?

UFORA report the family have been signed up 'exclusively' by a TV company.

News Round-Up:

** UFO and paranormal groups in the Midlands have merged into an informal liaison system known as "STRANGE ENCOUNTERS". Each will continue independent status and most are part of the MUFON and BUFORA schemes too. The three main coordinators are Clive Potter (central), David Taylor (west) and Ernie Still (East) at the final three group addresses shown on page 16 of this issue. Good luck to this excellent venture in regional cooperation.

** One group definitely not involved in this liaison is UFOSI in Birmingham. They have been receiving widespread publicity recently and claim to be funded by British Aerospace. They are also to feature on a BBC TV documentary later in February! Clive Potter has been looking into this on behalf of BUFORA and discovered it is a fraud. The man who runs UFOSI, John Hurley, has NO sponsorship or relationship with British Aerospace, who may well take action if the claims are repeated. Hurley has responded with ludicrous threats that he will personally evict "by force" any UFO investigator who gets in their way and that BUFORA will "cease to exist" if they don't leave him alone. It's amazing how ufology attracts so many cranks and cheats, and how serious media outlets stupidly endorse them.

** Not entirely divorced from the last sentence, it's a while since I've mentioned YUFOS or Quest. Since 'the world's greatest' (in all departments) have excommunicated everybody who did not fall for their Cracoe Fell con as 'non serious ufologists', it was fascinating to see that in the January 1988 issue of CONTACT UKs magazine there is a big advert for Quest. In a move that well illustrates just how many scruples YUFOS have got left, they use a statement by me, given ages ago, as advertising hype. What they don't tell those they wish to dupe with this hypocrisy is that they wrote me off over a year ago and told all their members not to talk to me or answer any letters I might be dumb enough to waste time writing. Having the world's greatest magazine promoted by a non-serious ufologist (who frankly doesn't give a Four X for this bunch of wallies) indicates that they are in pretty dire straits. Pity it's not the Menai Straits.

** Mainly by virtue of being the only one to enter, Andy Roberts won the Christmas quiz about UFO authors and the science-fiction tales they have also sold. He gets a year's free subscription. Serves the rest of you right for chickening out! The answers, if you were genuinely puzzled, were in order:- Ian Watson, Peter Hough, Carl Sagan, Whitley Strieber, Jacques Vallee, Ralph Noyes, George Adamski and yours truly. (Surely you could have worked out that nobody else could possibly earn money by writing about a conversation with a sandwich!) Andy, incidentally, got 4 of the 8 correct.

DIAL U F O

Readers (only within the environs of Greater Manchester) are in for the dubious treat of hearing your editor spouting on about UFOs for the mere investment of a few pence into your phone box. She has started up "The North West UFO Line" on behalf of MEMO enterprises, British Telecom and MUFORA. Three separate messages (3½ mins long) are recorded each week (on Mon/Tue, Wed/Thur and over the weekend). They bring up to the minute news on sightings and stories in the UFO headlines. The service is an experiment and began on 8 February for a guaranteed three week spell to 28 February. Its continuation after that depends on how economically viable MEMO find it to be. Whilst dubious that it will find enough customers to compete with MEMOs other services, if you want to give it a go dial:- 0077 44 33 28 (But if you misdial the last two digits be prepared for one of MEMOs other services... something to do with Lucious Linda!)

FOR YOUR PERUSAL:-

Major articles elsewhere



Sad to report that the last of what was once three news-stand magazines on the paranormal (*The Unknown*) went the way of all the others on Christmas Eve when its owners (Scrooge, sorry Sovereign, Publications) sacked the staff and shut up shop. It's a sad truth that serious magazines just don't sell, like serious books.

On the other hand a couple of nice new American goodies. Both are 'Fortean' in the sense of covering a range of things. But they do feature UFOs quite strongly. *Artifex* is the deeper of the two. A product of the Archaeus Project (629 Twelfth Avenue SE Minneapolis MN 55414) it contains several features, such as a look at the parallels between abductions and certain religious motifs.

