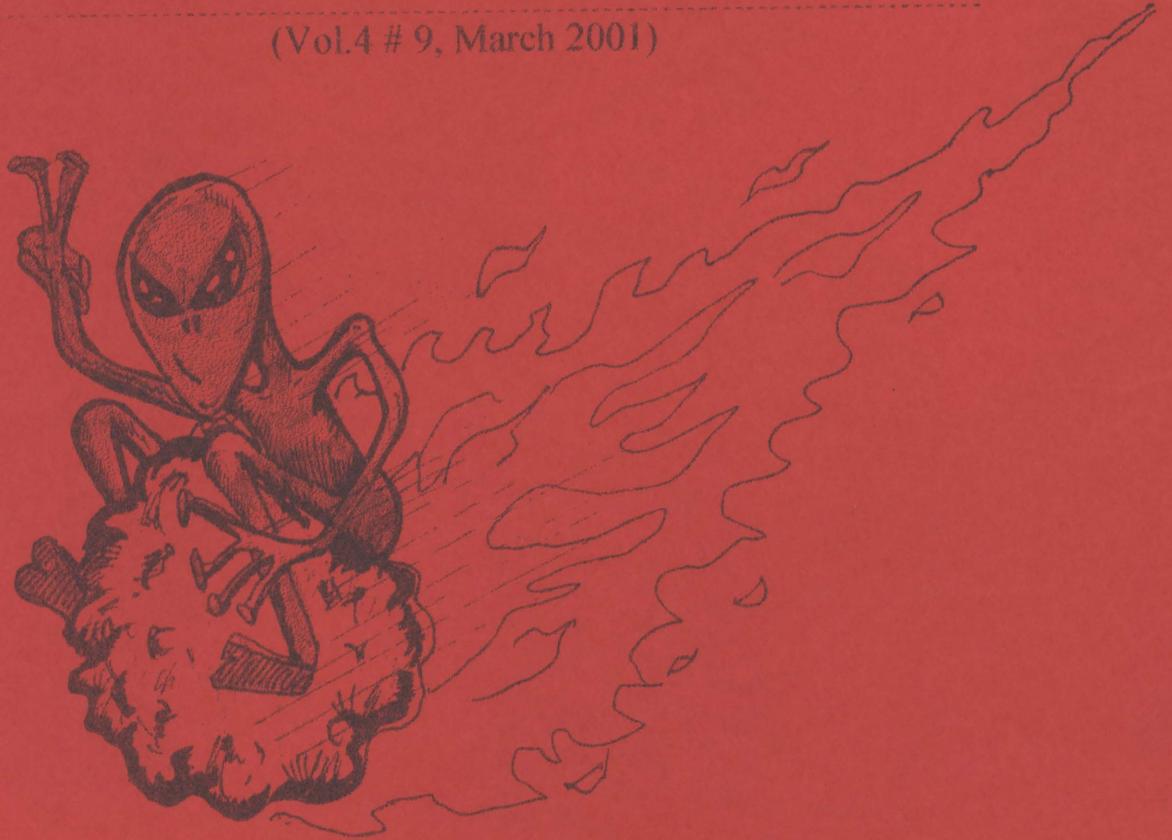


YUFOS

YORKSHIRE UFO SOCIETY

PROJECT RED BOOK

(Vol.4 # 9, March 2001)



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AIR MARSHALL SIR GEORGE JONES AND THE UFO

UFO CENTRAL

THE MEXBOROUGH FOOTAGE- THE FINAL REPORT?

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Dedicated to: The Gentlemen... they scare me, ya know...

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The articles and views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor, YUFOS members or hell, anyone for that matter.

"We buried him. On a hill. Overlooking a little river. With pine cones all around....What the **** do you care, Janice!"

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AIR MARSHALL SIR GEORGE JONES AND THE UFO

by Bill Chalker

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(First published in "Australian Ufologist*", Vol.4, No.3, 2000, as "Air Marshall Sir George Jones and his UFO". Thanks to Bill for permission to reprint this article in PRB)

In 1930, a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) officer, Squadron Leader George Jones, was sent to Warrnambool, Victoria, to investigate reports of mystery aircraft flying over the coast. No explanation was found in this early official RAAF UFO investigation.

Further "mystery aircraft" reports were made in the near Pacific and Papua New Guinea area in 1930, and in 1931 the RAAF was denying any of her planes were the explanation for "mystery planes" reported widely in Tasmania." Jones was to become RAAF Chief of the Air Staff during World War Two, and subsequently Air Marshall Sir George Jones. He was himself to become a UFO witness in 1957. He also became a valuable advocate of serious UFO research, being a patron of the short lived national civilian UFO research organisation CAPIO - Commonwealth Aerial Phenomena Investigation Organisation, and a member of VUFORS - the Victorian UFO Research Society.

In 1965, the former Air Marshall, Sir George Jones, recollected the 1930 affair, in an interview published in the *Australian Flying Saucer Review* (UFOIC, Sydney edition, No.8, June, 1965, pg.18):

"My first introduction to UFOs was in 1930. At the time I was a squadron - leader in the air force and was sent to Warrnambool because some people down there had seen a formation of what they took to be aircraft flying over the coast.

"I went there but could not establish what they were. They were not aircraft belonging to us and, as far as I could find out, they were not aircraft belonging to any other powers. The possibility that they might have been a formation of swans or other birds was always there. But the thing was left open - I could not establish what it was."

George Jones also described his own UFO sighting which occurred on October 16th, 1957. He saw "a brilliant white light at the bottom of a shadowy shape like a transparent balloon", which travelled very quickly and silently at about 400 mph at some 1,500 feet altitude. Sir George was certain it was not a meteor or reflected light. He described it as travelling in "a purposeful way". He added, "Nothing could shake me from my belief in what I saw. But I wished I had 4 or 5 witnesses. I have reported it, but have been loath to talk about it publicly lest people should think I was either an incompetent witness or getting a little screwy in the head." (quoted in a statement George Jones made on January 3rd, 1958, at Warburton, Victoria).

I had the pleasure of interviewing Sir George about his UFO reminiscences in 1988 when he was 92. I found him to be remarkably lucid in his recollections and certainly would not attribute to him any thoughts of being "a little screwy in the head". One only has to read his autobiography, *From Private to Air Marshall*, published in 1988, to realise just how remarkable and impressively credentialed a witness he was!

Jones was not alone during 1957. It was a major year of activity both in Australia and overseas.

THE WAVE OF 1957

Coincident with a spectacular UFO wave in the United States, which featured the extraordinary Levelland "electromagnetic" milieu, in which several independent drivers had their cars immobilised during UFO encounters, Australia experienced a wave of impressive reports.

At about 7.46 pm (local time), on September 27th, 1957, the Air Traffic Controller at Launceston airport, Tasmania, observed a

strong white light to the east proceeding at DC3 speed towards Hobart. Met radar and Tower control at Hobart were alerted. At 8.23 pm, the Met radar picked up a strong echo at 9 to 10 thousand feet heading towards Hobart. The trace was held for approximately 15 seconds, where upon the source appeared to accelerate with "a terrific burst of speed" and disappear.

During September and October, 1957, nuclear weapons test series, codenamed ANTLER, were undertaken at Maralinga, South Australia, with kilotonne range nuclear explosions being detonated on September 25th and October 9th. The site was subject to intense security. During that period the integrity of the facility was challenged in an extraordinary fashion.

Just before dusk one evening Royal Air Force Corporal Derek Murray and some colleagues were called out of the Maralinga village canteen to witness a UFO hovering apparently silently over the airfield. The UFO was described as a "magnificent sight", being silver/blue in colour, of a metallic lustre, with a line of "windows" or "portholes" along its edge. Corporal Murray states that the object could be seen so clearly that they could make out what appeared to be plating on the objects surface. The duty air traffic controller also ostensibly witnessed the spectacle. He allegedly checked Alice Springs and Edinburgh airfields who reported they did not have anything over their areas. No photographs were taken as the top security status of the area required that all cameras be locked away. These had to be signed in and out when used. After about 15 minutes (as dusk began to fall) the aerial object left swiftly and silently. In a statement to UK researcher Jenny Randles, which he also sent to me, Murray stated, "I swear to you as a practising Christian this was no dream, no illusion, no fairy story - but a solid craft of metallic construction".

