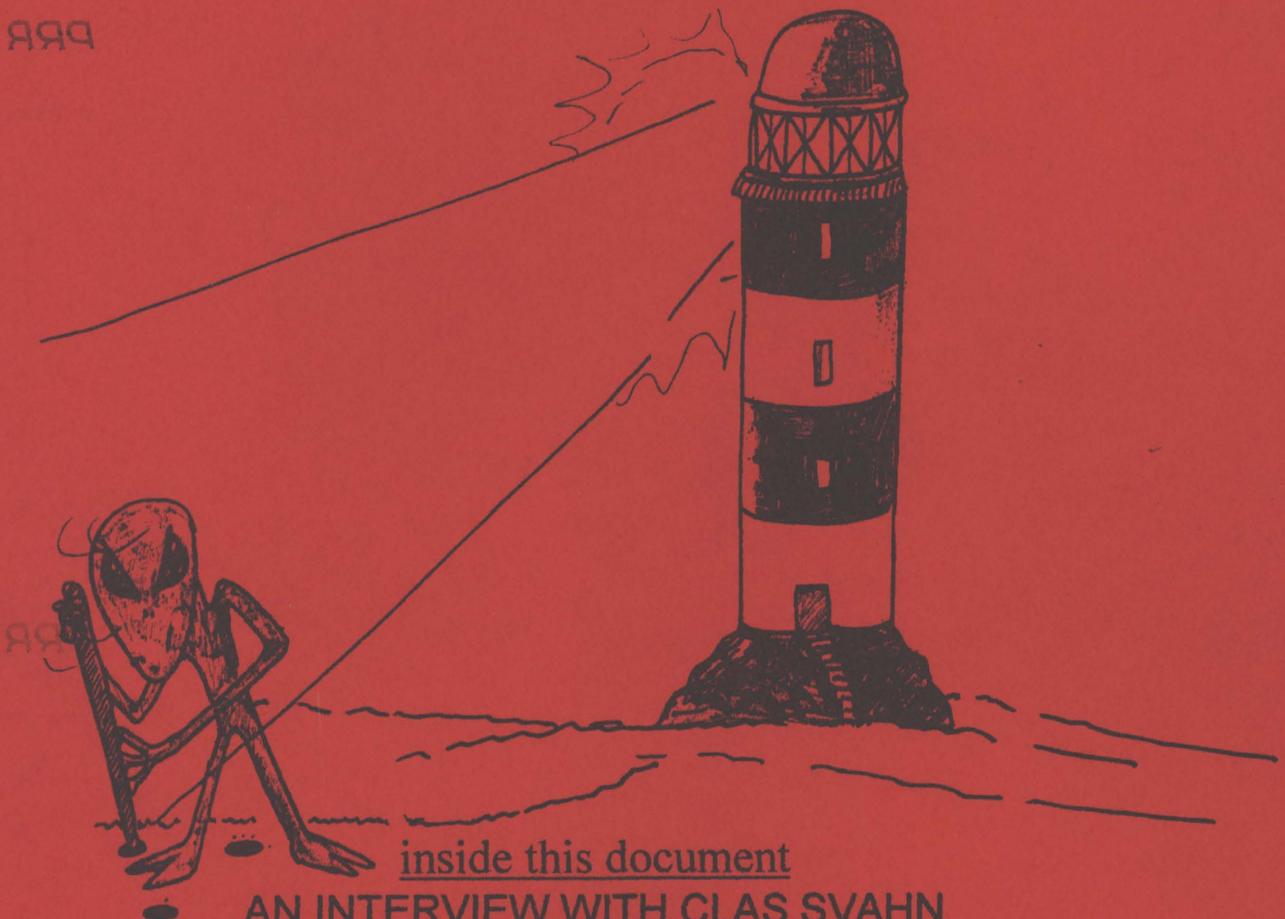


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YORKSHIRE UFO SOCIETY

PROJECT RED BOOK

(Vol.4 # 10, April 2001)



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AN INTERVIEW WITH CLAS SVAHN

RENDLESHAM: POINT / COUNTER-POINT

And much more...

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YUFOS



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"This is not a good day to be a bad-guy."

AN INTERVIEW WITH CLAS SVAHN

Clas Svahn was born on 12 April 1958 in Mariestad, Sweden.

He worked as a journalist at *Mariestads-Tidningen* (Mariestad) from 1978-1983, and *Norrbottnens-Kuriren* (Luleå) from 1983-1990. Since 1990 he has worked at *Dagens Nyheter* (Stockholm), Sweden's largest morning newspaper, at the paper's Internet edition as web editor for the science section, and as a reviewer for UFO, science fiction and other related books for Swedish libraries.