The other seems more aimed at the news stand market. Entitled *Strange Magazine* (PO Box 2246 Rockville MD 20852) it's not very strange really. There's a familiar blend of news and features, plus nice art work, on everything from lake monsters to Hollywood reports on the wave of UFO movies due to hit our screens (on *Communion*, *Intruders* and, oh no, *Light Years!!!*) (\$18.95, 4 issues, UK rate)

UFO BRIGANTIA Nov/Dec (£7, six issues, 84 Elland Rd Brighouse West Yorks HD6 2QR) New format and price under IUN banner. But same as usual really. 32pp. Foo fighters... the cover up critically examined... Albert Budden on Rowley Regis CE4

MAGONIA Jan 1988 (£3, four issues, 5 James Terrace, London SW14 8HB)

A strange, almost fond, look at Strieber, plus the two Dennis's on a deep approach to psychoanalysing missing time abductions (*Stillings*) and MJ12 (*Stacy*)

IUR Sep/Oct (\$35, US, 6 issues, 2457 W Peterson, Chicago, IL 60659)

Great issue... A terrifying look at why the aliens are here according to Budd Hopkins (*Beyond Intruders*), Stanton Friedman on why MJ 12 is so important and JR reveals the full story of disinformation in UK ufology... the story Mrs Thatcher wouldn't allow Northern UFO News to publish (well, sort of).

MUFON Journal Dec 1987 (\$30, US, 12 issues, 103 Oldtowne Rd, Seguin, TX 78155)

A very interesting reassessment of the Meier 'Hoax'. Asks if we've been too tough on the one armed Swiss farmer? James Deardarff provides several examples from my books that seem to support what Meier is saying (No comment!).

FOCUS Dec 1987 (\$20, US, 12 issues, 4219 W Olive, Suite 247, Burbank CA 91505)

Now here's the antidote. For anyone harbouring the slightest crumb of belief in the Billy Liar case, Hal Starr's inside report utterly demolishes it. We all knew it was a fraud from beginning to end. Starr proves it, and a lot more besides. Vital!

FATE Jan 1988 (\$22, US, 12 issues, 500 Hyacinth Place, Highland Pk, IL 60035)

Congratulations to Jerry Clark, recently promoted to editor. There's a report from Peter Hough on a fascinating poltergeist case MUFORA handled in Swinton (no UFOs, so it wasn't in MUFON). Jerry himself starts a four parter on the history of UFO crashes which he promises will end in April with blockbuster new material on the MJ 12 affair. He overrates the *Observer* MJ 12 story a lot, however.

BOOKS OF THE MOMENT:

SPI, the Scottish group, have produced a smashing report on their 1987 work. Containing summaries of all parahormal investigations, press stories, photos and reproduced letters of importance it's a nice idea. They also have a newsletter. Both subscription and the report cost £2 each (inc post)... SPI address, page 16.

Phantom Aerial Flaps and Waves By Nigel Watson, 24pp, £1.15 (inc post)
From: MAGONIA 5 James Terrace Mortlake Churchyard London SW14 8HB

Nigel has been with MUFON since issue 1 (who else can claim that?). He has always had an interest in historical UFOs. Now in this handy MAGONIA special (to MUFON size and format) he has compiled a global account of mystery airships, aircraft and foo fighters from 1830 to the very start of the supposed UFO era in 1947. These pre-UFOs may, or may not, be relevant according to your personal interpretation. But nobody can deny that Nigel has come up with a great service to ufology by putting all the data in one place. In 24pp there were limits. Each 'wave' has a very short space devoted (generally one paragraph). But this was clearly not intended as a definitive work but as a sort of annotated index. For anyone researching UFOs before 1947 this new booklet can only be called indispensable, and at the price is also a bargain.