On November 8th, 1957, astronomers at the Commonwealth Observatory at Mount Stromlo, near Canberra, the nation's capital, became reluctant but prestigious witnesses to the Australian UFO mystery. They observed a bright, pink object moving across the western horizon for about 8 minutes after 3.03 a.m., before it disappeared. One of the astronomers who saw the UFO, Dr. A. Przybylski, said it had a bright pink luminosity, which was brighter than anything else in the sky at the time except the moon. It appeared to be brighter than Venus. The object travelled

slowly across the horizon, in a southerly direction, rose and passed beneath the moon before sinking again and eventually disappearing. Dr. Przybylski's observation had lasted for about 2 minutes. He was quoted as saying that the object was completely unlike anything he had hitherto seen. Two of his colleagues also saw the object. Rough computations suggested the object was not more than 1,600 miles above the earth. Its velocity was too slow for it to be a meteorite, even slower than the slow moving Taurid meteorites, and the two Soviet Sputnik satellites had already made their passage. A check with aviation authorities indicated that there were no aircraft in the sky after 2 a.m. No scientist at the Observatory had ever previously observed such an object. The assistant director of the observatory, Dr. A. R. Hogg, indicated "that it was the first time the observatory had sighted what might be called an unidentified flying object. What it was remains an open question."

SIR GEORGE JONES AND THE 1965 UFO CONVENTION

Sir George Jones was a prominent guest at a major turning point in civilian UFO research in Australia. It occurred on February 27th, 1965, at Ballarat, Victoria. What was billed as Australia's first convention of UFO groups provided a focus for elevating the respectability of the UFO subject. Unfortunately, in hindsight it also started a process that, while initially encouraging, would eventually divide some UFO groups and lay the seeds of group political warfare which would resound for years to come.

The occasion was one of great euphoria for those researchers, investigators and enthusiasts who attended. The conference had been arranged by W. Howard Sloane, of the Ballarat Astronomical Society, with the aim of removing "the stigma of ridicule from research into UFOs." Not only did representatives of most existing Australian groups attend, but there were also several witnesses to some of Australia's most famous cases, including the Rev. William Gill and Charles Brew, who spoke about their experiences. Former Air Marshall Sir George Jones attended and was out spoken in his support for serious UFO research. The RAAF was represented by Mr. B. G. Roberts, Senior Research Scientist, of the Operational Research Office, Department of Air, Canberra. The presence of a scientific consultant of the RAAF, along with

2 RAAF officers, manning a hardware display, was an unprecedented step for the Australian government.

The Department of Air (Air Force) scientific representative, B. G. Roberts gave a presentation which addressed the term UFO and some objections to it, official assessments of aerial sightings, and the identification of sightings. Roberts argued the term "unidentified aerial sightings" (UAS) was a more appropriate one than UFO, the latter term having long since been regarded as just another term for "flying saucers". He indicated that "the assessment of reports of unidentified aerial sightings in Australia and the territories is the responsibility of the Department of Air at Canberra. There is no hidden implication in this allocation of responsibility. The Department is simply the most appropriate authority for the task, which is performed to determine whether or not a threat to the security of the nation is involved." Roberts highlighted that 9 out of 10 sightings are explainable.

"Finally," Roberts added, "I would like to make it clear that the Department of Air never has denied the possibility that some form of life may exist on other planets in the universe... However, the Department has, so far, neither received nor discovered in Australia any evidence to support the belief that the earth is being observed, visited or threatened by machines from other planets. Furthermore, there are no documents, files or dossiers held by the Department which prove the existence of "flying saucers"."

The civilian UFO researcher audience, at the Ballarat convention, sceptical of the claimed lack of compelling UFO photos in the RAAF files, were interested in Mr. Roberts knowledge on "the holy grail of Australian ufology", namely the photographic evidence secured by Papua New Guinea DCA Deputy Director, Tom Drury, back in August, 1953. Peter Norris, President of VFSRS, asked Roberts if he was aware of the film. Roberts said he was not. Fred Stone indicated that 4 stills from the Drury film had been supplied to him by the RAAF in 1954. Roberts clearly was uninformed about this famous case and even remarked, "I feel a bit like Daniel in a lions' den!" Andrew Tomas indicated he had seen the film in the hands of Edgar Jarrold, the pioneer Australian researcher and director of the Australian Flying Saucer Bureau. There is evidence that Jarrold did eventually receive prints of individual frames, some 94 prints, but

not the actual film. Tomas told the convention that the RAAF sent the film to Dayton, Ohio, and then researchers lost track of it.

Former RAAF Air Marshall Sir George Jones also challenged Mr. Roberts. While questioning the value of photographs as evidence of the reality of UFOs, he nevertheless insisted on keeping an open mind towards reports such as those of Charles Brew at Willow Grove, Victoria, and Rev. William Gill and others in Papua New Guinea. Sir George said to Mr. Roberts, "You leave me with an impression that everything can be explained away given sufficient time and effort. I don't know how they (RAAF) get on with those things (meaning reports like those of Charles Brew and Rev. Gill)."

Because of his significant role in the Australian UFO story, I approached Sir George during 1988 for an interview. He kindly consented and on December 9th, 1988 I sat down with him in his Beaumuris home. While he was of failing eye sight, at the age of 92, he was very sharp and articulate with surprisingly interesting recollections from so long ago.

B.C: I think the earliest involvement you had was back in 1930 when you were a squadron leader and you were asked to do an investigation of what was thought to be planes or birds off the coast of Warrnambool.

Sir George: Yes, that was my earliest experience with that sort of thing. I was senior staff officer at the time and I was ordered to go down to Warrnambool and investigate the report of some strange things that had been seen flying over the district. I went down there and interrogated the people who had been seeing things. They couldn't tell anything to clear up the mystery. One elderly man said, Oh, I think it must have been some of these Germans coming here. It was before the war - the second war - some of these Germans coming in formation. We knew darn well that wasn't so. Anyhow, I reported what they had said, that sort of thing, but it didn't clear up anything.

B.C: What that a formation of lights?

Sir George: Well it was just a formation. It might have been a flock of birds, large birds, I don't know.

B.C: Was it during the day or during the night?

Sir George: During the evening, I think it was. So we had to let that go.

Sir George described recollections of the 1959 Papuan Father Gill case, having met him, and that officialdom knew that it was not one of ours and more likely not from earth.

Sir George: So there was something there alright. And we knew very well that it wasn't human craft as we understand it and that nobody could possibly have flown there from any established base or anything like that.

He recollected the 1965 Ballarat meeting and how the RAAF technical representative had tried to ridicule and explain the more unusual reports.

Sir George: I rather resented that. I got up after he had spoken and said, do you contend then that you understand all possible physical phenomena in the universe. Oh no, no we don't contend that. Might this have been some phenomena, rather a new thing we don't understand. Oh, I suppose so, that sort of thing.

Sir George also recollected the 1963 Willow Grove Moe close encounter of dairy farmer Charles Brew. Considering he was recollecting this after nearly 30 years he was surprisingly accurate in his recall. Presumably in October 1957, 3 days after Tommy White, a minister of Air over Jones, had died at Barwon Heads, Sir George and his wife were driving. Sir George told me that they saw:

"...a brilliant white light came in from over the bay. As far as my memory goes it looked as though it was 500 feet, flying fairly fast, 300 or 400 miles an hour, very fast. The extraordinary part about it was that it made no noise what ever. It disappeared right over in the direction of Melbourne. I was very mystified what it could be. I rather jokingly said to a lot of the air force people a little bit later, that might have been the next day, Oh I saw Tommy White last night returning in his celestial chariot! I remember them saying, poor old Jones he has seen some flying saucers, ha, ha. made a joke of it you see. It was no joke as far as I was concerned."