Clas founded the local organisation UFO-Mariestad on 17 May 1974, and has been a member of UFO-Sweden's board since 1988 and has been chairman since 1991. He is the vice chairman of Archives of UFO Research, AFU, in Norrköping. Co-editor of UFO-Sweden's magazine *UFO-Aktuellt*.

His books include *Domstensenfallet? en svensk närkontakt 1958* (with Anders Liljegren 1989), *Mötet i gläntan* (with Gösta Carlsson 1995), *UFO-Mysteriet ? från flygande tefat till cirklar i sädesfälten* (1998), *Fakta om UFO* (with Göran Norlén 1998) and as sole author *UFO ? möte med det okända* (2000). Clas has contributed to other many books include *UFOs 1947-1987 The 40 Year Search for an Explanation*, *Phenomenon* (Futura 1988, ed. Spencer/Evans) *UFOs & Alien Contact* (Prometheus Books 1998) His pictures have been published in many books and magazines, for example: *UFOs 1947-1987* (1987), *UFO Investigation* (1993), *Alien Art* (1998), Jerome Clark's *UFO Encyclopedia* (1998) and *"The World of the Unexplained"* (1998).

Svahn has also co-produced several domestic TV-programs in Sweden as well as SciFi Channels *Earthscan* and *Sweden Special*, and he is currently working on a cd-rom project that will be published during 2001.

He has a wife Anneli and two children, Niklas ,9 and Markus, 7.

DAVE BAKER: Clas, how did you become involved with ufology?

CLAS SVAHN: My interest in ufology began in the early 1970's when I started reading Swedish books by Gösta Rehn and collecting clippings from newspapers and magazines. At that time there were nearly no programmes on radio or TV, with some rare exceptions, so all my information came from printed sources. For most young people getting interested in UFO's today TV is the main source of "information". They have a much more difficult start than I had.

In 1974 I started a local group affiliated to the nation wide organisation UFO-Sweden (founded in 1970) in my hometown of Mariestad. I was 16 years old and the small group - all boys! - started to investigate UFO reports in the area. We did quite a few good investigations. One of them revealed a much published observation made August 12th 1974 by several policemen and journalists to be nothing but the planet Jupiter. We were strongly criticized for that exposure. For me it

was a good start and very instructive in many respects. I learned that no witness, even though he is a policeman, should be judged by his rank or credentials. His story must be handled as raw material and an interpretation of an unknown stimuli and not been mixed up with the actual object.

Most of the books and TV programmes we are exposed to over here deal with US and UK ufology. How extensive is Swedish ufology? Is it the industry it is in the USA?

CS: Well, there were many TV-shows dealing with UFO's from an ET point of view, especially in the early 90's. However, UFO-Sweden's influence has been extensive and I should say that in more than 80 per cent of the shows from 1992 and on, UFO-Sweden have been represented or consulted. It is difficult to do anything without getting through us. (I have estimated my own appearances on radio and TV during the 90's to more than 100). During the 90's, cable TV started to spread through Sweden and many channels

chose to show UFO related shows, many of them imported from the US. The alleged crash of a flying saucer at Roswell is very well known in Sweden as are Area 51 and some American conspiracy theories. Swedish ufology is very well represented and I have commented on most of the topics mentioned above plus the "Alien autopsy film" where I did some original investigation as well. But ufology in Sweden is not an industry as in the US. Several magazines have tried to gain from *the X-files* wave but not made it over the first three issues.

Can you give readers of PRB a few examples of the kind of cases you have been involved in?

CS: The kind of cases I work with range from observations of Venus to military radar/visual sightings. Since I am interested in UFO's both as phenomena and as belief system, not to mention human perception and folklore, every sighting has its lesson to learn. My main interest, however, are military observations and observations in daylight of phenomena described as structured craft.

Some examples of cases that I am currently working on could be:

1. 18th July 1948. A high ranking Swedish military observed in broad daylight a cigar shaped object flying over and diving down into a lake South of Stockholm. A top secret investigation conducted in the lake did not reveal any object.
2. 3rd September 1978. A bright object (probably a large bolide) lit up a large area in the Northern part of Sweden and a shockwave was felt in several houses.
3. In the 70's. A Swedish commercial pilot encountered a bright flaming object in mid air. All electrical systems malfunctioned except the engine.
4. Spring 1974. A dozen soldiers and radar personnel saw a cigar shaped object in broad daylight manoeuvre over them. The object was also seen on the radar screen, which was photographed.
5. 11th November 1973. A boy in the small village of Penttjäja shoots a series of pictures of two strange objects in

full daylight. One of the objects could be seen coming out from the other, flying in front of a mountain range, before heading East.