UPDATES:

MJ 12...The mysterious MJ 12 agency still dominates thinking in the USA and there is no definitive answer as yet. UFO groups seem split over the authenticity of these documents supposedly demonstrating the existence, in the fifties, of a top secret (answerable to the President) team of officials responsible for investigating and obscuring the evidence for crashed UFOs. Whilst the team of Moore, Friedman and Shandera insist their sources check and have been getting some support from officials, since one of the documents definitely WAS on the Pentagon files, CAUS (Citizens Against UFO Secrecy) have openly challenged the documents. They have put forward material in their magazine (*Just Cause PO Box 218 Coventry Conn 06238*) which calls this "The MJ-12 Fiasco". They say, "The MJ-12 affair appears to be a grand deception and, consequently, a giant black eye on the face of ufology" (American ufology that should be, because apart from Tim Good and YUFOS, acceptance of this matter has been much less obvious outside the USA). It would be impossible to summarise the extensive reasons CAUS put forward, but they depend upon internal features of the documents themselves, and CAUS have, of course, been responsible for many of the lawsuits under Freedom of Information that have extracted papers from the US government (see their book "Clear Intent", Prentice-Hall, 1984). Meanwhile, CUFOS have responded by issuing press releases balancing the arguments out and offering both sides. With new documents and revelations promised soon by the Moore, Friedman, Shandera team, I guess those of us on the outside will just have to watch and make our own minds up.

Barnsley Photos...Research is afoot into a set of four daylight photographs taken by an unemployed man from Barnsley, in early August 1987. These first appeared (anonymously) in the local paper a few days later and I alerted BUFORA investigators Philip Mantle and David Clarke. They have spent six months looking into the matter; although the witness has only been partially cooperative. It has proved difficult since Tim Good advised him not to part with the negatives (essential for investigation) and proposed also that he work with YUFOS...who, as readers will recall, are well known for their expert and objective evaluation of photo cases. Initially it was felt by myself and the investigators that this looked suspiciously like a hoax involving cut out UFOs stuck on the window. Evaluation by Nigel Smith (BUFORA's photo expert—a professional TV film editor) seemed to confirm this. Since that time US Navy physicist and one of the world's best known analysts, Dr Bruce Maccabee, has been studying the case and whilst he cannot rule out this hoax method seems more open to the pictures being bona fide. Work is proceeding and a summary report is published in the current *UFO Brigantia*. Meanwhile the witness has gone public on BBC TV (*Kilroy*) and there was a big *Daily Star* report, which makes several new bizarre claims on the matter. The witness claims not to have been responsible for this false report.

MEDIA MATTERS:-

A look at UFOs in the public eye



Probably the best news of recent months was the series by freelancer Ralph Barker in the *Sunday Express*. This began on 22 Nov with a full page story on the now oft repeated Alan Godfrey CE4. This was a long, lyrical, drawn out and 90 per cent accurate report on his conscious testimony. The rest was swept aside, as were the months of field investigation without a mention. The one point of importance was the stressing by Alan of what I have always considered a major fact. The hypnosis sessions had not helped. They had made him MORE confused. Many 'abductees' have said exactly the same thing.

A slightly smaller story followed the next week (29 Nov). Attributed to the Birdsalls and YUFOS, this was on the Meanwood, Leeds, landing witnessed by two young girls (as with the Godfrey case this is discussed in *Pennine UFO Mystery*; although MUFORA's contribution to the Godfrey case was given no credit whatsoever in Barker's series). The date of the Meanwood case was cited as totally incorrect (22 November 1979, when it was 22 February). Barker positively knew the correct date since I had discussed the importance of that weekend's events and the various MoD letters about it. These I offered him, but the journalist was disinterested in this 'distraction', inexplicably made his mistake and repeated it in what turned out to be an utterly pointless letter to the MoD. Barker told me that he credited the Birdsalls on this case because they came over as "fine researchers, ultra-dedicated, skilled and perfect gentlemen". I think this obvious ability to judge personality helps explain the cock up Barker made on this case.