I asked Sir George given his position in the Defence hierarchy what the official attitude

was.

Sir George: Oh, the official attitude was one of scepticism, there was doubt whether they existed. There was no confirmation. You couldn't prove it.

Sir George was aware of the Nullarbor sighting of the Knowles made early in the year of our interview - 1988 - and mentioned he had heard of drivers who refused to take that road because of the sightings.

B.C: When you look into that thing at Warrnambool back in 1930 was that just part - were you asked to do that as part of your normal job? Was that an unusual thing to be asked at that time?

Sir George: Oh, very unusual to be asked to do. You could well imagine nobody felt convinced that there was anything very mysterious at that stage.

B.C: Why did they pick you at the time?

Sir George: Well I was the chief flying instructor at Point Cook, so I suppose they reckon not only could I fly to the right place, but I could form a reasonable conclusion as to its authenticity. I reported what they had said. There was nothing much you could do about it.

I came away from the interview deeply impressed with Sir George. His biography *From Private to Air Marshall - The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones* (1988), paints a picture of an outstanding Australian. I was honoured that he had granted me the interview and had autographed my copy of his book.

The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History by P. Dennis, J. Grey, E. Morris & R. Prior, 1995, records that Sir George Jones died on 24th August, 1992.

I had thought that the earliest evidence for official investigations in UFO like situations may have occurred in 1920.

STRANGE LIGHTS AND VANISHINGS

The official files do not confirm significant military activity before 1950, however research has confirmed involvement by the military, albeit in some cases, cursory in

nature, back as far as 1920. The Navy submarine depot ship, the Platypus, was involved in the search for a missing schooner, the Amelia J, in Bass Strait. Mystery lights, thought at the time to be "evidently rockets", were observed. Two aircraft left the flying training school and aircraft depot at Point Cook to join in the investigation. One was piloted by a Major Anderson and the other by Captain W.J. Stutt – an instructor for the NSW Government Aviation school at Richmond (a forerunner to the Richmond RAAF base, established soon after the birth of the RAAF in 1921). Stutt and his mechanic, Sergeant Dalzell were last seen by Major Anderson flying into a large cloud. Their plane and the schooner were never found. Fifty eight years later the Bass Strait became the centre of another extraordinary plane/pilot disappearance, namely the Valentich affair of 1978.

Recently I uncovered even earlier evidence of official Australian investigations of possible UFO phenomena near Queenscliff in Victoria during 1914. Was this something to do with the interment of German immigrants during the early months of the war - a product of the paranoia of the period. Ultimately 3986 German-born Australians were interned in various locations in each state (see Frank Cain's 1983 book *The origins of political surveillance in Australia*, pgs 4-5). A Department of Defence minute paper (file series A38/7/80) dated 2nd November, 1914 and entitled *Report on investigation into reports of strange aircraft at Queenscliff*. Lieut. Henry Petre (sic?) A.I.S., wrote the following report:

D.M.O.

I visited Queenscliff on the 19th October and reported to the O.C.D.P. at 7.30 pm. At 8.25 pm I proceeded to the Out-post in charge of A Infantry Sub command stationed on a hill a mile from Queenscliff and commanding an unobstructed view on all sides. I remained till 9.30 and then proceeded to Queenscliff Port but, finding the out-post more suitable for observation, I returned there at 10.15 pm. Sentries were on duty all night and were instructed to report to me if any lights were seen. I received a report at 10.30 that a moving light was visible in the West, but on inspecting it I found it to be a star seen through the haze and mirage above the horizon.

Nothing further was seen that night.

On the following day (20th October), I interviewed various persons who stated that they had seen lights moving through the sky, though the only account that seemed to me to be entitled to full credence, was that of Capt. Instone, a Pilot and, therefore, a man who should be able to distinguish between a star and an artificial light.

The wife of one of the gunners informed me that she had seen a light moving across the sky from Point Lonsdale to South Channel and back again on the previous evening at 8.30. If there had been such a light I should have almost certainly seen it while driving to the outpost as I was sitting at the back of the cart and facing in the direction in which it was supposed to be.

No sound was heard by any of the persons interviewed though some of them stated that the light had been within a mile of them.

I spent the night 20th-21st October at the Outpost in charge of A Infantry sub command, but again saw nothing.

On the 21st October I returned to the Central Flying School by the train leaving Queenscliff at 6.20 am.

On the 22nd October I made a flight to Germantown and reconnoitred. I had intended to proceed from there to Bonnie Vale and meet Colonel Sandford, but was prevented from going further by the failure of my engine.

I carried with me as observer Lieut. Williams, and we made a careful inspection of the country from a height of 1000 feet. There were no indications of the presence of Air craft, there being no buildings large enough to house them and nearly all the fields being under corn. In my opinion, it would be impossible for any Air craft to leave Germantown without its presence being known to practically all the inhabitants. This of course only applies to the immediate vicinity of the Township as further reconnaissance was cut short by the rapid loss of power of the engine.

I landed at Geelong at 4.5 and reported to the O.C.D.P. Queenscliff by telephone and, though, after allowing the engine to cool, it was possible to again ascend and return to Werribee, I did not think it wise to proceed further as overheating prevented the engine from running for any length of time.

I have not seen or heard anything to convince me of the presence of hostile air craft in the neighbourhood."

It seems the intrepid lieutenant was an early airborne UFO investigator back in 1914. It

seems that his flight was designed to check out possible enemy activity emanating from Germantown. Such activity does not seem likely under the circumstances. Other areas seem to have usual activity. The town of Kempsey situated on the Macleay River in northern New South Wales has had a long history of UFO sightings.

During September, 1913, "a fireball or will-o'-the-wisp" sighted up the Macleay River was reported as "making the curious speculate".

During November, 1914, the sky over the Macleay and Maria rivers played host to a nocturnal mystery, complete with mystery planes, "machinery hums", flashing "signalling" lights, and an aerial searchlight which "was visible for ten minutes when it coursed south and disappeared."

There were reports through the fifties and sixties, but UFO activity was the most intense during 1971. Like a small number of other areas throughout the rest of Australia, sightings have continued, suggesting that factors common to the area are of significance to the manifestation of the UFO phenomenon. Enquiries into these areas may eventually lead to the elucidation of the nature and motive of this elusive phenomenon.

There were indications of official military involvement in investigating UFO events as early as 1914 in Australia. All such involvement up until the modern era of UFO reports, beginning in 1947, were driven by contemporary issues and concerns, such as alarm about possible foreign military activity. To have such a highly regarded figure as George Jones involved as an investigator in 1930, as a witness in 1957 and as a very well credentialed advocate in 1965, is a remarkable testament of the evolution of one unique Australian's participation in a premier mystery of our times.

*Australian Ufologist can be contacted at PO Box 805, Springwood, Queensland, 4127, Australia. Subscription: \$35 (4 issues) seamail, \$45 (airmail).

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THE MEXBOROUGH FOOTAGE: THE FINAL REPORT?

Regular readers of Project Red Book will no doubt remember the on-going saga of the UFO footage filmed by Michael Nicholls in Mexborough in March 1999, and since investigated by Dave Baker and Jonathan Slater of YUFOS. (See PRB Vol.4 #4) The usual questions were asked in order to identify or explain the two objects in the footage, but it seemed that the answers would lie in the footage itself, and so plans were made to have the cassette analysed by experts in this field.

Following the report by Bill Rose (Vol 4 #6) we were still unable to close the case with true satisfaction. Although Bill had provided an excellent appraisal, which gave us more information than we had before, we were still left only with possible solutions.

I decided to ask Tim Farrow, of T.J.F. Video Productions in Cornwall to analyse the camcorder footage to give a second opinion. The only details I submitted with the original camcorder cassette were the original YUFOS sighting report form, and a list of details such as date, time, and weather conditions etc. This was to avoid Tim being influenced by opinions put forward in previous YUFOS articles by the likes of myself, Jenny Randles, Andy Roberts, Dave Clarke, and most importantly, the analysis by Bill Rose.