Finally, the series ended (6 Dec) with another fully credited story on the Paul Fuller investigation of the Eric Spinner, Isle of Wight, case...one of the best recent UK cases (even if Stewart Campbell has, naturally, explained it as the mirage of a star that flew from horizon to horizon and below the hill line).

The *Daily Mirror* cashed in on the Zena Sfeir farce (6 Jan) with a full page called "Aliens". A few cases culled together; including the Sussex CE 3 involving 'alien diamonds' reviewed in MUFON case histories two or three years ago when BUFORA investigated and largely disproved it. The *Mirror*, naturally, provided an inaccurate load of cobblers complete with an 'identikit' alien, the like of which I'm quite sure nobody has ever reported, but what the heck...it looks scary.

Other than that it's been a time for stories ABOUT ufologists. The most UFO aware story was on the IUF team (30 Oct) in the *Huddersfield Examiner*, which discussed Pennine cases of earthlights and the theory. BUFORA's Eric Morris must win the prize for covering the most different subjects in the *Crewe Chronicle* (2 Dec). Most photogenic was Ernie Still (13 Jan) whose picture in the *Northants Telegraph* under the "Watcher of the skies" heading could win an award. Probably the most visually interesting was Georgina Mills of MUFORA in the *Thameside Advertiser* (12 Nov)...holding copies of BOTH 'Earthlights' and 'The UFO Conspiracy' and wearing a T-Shirt with 'The Men in Black' on it! And I guess the most unusual angle had to be the one on yours truly entitled 'Encounters of a UFO kind' in *Computer Talk* newspaper (16 Nov), discussing how I use my two Amstrads for UFO related work. (The part I liked best was the revelation of the 18 April publication date for my book *Abduction*, before I even knew myself!)

Two smiles to end on: *The Listener* (5 Nov) obliquely referred to your editor again by interviewing the Womens Hour radio team. As an example of "bad taste" they cited the interview with me in which I was asked (so told them!) about cases of 'space-naps' involving mostly young, female abductees. "I wonder if the earth moved," quipped this sage from the BBC....Talking of which ex-cop John Stalker briefly took over Derek Jameson's BBC radio show in time to interview Zena Sfeir. When she explained how police turned up half an hour after her 'emergency' call to them, he said, awestruck... "What...only thirty minutes!"

THE UFO THAT WAS AFTER ME!

On Monday, 1 February the lunch time TV news announced... "Police officers in Cheadle have had a close encounter during the night". As those observant amongst you will have noted, Cheadle is the part of Cheshire where I happen to live.

I called both Peter Hough and Roy Sandbach (another Stockport MUFORA member) and we quickly distributed work to do. Peter liaised with a friendly journalist on the *Manchester Evening News*, Roy was set upon Manchester Airport with vengeance and I tried the direct approach via the police.

At Cheadle police station a by now thoroughly cheesed off desk sergeant did not seem kindly disposed to my suggestion that we wanted to see if there was anything in the case or if it was just a misidentification 'like most UFOs are'. This, I thought, was the sensible line to adopt. Don't want them to think MUFORA is a bunch of crackpots who believe everything. The sergeant seemed keen to defend his bobbies who were actually from Cheadle Hulme, he explained. "They're in bed now," he said. "But you surely don't expect to talk to them, do you?" However, the Greater Manchester police were holding a press conference that afternoon. He gave me the appropriate name and number in Manchester to contact.

I called the woman. She admitted they had received "dozens of calls from press and TV". She was unsure about the press conference. "Hold on, I'll find out" she said. After some time away from the phone she returned to assure me that no press conference was planned. So where had the Cheadle Desk Sergeant's ideas on that come from? Without actually saying so, she led me to believe that the release of the story was 'unofficial' and 'premature' and whilst plans for a conference had been drawn up, as soon as the extraordinary media interest was noted, plus the way the case was being exaggerated by reporters, they had quickly shelved it and told the officers concerned to keep away from interviews.

I had several very enlightening discussions with this woman (who is press liaison officer). Throughout the day I saw her increasing frustration as she desperately tried to prevent what was soon an apparent crock of a case from turning into major headlines. At first she gave me the party line, "We are not releasing any more information on this" Why not? "Because we have none". As we came to trust one another she was a lot more helpful.

I spoke with my contacts at the Stockport Express, BBC Radio Manchester and Granada TV. All knew about the case. All had been fobbed off by the police. The BBC said, "They won't tell us a thing. We've had to take it out of our news bulletins. We just can't get any details."

But Granada TV were carrying the story. Indeed, I was put onto their reporter, John Mulson, who was 'filming an item for tonight's *Granada Reports*'. Mulson was a right wally. He knew next to nothing about the story. They had conned a phone interview out of one officer before he found out what they intended to do with it and the police had shut him up. They didn't know if said PCs had been in or out of the car (vital, as you will see later). They didn't even know WHERE in Cheadle the event had taken place. To Mulson this was an excuse for a day off.

Mulson seriously asked me about 2.30 pm, "If you can find out where it is then we'll meet you there and film you at the scene. We're just off to interview another witness who saw it in Ashton". We arranged a later phone rendezvous and I got on with the investigation... doing what should have been HIS job!

Meanwhile, Roy had given up with Manchester airport. Likewise Peter with the *Evening News*, who had explained that 'leading UFO expert' Steve Balon had been interviewed by them, pronouncing the case important and waffling on about spaceships gathering up water from the nearby River Mersey.

Balon, of DIGAP, we both knew. He has been meddling in cases that have publicity value for some time. He never shares his results and seems only to enjoy the notoriety. He was chiefly quoted in an utterly dreadful Daily Star article on 30 Jan which included the incredibly silly "21 things you never knew

about aliens". He also claimed to be a 'leading BUFORA investigator'. This surprised me (as Director of Investigations!) I've now ascertained he is definitely not a BUFORA member, let alone an investigator. BUFORA are considering what action to take. A few days later Balon was on Piccadilly Radio with more libelous 'Baloney'; saying it's well known in ufology how Allen Hynes is (sic!) a government agent.

Back to the Monday. By now my incessant phone calls were making the facts clear. The two police officers had been patrolling down Bird Hall Lane, Cheadle Heath, in their car, at 06.22 on the Sunday, 31 January. This is only several hundred yards from my front door! I began to wonder if this UFO had been after me.

However, there was a big clue. I live directly underneath the flightpath to runway 24 into Manchester Airport. Any visitor to my house will support that aircraft pass over very low (at 980 feet actually, as we are just over 3 miles out) However, the location of the PCs was just to the south of the glideslope. Inside a car, given the westerly winds that were prevailing, plus the fact that aircraft before 6.30 am run very quiet, any landing plane WOULD seem silent from their location. And there WAS a landing plane... a British Airways Tristar jet on a flight from New York. The Tristar, according to the airport, is very quiet and has three engines and quite unusual tail lighting. Seen from almost head on it could look very odd. The Tristar touched down at 06.25. It passed straight over my house (where I was asleep) seconds before the PCs saw their UFO.

Of course, you may say, policemen on night duty in Cheadle must see hundreds of planes. Quite so. But the circumstances here were unusual, not least because of the huge media splurge over the Munderabilla case just a week before.

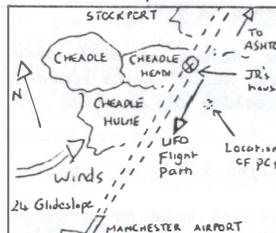
By now all the media sources had heard from either me or the airport that the Tristar was the culprit. Some (like the BBC) dropped the matter instantly. Granada TV were much less honourable. Mulson, still unaware of the location, said, "This case is a dead duck, but I've committed a day to a story and we are having one". He wanted me to appear on air and talk about "other policemen who've seen UFOs... wasn't a bobby kidnapped by spacemen once in Todmorden?" I refused to do anything except state the facts I had carefully accrued over several hours that identified THIS case. He did not want to know about that.