As with Bill Rose, Tim provided his investigation completely free of charge, as he has an interest in the area of UFO footage, and so was under no obligation to favour one explanation over another.

Below is the report submitted by Tim Farrow.

PROFESSIONAL DETAILS OF TIM FARROW

"Basic education to Grammar School level and multitude of "O" levels
Secondary ONC in Chemistry
UEI engineering maths

Joined RAF 1960
Basic electronic training
Advanced training in radar principles and electronic image interpretation and enhancement. These qualification did not, then, carry any civilian equivalent although now the same training equates to a degree.
Specialist training in several radar equipments, including front line attack radar

Was solely responsible for the bringing into service of two major radars on the Nimrod in 1969, including the then top secret ECM. (Electronic Counter Measures)

Left RAF in 1972 and did various jobs until 1977

1977 went to Saudi Arabia to do similar job to RAF, but as a civilian, including working as an instructor teaching radar and the basic principles of electronic imaging.

End of 1982 returned to UK and set up TJF Video Productions in 1983.

1990 got involved with time lapse/security video enhancement and image identification in, initially, criminal but later civil field.

I am now a registered expert witness on video and photographic enhancement and image identification. This involves working with video and photographic evidence to enhance, identify and compare and the calculation of distances, heights and speeds from these images and other evidence.

I have appeared in many court cases, including three murder trials.

REPORT ON SIGHTING BY MICHAEL NICHOLLS ON 13TH MARCH 1999 AT MEXBOROUGH

By Tim Farrow

Initial Observations

1. The first object is moving on a straight path.
2. The direction, taking Michael Nicholls notes as correct, is on a course of 045 degrees
3. This course can be described on the video as travelling from 4 o'clock to 10 o'clock, but as the camera pans with the movement of the object the finishing direction, as viewed from the camera, moves toward 12 o'clock.
4. As a result of the movement of the object and the camera, we get the impression that this object is slowing down. Whereas what is actually happening is the angle of movement of the object relative to the centre line of the camera slowly changes from 45 degrees to 0 degrees.
5. This is confirmed by the sun shining on the object creating a glow on the rear right hand side.
6. The also accounts for the object looking black.
7. The cloud is Stratocumulus with a cloud base of around 6 to 7,000ft.
8. The puts to object at a flying height of 8 to 10,000ft.
9. The distance of the object from the camera I would estimate at a minimum of five miles when first seen and increasing as the object goes away.
10. This figure is based on one brief long shot in the film and seventeen years experience in aviation.
11. The speed of the object I would estimate at 150 to 250 knots, again based on my experience.
12. The second object actually comes in from the bottom of the picture. To see this one has to go back frame by frame from where it is clearly visible. This can only be seen digitally on a computer. A video recorder is not good enough to see it.
13. The objects "Disappear" from view gradually.
14. The second object appears to be behind, to the right and below the first object

Conclusions

1. I suspect the second object was there all the time and a constant distance from the first object but not visible on the video because it was off the screen.
2. This is confirmed by the second object appearing from below the picture as it gets further away from the camera and the field of view becomes greater.
3. The "Disappearance" of the objects is explained by the increase in distance from the camera and cloud density.
4. The distances are confirmed by the audio when Michael Nicholls says he cannot see the object with the naked eye fairly early in the video.

What are these objects?

The position and action of these two objects is exactly how two small military aircraft would behave when flying in what is called "Loose Formation".

I am not familiar with the area but, are any military bases known of within 150 miles or

so, in the direction the objects were moving.

If these were military aircraft then I would expect them to be landing within half an hour maximum from the time of this sighting, 4 to 4.30 p.m.

The size of these objects on the video and their distance and speed equates to that of a small light aircraft.

The fact that there are two of them and the constant distance they are apart would suggest that they are unlikely to be civilian aircraft.

The balance of probability is that this analysis is correct, but there will always remain that nagging doubt, that 5% chance that I am wrong.

TIM FARROW

21st. February 2001

P.S.

I must congratulate Mr. Nicholls of the excellent quality of his recording and the use of a tripod, without which any accurate investigation would have been impossible.

COMMENTS

(Dave Baker, editor PRB)

Obviously, one of our main hopes was that Tim Farrow would be able to digitally enhance and enlarge the objects contained in the footage so that we would be able to see clearly exactly what it was that flew over Mexborough on 13 March 1999.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to enhance the footage sufficiently to identify with any certainty what the objects are. This is due to the relatively low-resolution of the analogue camcorder, the use of the full-zoom function in the filming, and the small size and great distance from the camera of the objects.

Bill Rose was also unable to enhance the footage for similar reasons, so I think we can safely assume that any further attempts in this direction would be fruitless.

Therefore, any attempts at identifying the UFOs would have to be based on their speed, movement, size, and altitude.

Comparing the two reports, we find that Bill and Tim agree on some points, but differ markedly in others.

Both men reject the idea of large birds. In his report, Bill stated;

"I have some reservations about the idea of a large bird/s. My instinct tells me that this/these objects/s behaviour does not quite match that explanation, but it would definitely be worth pursuing an ornithological line of enquiry."

When I spoke to Tim Farrow by phone after he had completed his report, I suggested the idea that the UFOs may be large birds such as herons. This had been considered by YUFOS members, and Andy Roberts and Dave Clarke of UFOIN.

Based on his judgements of size, distance, speed and altitude, Tim totally rejected this idea. He also considered that the straight flight-path of the objects was too exact and direct for a bird of any kind.

Bill Rose had suggested hang-gliders or micro-lites as possible culprits, and this was a line of enquiry we pursued, even though we had initially rejected the possibility. However, as reported in earlier issues of PRB, we were unable to trace any hang-gliders or micro-lites hired out on the day and time in question. We must still bear in mind, that the sport is quite popular these days, and it is likely that there are a large number hang-gliders and micro-lites which are privately owned and therefore almost impossible to trace.

In our phone conversation, Tim Farrow rejected such objects, for the same reasons as the bird hypothesis: the altitude was too great, and the speed too extreme.

Although Tim considers his conclusion is 95% likely, Bill Rose did not think aircraft a viable possibility in his report.

Bill wrote: *"I think that there is virtually no likelihood that the objects are normal fixed-wing aircraft. The motion seems much too slow and I would expect to hear some engine noise."*

Both men rejected balloons also.

It should also be noted that Tim seems convinced that Michael used a tripod whilst filming the UFOs, something that Bill Rose had suspected also.

Michael had never mentioned that he used such a device on our initial interview or in his YUFOS sighting report form, and he denied using a tripod when I later asked him. Michael claims that he supported his elbows on the railing of the balcony.

Bill consented that this is possible, but Tim was still highly dubious – to say the least.

The relevance of this is that if Michael did use a tripod, why did he not mention this during his interview? He told Jonathan Slater and myself that when he saw the first object, he raced back inside the flat to grab his camcorder. It may even have already been fixed to the tripod, and so would not have taken long to position, so why not mention it?

Unless, of course, Michael knew that these objects- whatever they were – were due to pass by and was fully prepared to film them. This of course leads to the suspicion that Michael knew the identity of the 'UFOs' all along and purposefully set out – 'amazed commentary' and all, to pass the footage off as UFO footage.

While the suspicions of Tim & Bill – made independently remember – have to be taken into consideration, I personally do not think that Michael was attempting a hoax. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that he is simply an exceptionally good camcorder user, and we should not let the professional camerawork detract from the focus of the investigation, which is to identify the objects in the footage.

So, returning to the two appraisals, who is right? Tim Farrow or Bill Rose?

The fact is that the conclusions reached by each man stems mainly from his own estimation of those important factors: altitude, distance, speed, size.

Comparisons of the two reports have not been made here in order to judge one against the other, but to compare the two. I have not rejected Bill Rose's report in favour of Tim Farrow's, or vice versa.