Amidst predictable spooky music the Granada TV feature went ahead. The Ashton witness saw a light TEN HOURS earlier (almost certainly an aircraft too), but Granada cleverly made it appear as if this man had seen the Cheadle UFO. They also did exactly what Mulson threatened to me he would do if I did not reveal the exact spot in Cheadle. They took shots of the town centre... two miles away from the actual location! "Who'll know the difference?" Mulson chuckled.

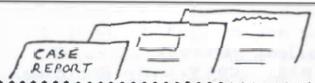
I then had a fascinating debate with the police liaison in Manchester. I told her it was a positive IFO and if they continued to say 'no comment' the story would go out garbled and distorted. Far better to come clean and admit the error. The media would not be interested in an explained UFO, only one they could pretend was unexplained if the police kept on being obstructive. She said they were just not allowed to admit it was an aircraft, because it would undermine confidence in the police. Even so, I had "Got it in one". So sympathetic was she that she kept me holding on whilst also speaking with 'the chief' (James Anderton?). "I think you are right and you should explain this to him".

But God's Cop was praying to his superior on high. "It's no use, he doesn't want to know," she told me. "He just wishes this would go away. I guess we'll learn by our mistakes that we should never talk about UFOs again."

The last thing I did was call the *Daily Star* to make sure they knew the truth. They did, but carried the UFO story anyway. Am I glad I did not explain how close this 'UFO' was to me. Or that it was the EXACT flight and plane I returned on from researching abductions in the USA, after last year's MUFON conference!



CASE HISTORIES

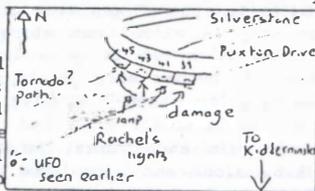
*****
Another one the weather men missed BASE report, Mark Sampson

Case 8652 9 December 1986 Kidderminster, Worcestershire Level A SP 2-7

Something from out of the sky struck the residents of Puxton Drive, Kidderminster, in the night of 9th December 1986 and it might offer indications about the recent encounter at Mundrabilla, Australia (see pages 2-3)

Derek Perks and his wife live at No 41 and they were woken at about 00.50 by a violent vibrating of the windows. A high pitched whistle was also heard. He likened this to a "giant spinning top" that slowly wound down. It then became a grating noise, then high pitched again, then stopped. Mr P got out of bed, but by the time he did so the noise (duration only 15 seconds) had ceased. Their son slept right through but 13 year old daughter Rachael heard them moving and talking and got up within seconds of the noise (which she did not hear). Looking south towards Kidderminster she observed "four white lights - an oval, square, triangle and parallelogram - all in a line" They were two dimensional and quickly faded out.

Meanwhile the families at Nos 39 and 43 (adjacent houses) had all been woken by the noise. Quite a gathering now met in the street in nightclothes. They were all surprised to find that extensive damage had been done only to their local area. A large number (at least 11) wooden fenceposts had been snapped near the base, uprooted and replaced on the walkways between the three houses or in one of the gardens. Next day it was found that the metal casing on a streetlamp had been twisted from horizontal to vertical. After much discussion the Fortune family (No 43) settled on a 'freak wind' and Derek Perks on the extra-terrestrial spaceship idea. He contacted the local press and so reported the matter; hence the involvement of ufology.



At 02.00 Mr P called the Kidderminster police about the incident. Here he learned that a policeman had just gone to Silverstone Road (very nearby) as a man had reported tiles falling from a roof with no obvious cause. The PC had returned saying it was "bloody spooky round there". Also following the local press story an anonymous woman from about 1 1/2 miles away called to say that in the evening (several hours before the "UFO" wreaked havoc) she had seen a light flying over a nearby school. From these things Derek Perks, ex army and a security officer, has cobbled together an extraordinary theory about a UFO that broke down, nearly crashed but flew off again just in time!

Of course, rationally this case would suggest a tornado. The weather had been wet the night before, but when the witnesses were outside at 01.00 it was dry and relatively calm. However, the report was studied by storm meteorologist Dr Terence Meaden who confirmed that this was a classic description "of a tornado/whirlwind creating a narrow path of damage with its highly localised hurricane-force winds". He suggests Rachel saw the 6 foot panels or other debris lit up and being carried by the short-lived phenomenon as it flew NE to SW.

Fascinating here is the way the event was "ufologised" by a single witness. As things stand at Mundrabilla, that case shows some evidence of being a tornado with possible electrical discharges. Perhaps publishing this UK case is timely!

THE GREAT AUGUST WAVE (Part 2)

Typical of the north's sightings during the 'Kite' fiasco down south was Gary Anthony's report from Hull at 01.10 on 14 August. He saw an orange star "emerge out of nowhere" and disappear six minutes later in the same fashion after moving N-S. Being an astronomer, the detailed account and sky map provided is very helpful. No obvious astronomical source springs to mind.

Meanwhile that same night in Bangor, Northern Ireland, a 16 year old girl saw a yellow light which orbited round the front of what she assumed to be an oval object. It looked like a lighthouse beacon and moved slowly and silently E-W. As it passed over a factory its hooter inexplicably sounded for a few seconds even though it was closed. Of course, there is much helicopter activity in N. Ireland.

Moving back across the Irish Sea to the Saturday night (the 15th) a 19 year old amateur astronomer saw three wobbling red lights in a triangle fly over him at North Shields, Tyne & Wear at 22.27 hrs. They were only visible a few seconds as they passed NE to SW.

Now we enter the real crazy time, that Sunday, 16 August, the world's final day, if you recall. Down south the Sams 'UFO kite' was doing its stuff but in a suitably apocalyptic display the UFOs were out in force up here.

David Clarke followed one up at Pinxton, near Derby, time 21.45. A qualified engineer and his girlfriend saw a "star like a sparkler" rise into the air. Then at 22.15 in north west Derby a Rolls Royce employee saw a bright white light over Allestree that moved in a downward arc and left a trail. It was visible just a few seconds.

At exactly this time in Batley Philip Mantle has a case where a woman saw a light "as bright as the sun" and looking like "the moon on its back". It was in view quite a few seconds, but with the other case, plus the fact that a brilliant meteor shower focused on this period of mid August, we may well have here a fireball meteor.

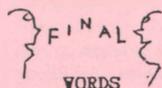
Back to David Clarke for 22.50 that UFO-filled night at Shelton Lock near Derby again. Two pensioners saw a big light with green lights round it that moved slowly from over the Rolls Royce computer centre. Seven minutes later another man and wife saw what was plainly the same thing as they drove over Breadsall Hilltop. They saw it as "massive... lights were brilliant... it hovered... red glow underneath... on top like big cabins all lit up like a double decker bus in the sky... it looked like it had a metal thing on the top, but the lights were so bright that there was no definite outline". This couple (Mr and Mrs Boon) * say the magnificence of this object was enhanced because all the streetlamps in this part of the road had mysteriously gone out. Next day the 20 amp fuse that worked their Ford Escort's internal lights and windscreen washer had blown. Unfortunately they threw it away. Also a pre-WW II prismatic compass allegedly pointed south instead of north inside the car after the experience. However, when the investigator tried it there was no malfunction. The compass is in perfect working order.

Around 23.00, as the Boon's were chasing their UFO, numerous people in and around nearby Chaddesden saw various coloured lights (red, green, orange, yellow, and white). Finally, again in Batley, there was a report of a reddish/orange glow seen at 23.15 that pulsed in and out and faded and reappeared.

A clue to all this seems to have been unusual weather conditions. The Boons reported the remarkable clarity of the air. But Nottingham Weather Centre told David Clarke that there was a major temperature inversion that night in the area and it does seem likely that distortion of ground lights or aircraft by this inversion was responsible for some cases if not the Breadsall Hilltop saga.