Both men seem equally qualified, and so have an equal chance of being right. I am certainly

in no position to judge one of these analysts over another.

I decided that the best way of proving Tim's theory was to find out if any military aircraft had passed over Mexborough on the day and time in question. If any such aircraft could be tracked down, we could certainly close this case once and for all.

As this issue goes to press, I am waiting for one of my contacts to help me in this direction, and I hoped I would receive an answer in time to be included in this issue.

Unfortunately, some things cannot be rushed, and I did not hear anything in time.

So, for another month at least, PRB readers will have to wait...and wonder.

CORRECTION

Eileen Fletcher, who translated the article entitled: "*Ufonaut or King's Daughter?*" in PRB Vol 4 #7 has asked me to point out that there was an error in the published article.

The sentence should read:

"... in Sweden 'the Japanese are known for their investment in the Hessdalen project."

Sorry for the mistake!

Dave Baker, editor PRB

FROM AROUND THE WORLD...AND BEYOND!!!

UFOs, conspiracies, fortune and paranormal events compiled by Dave Baker

BIG CAT STALKING FRANKFURT?

Frankfurt, Germany (*Reuters*) - German police stepped up their search Thursday for a creature believed to be a black panther after a series of sightings on the outskirts of Frankfurt.

Police said a construction worker reported seeing a large black animal on a building site in Kalbach, northern Frankfurt, Thursday morning, and that it left a big pawprint.

The sightings of a beast believed to be the big cat species started Wednesday in the small town of Bad Homburg, 10 miles from Frankfurt.

"We have warned people in Kalbach to be careful and not to go out walking with their children or dogs," a spokesman for Frankfurt police said.

"Last night a driver reported seeing a black cat by the side of a road but it turned out to be just a normal black cat."

Police have failed to find the creature despite using a helicopter with heat-seeking equipment, and remain skeptical about whether it is a panther because no one has reported one missing.

In an unrelated incident, a runaway Shetland pony ran in front of a taxi near Frankfurt Wednesday night and was killed, police said.

The Panther case echoes chaos caused in late December by an escaped tiger, "Sahib," which brought traffic on Germany's busiest motorway near Frankfurt to a standstill for more than two hours.

The 150 kilo tiger was recaptured in a major police operation using heat-seeking equipment. It took six shots from an anaesthetic dart gun to pacify the animal.

ASTEROID 'DESTROYED LIFE 250 MILLION YEARS AGO'

(By BBC News Online science editor Dr David Whitehouse 22 February, 2001)

Atoms from a star trapped inside molecular cages of carbon prove that Earth's biggest mass extinction - an event 251 million years ago - was triggered by a collision with a comet or asteroid.

This conclusion was reached by researchers in the United States, reporting in the journal *Science*.

Scientists do not know the site of the impact, at a time when all Earth's land formed a super continent called Pangea. But they have identified traces of the object that crashed to Earth. In rock layers laid down at the time there is a much higher concentration of complex carbon molecules called fullerenes that contain isotopes of helium and argon trapped inside them.

The fullerenes contain at least 60 carbon atoms in a structure resembling a soccer ball. The researchers believe these particular fullerenes are extraterrestrial because the gases trapped inside have an unusual ratio of isotopes that indicate they were made in the atmosphere of a star that exploded before our Sun was born.

"These things form in carbon stars. That's what's exciting about finding fullerenes as a tracer," said Dr Luann Becker of the University of Washington.

The telltale fullerenes were extracted from sites in Japan, China and Hungary, where the sedimentary layer at the boundary between the Permian and Triassic periods had been exposed.

Dr Becker said that the fullerenes were found at very low concentrations above and below the boundary layer, but they were found in unusually high concentrations at the time of the extinction. The research was made difficult because there are few 251 million-year-old rocks left on Earth. Most rocks of that age have been recycled through the planet's tectonic processes.

"It took us two years to do this research, to try to narrow it down enough so that we could see this fullerene signature," she said.

The fullerene concentration at the Permian-Triassic boundary means they were delivered to the Earth by a comet or asteroid. Researchers estimate the comet or asteroid was 6 to 12 km (3.7 - 7.4 miles) across, or about the size of the asteroid believed responsible for the extinction of the dinosaurs 67 million years ago.

The scientists determined the size based on two factors - if the body was smaller than 6 km (3.7 miles) the effects would not have been global; if it were larger than 12 km (7.4 miles) there would have to be more gas-laden fullerenes distributed around the world.

"The impact of a body of this size releases an amount of energy that is basically about one million times the largest earthquake recorded during the last century," said Robert Poreda, associate professor of earth and environmental sciences at the University of Rochester, New York.

Researchers believe that the impact and rapid extinction occurred simultaneously with some of the most extensive volcanic activity the world has ever seen: enough lava to cover the entire planet with 3 metres (10ft) of it, oozed out of the ground in Siberia in less than one million years. These changes wiped out 90% of all marine species and 70% of land vertebrates.

"If the species cannot adjust, they perish. It's a survival-of-the-fittest sort of thing," said Dr Becker. "To knock out 90% of organisms, you've got to attack them on more than one front."

The mass extinction of 251 million years ago was the greatest on record. Many fossils below the boundary, such as trilobites, which once numbered more than 15,000 species, are completely absent above it. There is also strong evidence suggesting the extinction happened very rapidly, in as few as 8,000 to 100,000 years.

It was thought that any asteroid or comet collision would leave strong evidence of the element iridium, the signal found in the sedimentary layer from the time of the dinosaur extinction. The team believes that difference might be because the two space bodies that slammed into Earth had different compositions.

"These two extinctions are like bookends for the age of the dinosaurs," said Dr Poreda.

In 1996, Becker and Poreda discovered that fullerenes found in a huge impact crater in Canada came from space nearly two billion years ago.

Last year they showed that even more complex carbon molecules, with as many as 200 atoms, had survived from the impact that wiped out the dinosaurs.

MOTHMAN- THE MOVIE!
DIRECTOR IN THE MOOD FOR
PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER
(Ron Weiskind, Movie Editor, *Pittsburg Post-Gazette* February 20, 2001)

Editor's Note: This story may be more suited to a film magazine such as Empire, but I've included it because the movie is based on one of my favourite UFO/paranormal books of all time: John A. Keel's "The Mothman Prophecies", a book which I know is a favourite (not always in a manner Keel would like!) of many other ufologists.

Richard Gere IS John Keel...yeah, right.

Mark Pellington knows what he wants and has a knack for describing it in words as distinctive as the images he puts on screen. The director of "*The Mothman Prophecies*" did not want to make a horror film or a monster movie, although the project is based on a book by John A. Keel that is replete with images of UFOs, alien visitors and a large manlike creature with wings and burning red eyes.

These were elements that "debased and devalued the integrity of the story. They verged on science fiction and almost bordered on the ridiculous", the director says during a meal break, dominating the table front and centre in a dining hall at Point Park College.

He wanted to "push it toward the ideas of perception, knowledge, reflection, mysterious elements of destiny, someone's inexorable pull toward something they don't understand, following a man on his journey."

Above all, he believes in not explaining everything to the audience. "You need to feed them and entertain them. The idea of real or not real, known or unknown -- it's pretty clear when things don't fit in this movie, when they become too melodramatic or wacky.

When they remain enigmatic, mysterious or emotional, it works."

"Hopefully, we're dealing with themes and emotions that have depth and resonance that go beyond the typical genre film."

When the movie shot one cold night at an abandoned factory site in or near Penn Hills, Pellington dubbed it "The Zone Of Fear" -- apparently to put an image in the heads of cast and crew that would serve the emotions he wanted to bring out in those particular scenes.

Pellington quotes Richard Gere, the movie's star, describing the film as "a metaphysical thriller." The director himself calls it "a psychological mystery with natural surreal overtones."

In the mood yet?

Producer Tom Rosenberg oversaw Pellington's previous film, the thriller "*Arlington Road*", and thought he had the right stuff for "*The Mothman Prophecies*".

"This movie has to have a certain style and tone," Rosenberg says. "The camera and lighting is very important. Mark is terrific with the camera. He has a lot of style."

Pellington, 38, stands out on the set, a tall, stocky man with unruly black hair and horn-rimmed glasses who may watch one take from behind a set of video monitors and plant himself right next to Gere for a series of extreme close-ups.

A native of Baltimore -- home to such idiosyncratic filmmakers as Barry Levinson and John Waters -- Pellington was intrigued when Rosenberg sent him Richard Hatem's original script for "*Mothman*." But he was mixing "*Arlington Road*" at the time and had other things on his mind.

Rosenberg kept sending him new drafts, and finally he got together with two pals, Louis Klahr and Ernie Marrero, whom he calls adherents of "the non-Hollywood school of screenwriting."

They worked on the script until it fit his vision of what "*Mothman*" should be.

"It's still Richard Hatem's house. We remodeled it.", Pellington says.

Once he signed on, Pellington was adamant

about shooting in Pittsburgh, a city he knew from visiting college friends who live here and from shooting a number of Iron City Beer commercials in 1992.

"I knew it had the terrain, I knew it had good crews and it was American," he says. The other option was shooting in Canada, which offered economic benefits but not the right look.

"We needed a town with a bridge leading into it. In Pittsburgh we had a choice of 10 of them," each with its own personality and mood.

He wound up choosing Kittanning, a town that "has a reality to it, but also a little mystery and some sadness."

He calls the workers on "*Mothman*," who are about 85 percent local, "the best crew I've ever worked with. I'm having too good a time and I'm feeling too good about stuff. There is a certain energy and spirit to this movie."

Pellington also praised Gere, who has contributed good ideas and "a giving spirit" to the film.

"He has been extremely supportive to me and my unorthodox, non-linear, abstract way of communicating."

Pellington seems to be doing all right so far.

ARGENTINA: LOCAL RESIDENTS TERRIFIED BY "IMP"

(*Diario Austral de Temuco Sunday, February 18, 2001*) Thanks to Scott Corrales.

For some reason, Argentina has been a perpetual source of stories regarding diminutive entities best described as "imps". Last year we featured stories on the police station that had to be vacated after officers reported a small, nonhuman creature walking into the premises.

Hoaxes? Children playing pranks? You be the judge

-Scott Corrales, Institute of Hispanic Ufology

¹ Or a prime example of an urban legend / modern folklore in it's infancy...? DB.

As occurs in fairy tales and myths, a strange being has been appearing repeatedly at night in the town of Pitruquen.

The creature involved would be an "imp", which according to the testimony of some local children, has manifested itself in a patch of vacant land near the homes located in that city's Manuel Rodriguez street.

The children attested that the mysterious entity, which only appears at night, "is small, since he's no taller than 50 centimeters, and he's been appearing since September in the same spot."

They likewise noted that the entity hides in a sort of cave located at the site, not far from the backyard of the children's house. "We would go and see him every night. At first we thought that it was a "guagua" (newborn) living in a house close to where the creature hides. Then we realized that the baby was always crying, and we thought that it knew when the imp was approaching," explained the youngsters.

"Sometimes we would shine our flashlights on him at night. The light would blind him and make him crouch. That's when we could see things on the side of his head, which looked like ears. He'd squeal so that we'd go away, and that's why we started throwing stones at him. He would follow us, but we always managed to get away," they stressed.

The children explained that after these incidents, they never again came near the place.

"It scared us, because he could do anything. Besides, he's real strong, because he moved a car that was near the place and he'd beat up on the dogs," they noted.

The youngsters added that "the imp even got into the Hospital to pester the people there. That's why lots of people came to see him. Firemen and "Carabineros" and detectives showed up to keep an eye on things and find out what was going on."

Delmira Munoz, the children's aunt, corroborated their version of the events. "Whenever my nephews visited that place, they would come across a little crouching man wearing a sort of blanket over his back. The other neighbours can also say the same, since many of them have seen it. Fortunately, this entity hasn't come all the way to our house, and that's why the children have no problems

sleeping. But if they bother it, it reacts violently," she stated.

Delmira Munoz also noted that there were suggestions that the alleged imp had been captured. "The hospital's officials had said that it had been caught and sent to Temuco to perform experiments on it."

Hernan San Martin, another witness to this mysterious entity's presence, recalled that "one day I was drinking tea with my wife, I heard the children throwing stones at something. We went out for a look, and my wife told me that a little man was walking around. I went to check what was going on and found a sort of cave in which it seemed to hide. That's when the kids told me it was a little man with wizened features, hairy, pig-like ears and shining eyes."

San Martin remarked that after the incident, he wasn't all that convinced by the children's story. "However, my wife and I thought we could feel it approaching the house in the dark. I made an effort to catch a glimpse of him, but I couldn't, because it's very astute."

As time went by, he noticed that part of his hens and chickens were slowly dying. "The likeliest explanation is that this critter killed them. What I find strangest of all is that it only drank their blood. All of these events led us to find out more about it. People told us that it was an imp raised in the countryside and would never be seen in a city. They further told us that it obeys a master and is loyal to him."

Hernan San Martin finally observed that in spite of the alleged imp's aggressive tendencies, it has not hurt the children until now. "It appears to have only wanted to play with them. But it behaves violently toward animals, since its hurt our cats and dogs don't want to go near it, because it frightens them."

ABSOLUTE KINDA IRREFUTABLE PROOF OF SKUNK APE

(Steve Otto, The Tampa Tribune, (Tampa, Florida) 12/2/ 2001)

Snicker if you want. Some of you obviously just don't appreciate having your own monster right in the neighborhood.

Michelle at the Sarasota County Sheriff's

Office faxed me some material along with a cryptic note, "Don't monkey around with this."

So, if something smells bad out in your back yard and you look out there with your flashlight and run smack dab into a hairy creature with bad breath that is not your husband, I told you so.

I was on the first real Skunk Ape expedition over 20 years ago deep into the Everglades.

OK, so it wasn't that deep, and we stayed at the Holiday Inn in Fort Lauderdale.

But we actually did meander into the edges of the Everglades, although the strangest creatures we saw were in the lounge back at the motel.

Anyhow, the Skunk Ape, a Florida version of Bigfoot, gradually slipped back into oblivion, resurrected only during the dog days of the year when columnists are desperate for a story.

Now - well you can see for yourself - that the Skunk Ape has returned. Not only is he back, he's practically in our back yard.

The story is filed in the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office under 'Suspicious Incident.' The officer on the desk in his report on Jan. 18 says:

"I received an unusual letter addressed to the animal services of the sheriff's office. The letter told of an encounter with a monkey or ape and contained two photos. The letter was anonymous."

In part, the letter says: "Enclosed please find some pictures I took. ...My husband thinks it is an orangutan. Is someone missing an orangutan?"

"It is in a crouching position in the middle of standing up from where it was sitting. It froze as soon as the flash went off. ... I heard the orangutan walk off into the brushes.

"I judge it as being about six and a half to seven feet tall. As soon as I realized how close it was, I got back to the house.

"It had an awful smell that lasted well after it had left my yard. The orangutan was making deep 'woomp' noises.

"For two nights prior, it had been taking apples that my daughter brought down from up north

off our back porch. It only came back one more night after that and took some apples that my husband left out in order to get a better look at it.

"We got a dog back there now, and, as far as I can tell, it hasn't been back.

"I don't want any fuss or people with guns traipsing around behind our house. At the very least, this animal belongs in a place like Busch Gardens.

"Why haven't people been told that an animal this size is loose? ... Please look after this situation. I don't want my backyard to turn into someone else's circus."

Naturally, this story has found its way onto the Internet and the 'experts' are on a roll. One has speculated that it is one of three things:

- (1) A hoaxer wearing an ape suit,
- (2) an escaped chimpanzee, or
- (3) an as yet-undiscovered large anthropoid, per the "Unknown Pongid" type discussed in *The Field Guide to Bigfoot, Yeti, and other Mystery Primates Worldwide*. You can guess which choice is leading the Internet pack.