But isn't it odd that on the very last night of the world (according to those predictions) bizarre and rare weather conditions should generate many UFOs?..... To be continued...

* For Fortean's, note the names of witness (Boon, Perks, Fortune) on these pages!



There are several conferences on the way. First off is the one most of you are likely to be able to attend; the "MYSTERIES OF THE PENNINES" day on Saturday 26 March (9.30am to 5pm) at the theatre of the magnificent Sheffield Library, in the city centre (just 5 mins walk from the bus or rail stations). Good car parking facilities also on offer. You are advised to book in advance and full travel and other details will be sent with your ticket/s. A licensed bar and bookstall is promised. Tickets are £2.50 (£2, students, OAPs, UB 40 holders) from:- 103 Derbyshire Lane, Warton Lees, Sheffield S8 9EW (pay 'Northern Earth Mysteries'.. Lecturers and subjects will include; Terence Whitaker (Ghostlore of the Pennines), David Clarke and Andy Roberts (Pennine spooklights), Rob Wilson and Ian Taylor on various local legends and Jenny Randles (Pennine UFOs)... BE THERE!

Hot on the heels of this, if you fancy a trip on a TGV to Lyon, France, then on 2-3-4 April a marvellous event is promised. Three days of deep French lectures, deep bottles of French wine, deep indigestion from rich French food... and it is only £50 for the full package (a three day stay with meals). Interested?:- AESV:- BP 324 13611 Aix-en-Provence Cedex 1 France

OPERATION SKYWATCH KEEP THOSE EYES ON THE SKIES!

Many of you may know that on Sunday/Monday 29-30 May the whole ITV network is giving 27 continuous hours to a fund raiser for charity. No normal schedules... No Coronation Street... BUFORA has decided to organise four sponsored skywatch sites in which the public will be asked to come, watch the skies, contribute £1 and meet real Ufologists. In the process we will have fun, help educate people, get sightings, maybe see a UFO and do some good. But we need your help to organise things, raise sponsors, promote the event. Regional sites will be in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Northants, run by MUFORA, IUN, MUFORC. Jenny Randles is coordinating the exercise for BUFORA So... IF YOU WANT TO HELP WRITE TO THE EDITOR N O Y You'll be sent a fact/information sheet. BUT HURRY!

CALENDAR

BUFORA lectures at the London Business School, near Baker Street tube, 6.30-9.30pm
 5 March "Abductions" by John Rimmer (after the BUFORA AGM)
 26 March SHEFFIELD CONFERENCE (See above)
 9 April "Mind and magic" by Guy Leon Playfair (NB NOT 2 APR as advertised)

N U F O N Regional Groups

SPI	(Mid Scotland)	4 Woodlea Park, Branshill, Sauchie, Alloa	FK10 3BG
SUFOS	(S.Scotland)	80 Beechwood Rd, N. Carbrain, Cumbernauld	G 67 2NE
NLUFOIG	(Cumbria)	89 Bare Lane, Morecambe, Lancashire	LA 4 6RN
MUFORA	(Lancashire)	6 Silsden Ave, Lowton, Lancashire	WA 3 1EN
IUN	(Yorkshire)	106 Lady Ann Rd, Soothill, Batley, W. Yorks	WF17 0PY
CUFOSC	(Cheshire)	117 Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire	CW 1 2AG
SSPR	(Derbyshire)	17 Old Quarry Ave, Wales, Sheffield	S 31 8RW
BASE	(W.Midlands)	2 Chapel St, Kingswinford, W.Midlands	DY 6 0JU
LUFOIC	(E.Midlands)	31 Grove Rd, Leicester, Leics	LE 5 3HJ
PARASEARCH	(Worcester)	79 Sandringham Rd, Stourbridge, Worcs	DY 8 5HL
MUFORC	(Northants)	46 Occupation Rd, Corby, Northants	NN17 2EF