David Barkasy runs the Silver Cit Serpentarium in Sarasota. He says he deals mostly in reptiles and arachnids.

He also wanted me to promise not to make fun of him, and we'll honor that. He says a friend of his at the sheriff's office showed him the photos. Barkasy asked some other people to look at them, and the rest is what urban legends are made of.

"I have been going down I-75 trying to figure out which house the photos were taken at," he said. "I don't believe in UFOs and things that go bump in the night. But I am curious."

There may be nothing to this, but already I have contacted our project editor here at the Type and Gripe factory to see about organizing an expedition.

It's a little early in the planning stage, but I'm thinking of setting up a base camp at Yoder's Amish Restaurant, which is near I-75 in Sarasota and has the best pies in Florida.

WHEN ANIMALS GO BAD AND ATTACK 2 !!!

1) KILLER CROC SHOT DEAD AFTER EATING BOY

(SMH|Published:Feb 12, 2001-03-04)

Soldiers shot dead a 4.6-metre-long crocodile that had snatched and devoured a 10-year-old boy bathing in a Borneo river, news reports said Monday.

Angry villagers sliced open the carcass of the female crocodile after it was shot Saturday, and found the hands and legs of Jaba anak Kana in the reptile's stomach.

Jaba was bathing Friday in the river on the Malaysian side of Borneo in his village near the Niah National Park when the crocodile attacked him.

His mother, Jema anak Abor, jumped into the river to try to free her son, but she was hit by the crocodile's powerful tail.

"I tried to squeeze the crocodile's stomach to free my boy, but it was too quick," she was quoted as saying by the Star daily.

The crocodile was shot at its nesting ground several metres from where the boy was attacked.

Attacks by crocodiles on humans are common in remote river villages in rural Malaysia, where residents rely on rivers for their water supply.

2) COUGAR ATTACK

(Jeff Bell The Times-Colonist, Feb 10, 2001)

VICTORIA - A Vancouver Island man beat back a full-grown cougar using his fists, a "I hit it one more time and jumped up, ran to the truck and jumped in the door," Mr. Cole said.

When he looked out, the cougar seemed to have disappeared. He started up his truck and the animal shot out from underneath, dashed up the bank and was gone.

Mr. Cole drove Mr. Nostdal, whom he described as "pretty cut up," to the small hospital that serves the town of 1,300.

He was in good condition, but Bonnie Overland, a nurse at the facility, said Mr.

lunch pail and even a bicycle to rescue a man the animal had pounced upon.

Elliot Cole, 38, of the northern community of Port Alice, was driving his truck home after a shift at the local pulp mill on Thursday when he came across Jon Nostdal lying on a darkened road about seven kilometres from town.

The 52-year-old tugboat captain had been cycling back to the mill, where his boat was moored, after going into town for dinner.

"At first I thought he had fallen off the bike," Mr. Cole said yesterday. "He was sitting in the road and the bike was down and there was blood all over his face."

Then he spotted the cougar with its paws wrapped around Mr. Nostdal's chest and neck. "So I drove right up to within about five feet of him and jumped out of the truck and yelled."

The cougar, an adult male, simply glared back and kept hold of its victim. So Mr. Cole grabbed the first thing that came to hand -- his lunch pail -- and hit the big cat full force. "It didn't even faze it, so then I gave it six good punches in the head."

When that failed to have the desired effect, Mr. Cole picked up the owned bicycle and pushed it atop the cougar in an attempt to pin it. The cougar let go of Mr. Nostdal's neck but still had its jaws on the an's coat.

"I yelled at him [Mr. Nostdal] to either wriggle free or tear the coat, do what he had to to get out of there and get to the truck."

Once Mr. Nostdal managed to scramble out of his coat and make his way to the truck, his rescuer prepared to follow.

Nostdal will remain in hospital for at least another day.

"He's very tired. He was badly mauled, but he's fine," she said yesterday.

Mr. Cole needed only a few inoculations including a tetanus shot, after the rescue.

Constable Randy Freeborn of Port Alice RCMP said conservation officers have been out looking for the cougar ever since the incident, but have yet to track it down.

"It's not unusual for us to have cougars in town or around town," Const. Freeborn said. "There's been five or six sighted so far this year, and four have had to be shot."

Attacks do take place from time to time on Vancouver Island.

Mr. Cole is shrugging off any talk of his

heroics. "You don't think about it at the time," he said.

In January, Frances Frost, 30, was killed when a cougar attacked her from behind, as she was cross-country skiing on a popular trail just north of Banff, Alta.

That cougar weighed about 50 kilograms, but they are known to exceed 100 kilograms.

UFO CENTRAL

By Jonathan Slater

I received the following UFO sightings after I advertised on the 'Knowhere' boards on the Internet. This is a place where you can find long lost relatives and advertise anything you want. (Example look: at Lincoln at <http://knowhere.co.uk/board/kb593/>)

I placed an advert saying, "*Have you! Seen any mysterious lights or strange objects in our skies lately? A non-profit making scientific research group requires serious reports.*"

Isle de Sol

"There were 6 of us on an island called Isle de Sol. This is a small island found on Lake Titticaca, Peru/ Bolivia.

"Weather conditions. Night-time, approx. 11pm, very clear and calm.

"As you can imagine at night the skies were crystal clear. We were all pointing out star constellations and it was not unusual to see a shooting star.

"As I'm aware, a shooting star's path is quick and fades quickly as it moves away from human sight. A satellite's path is different in that you can watch it curve round the earth in its orbit.

"Of all the Constellations, I find Orion's belt is the easiest one to find. While I was looking at this I pointed

"To a bright moving object moving across the belt at a very even, but slow pace. Due to its location we all quickly noted it and watched it's path.

"It moved slowly for about 2 minute in a similar path to a satellite. However, after a few minutes of a slow but even path, it all of a sudden went very bright, it was easily the

brightest thing in the night sky, and then it simply disappeared.

"I must confess that it never occurred to me to be a UFO, as it was originally as bright as a star and was moving in a path similar to a satellite. I can't however explain its sudden brightness and disappearance.

"This all happened in Late January 2000.

(Chris Breed)

Cornwall

"Early on the morning of Sat 30th Dec 2000, I witnessed an object in the sky at about 2.45 am.

"A noise woke me from a deep sleep and I went to investigate for intruders. I gave up almost immediately as I seemed to know there was no-one there but, very unusually for me, I felt as if there was some sort of presence on the landing. This feeling disappeared as soon as I re-entered the bedroom.

"I decided to look through my south-facing window to see if it had snowed -it being unusually cold. Seeing such a clear sky and feeling wide awake, I decided to star watch for a while & went to get the binoculars

"After watching for several minutes I noticed a craft appearing from nowhere at quite a height (near to a planet I had been looking at & wondering about the identity of).

"This craft descended at a fair rate & I saw that it had a row of bright white lights and it seemed to sparkle like Saturn with flashing blue & red lights.

"It moved slowly & silently across the sky at a height at which we frequently see air ambulances and RNAS Culdrose rescue helicopters, except this was definitely not a helicopter or light aircraft.

"This object moved a small distance away and came to a stop over ancient moorland. It stayed put for some time and then suddenly reduced in size so that I knew it had now gone out over the Atlantic. I could still observe it quite well through the binoculars.

"I then thought it would disappear but after several minutes it returned to the same spot over the moor land - still flashing away. It remained stationary for a few minutes.

"Then suddenly it just vanished from the clear sky. I looked all round frantically to sight it when up started this spectacular light show all round the large expanse of sky visible to me. It looked like rapid pinpoints of laser light, which appeared and disappeared all over the place.

"This lasted a few seconds and stopped abruptly, whereupon I noticed the craft had re-appeared again in the same spot with its lights flashing away.

"Next, it moved a little towards the house and then slowly & elegantly it rose at a very steep angle & made off towards the NW.

"Racing around to the back bedroom window I saw it again at quite a height & stationary. I "I have since heard that a woman on Lizard point has seen exactly the same as me although not on the same night. When she was asked if it could be something from the RNAS she said

feel sure there was another one but to be honest I was aware that my senses were almost electric by now.

"Also, I noticed that although the sky was so clear, there seemed to be a gauzy cloud-like something over Mounts Bay behind which two yellowish lights glowed on and off alternately. I formed the distinct impression that this was another much larger craft deliberately obscured.

"My husband reacted very oddly to all this and would not come to the window willingly although I was screaming at him to do so for the best part of 40 minutes.

"He saw the craft & said he did not know what it was & went back to bed. He would not come when I yelled at him to see the light show. When he finally came to the window it had stopped & he said there was nothing & became very irritable with me - he could still see the craft but refused to observe it.

He came to the back bedroom & agreed the craft was high in the sky but gradually he has gone into denial about the bits he originally saw and agreed to & has actually joined in with sceptics laughing about it.

"I find this amazing as I have hitherto had no interest in anything remotely connected to this subject and he is usually fascinated. In short- I am wary of who I talk to about it as I found the whole experience very un-nerving and actually suffered some mild associated depression for a few days.

"Anyway - back to the night in question - I went back to bed in a state of mental exhaustion - the thing had not gone from the sky but I felt I couldn't take any more of it. I dreaded tossing and turning all night but went out as if someone drew down a shutter.

it was definitely an extra terrestrial craft that she had seen.

(Leslie Salter)

IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE!!!

By Dave Baker

On Thursday 8th February 2001, during a particularly clear and crisp night, Yorkshire and –it transpired – much of England paid host to a visitor from another world!!!!²

Okay, so it was only a meteor, but it *was* a spectacular bolide, and as it burned up in the Earth's atmosphere it caused a swathe of reports to flood in to various UFO groups, newspapers, and radio stations.

In Sheffield, many people were moved to report their sightings to *The Sheffield Star*, which logged the reports but did not deem the story important enough to warrant publishing.

A physics teacher was heard on the local radio on Friday morning describing the classic symptoms - ie flashing lights moving at speed across the heavens, coloured lights falling away, shooting star speed etc.

As time went on, it became apparent that this spectacular IFO had been visible outside the Yorkshire area. Sightings flooded in to most UFO organisations and researchers.

Gloria Dixon, of BUFORA (British UFO Research Association) and *Strange Daze* magazine, revealed a sighting from Helsby, Cheshire, at 7:35 pm:

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

Steven Mera, of MAPIT (Manchester Aerial Phenomenon Investigation Team) also reports sightings flooding in:

"Ian" from Urmston reported a UFO around 7.30pm as "...a white rocket like object with a tail travelling across the sky from West to

East." It travelled in a horizontal position "...about 25% above the horizon."

A woman in Audenshwaer described a "...rocket like with a tail with bits of it falling off." between 8:00 and 8:30pm.

In Preswiche, a woman witness reported a blue-green object moving towards Heaton Park sometime between 6:30 and 7:00pm.

"Andrew" from South Reddish watched a bright white light that seemed to be sparking, around 8.30pm – 8:45pm,

"Sean" and his wife watched a strange object with a tail from their lounge window in Salford. They described the object to be moving backwards and forwards.

Here at YUFOS towers we received a couple of reports, mostly from people who suspected they knew what they had seen, but wanted it confirmed.

Over a week after the event, I received an e-mail from a visitor to our website, who wanted to pass on a possible UFO report from a friend:

"Have you heard anything about an event in West Yorkshire last Friday (9th February) at around 8.10pm? My friend (who lives in Knottingley) and I were making our way to Yorkshire from Lancashire, and we didn't see anything, but when we were at his sister's on Sunday morning, she explained what happened on Friday.

"Her friend, Barbara (a nurse at Pontefract Hospital) was getting ready to take her mother to the club in Knottingley, as she does every Friday. They were outside around 8.10pm when some massive, luminous green 'thing' flew over the houses low. It was "as big as a field" and made no sound whatsoever. Within moments, her husband (ie Barbara's) ran out of the house and asked what the hell the bright green light was. This happened near the 'border' between Knottingley and Pontefract."

Apart from the apparent discrepancy of the date – Friday the 9th, not Thursday the 8th – this sounded exactly like our by-now familiar bolide meteor sighting: the green trail, the 'low' trajectory. Taking into account the

² Cue Dramatic Three Chords, X-Files theme, or the "doo-doo-doo-doo" bit from *The Twilight Zone*.

chance of mis-perception of size, I thought it pretty likely that the witness had the date wrong.

I asked my correspondent to double-check on the date...and I was not particularly surprised to receive the following answer...

"I've checked the details and I'm disappointed to report that the event did in fact take place on Thursday. That's the day when Barbara's mother goes out. So it probably was the meteor. Damn! And I thought I had a story! Never mind!"

The most interesting – and certainly telling-aspect of this affair is the wide range of times and descriptions of the 'UFO'. If the many reports are all accounts of the same object-which they undoubtedly are- surely we should have similar accounts? And just how long did this bolide take to burn up? The times of sightings range from around 6:30pm to after 10:00 pm...

I think that we can safely assume that all of these reports are of the bolide meteorite, and that the descriptions, and even times, are based on witness misperception. Depending on the weather conditions, relative angles, position of the witness(es) (indoors, outdoors, in a moving car, etc.) we can expect a wide range of descriptions.

It's also a matter of an individual's perception, descriptive powers, memory, and the contamination of reports from others. As Andy Roberts of UFOIN has often suggested, we only have to consider the varying versions of the same event found in any court case to understand that witness testimony cannot be taken at face value.

In related news, Dave Clarke reported that *BBC Online* carried the following story on March 2001:

"A meteoroid has landed in a field in York, UK, narrowly missing a woman walking her two dogs.

North Yorkshire police were called to the Hopgrove area of the city after Silvia Mercer heard a rush of air and a loud explosion at 0800 GMT.

They found a smoking crater, about 12 centimetres wide and just under a metre deep, in a nearby field.

Officials from the Yorkshire Museum have confirmed it was made by a rock falling from space. It is almost 10 years since any such similar event

has been recorded on the UK mainland.

Mrs Mercer said she was frightened as the rock crashed to the ground just metres away from where she was walking. "It was a bit of a shock," she said. "I thought my last moments had come. I was very shaken. It could have hit me. I had no idea what it was. I went to have a look but could not see to the bottom of the hole. It was quite deep. I don't know anything about meteorites but after this I will be quite interested to know what happens to it."

The area was cordoned off by police after the meteorite - the name given to the lump of material that survives the impact - started making "weird" noises.

Pc Peter McCreedy said: "It started making popping and cracking noises, which are not usual. "Experts from York University have been here with radioactive detection equipment. The noises are believed to be caused by background radiation."

Army bomb disposal experts from Catterick were called to the scene and gave the all-clear for the rock to be taken away and examined by experts.

Meteoriticist at the Natural History Museum in London, Dr Matthew Genge, said he would like more information before he could be certain the rock recovered in Yorkshire was a meteorite.

"There are certain factors that identify a meteorite and from what I've heard, some things today just aren't consistent with that," he said. "For example, they don't smoke when they hit the ground, but then they do make a noise because, as they are travelling faster than the speed of sound, they are often accompanied by a sonic boom."

However, shortly after Dave Clarke posted the story, he returned with a follow up;

"As an example of "radical misperception" the story I posted earlier takes some beating. It seems everyone – including scientists from York, police etc and the witness herself, have been completely fooled by this one!

"What was thought to have been a meteorite was in fact an underground electric fire caused by a shorting live cable!

"Therefore - nothing fell from the sky at all!"

Interesting story, eh? Consider how many 'experts' had been consulted who were *convinced* that the visitor had been a meteorite!

Makes me glad I'm an amateur!