I remember reading a case in Eileen Fletcher's *Trans-UFO* about a the mysterious death of an elk, which appeared to have been dropped from a great height...

CS: August 3rd 1988 an elk was found dead on the mountain of Hunneberg East of Gothenburg. Pictures taken showed the elk laying flat on its back with his legs pointed out from the body as having been dropped from great height. When the story first appeared in a local newspaper several readers confessed to having seen mysterious lights over the mountain at the time. But since no one really knew exactly when the elk died these observations may not have any connection to its death. UFO-Sweden's investigations showed that the elk had been moved by someone, legs spread out and put in this position. An earlier picture taken of the dead animal showed it lying on its stomach. The interesting point is that all the legs were broken at the joints of the hips in a way not caused by a normal death. An autopsy made by veterinarian Margareta Steen in Uppsala could not explain these injuries. This case is still open and has not been explained.

We know that the so-called 'modern age' of ufology started in the US with the Kenneth Arnold sighting in 1947. But sightings of so-called 'ghost rockets' precede even that...How far back does Swedish ufology really go?

CS: You could argue that Swedish ufology goes back to the 1800's when all priests were requested to write down observations of strange happenings in their community, both in air and on land. Several UFO like phenomena have been found in these books kept by the priests even though most of them can be attributed to comets, powerful meteors, sun halos and other astronomical or meteorological phenomena at the time not commonly recognised.

In the Winter of 1933/34 and 1936/37 Sweden, Norway and the Northern part of Finland were plagued by mysterious lights and craft intruding on the three countries airspace. The mysterious fliers were nick-named 'Ghost

Fliers' and the Swedish military sent several Bristol Bulldog J7 aircraft to Norrland trying to catch the intruder - but without success. Most of the observations were probably caused by German Heinkel He60 aircraft spying over the Northern parts of Scandinavia and based on the cruiser "Leipzig" West of Norway from which they were catapulted. Others were clearly misidentifications of bright stars and planets. Only a few remain completely unidentified.

In 1946 one of the most intensive and powerful UFO-waves ever hit Scandinavia. The so called Ghost Rockets were observed and reported first and foremost from the North but many of the more than 1000 reports came from the South as well. A fair number of the sightings could be explained by meteors but many of them still defies explanation, especially those seen in daylight. The Swedish military estimated that nearly 100 of the "rockets" had crashed on Swedish territory. In at least 10-20 cases rockets were seen plunging down from the sky into lakes. In spite of thorough investigations of the lakes nothing was ever found that could explain the sightings. To me, the Ghost Rocket phenomenon remains one of the most puzzling events in the history of UFOs.

Are there any elements of Swedish ufology which appear to be unique to your country alone?

CS: I should say that the large number of Ghost Rocket-like objects seen also after 1946 are significant. As in 1946 many of these "rockets" have been seen to dive into lakes during the 1950's, 60's, 70's and 80's. During the 90's the number of reports of crashing objects have decreased.

When we met in Sheffield at the annual UFOIN get-together, you talked about some of your cases, and it is apparent that ufologists in Sweden have an incredible - and enviable rapport with the military. Can you expand on this?

CS: In many countries UFO groups have decided to make the military their adversary. From some points of view this is understandable and during the 1970's we had a situation like that in Sweden as well. In the

long run, however, this is not a fruitful way to work. For many years UFO-Sweden and myself have built a personal relationship with some of the most important persons in the Swedish military. One of them is the spokesman on UFO's at the Swedish Defence Research Institute (FOI) who is responsible for filing - and in some instances - investigate UFO reports from the public. For more than ten years, UFO-Sweden has been instantly informed (now via e-mail) of all reports coming in to FOI. In return we put our expertise to their help, investigating these cases.

Another source of information is the head of radar analysis at the Military Intelligence, MUST. Through this office, UFO-Sweden have access to any radar information, civilian or military, at our request. These well-working contacts have helped us to identify several "UFOs" that we never would have been able to track down without access to military primary radar.

In 1994 the former head of UFO investigations at FOI (then FOA), Arne Gjärdman, in a letter to the Domestic department proposed and recommended that UFO-Sweden should get financial support from the government as "The Defence Research Institute finds UFO-Sweden's activities valuable". The official letter also stated that "UFO-Sweden's work has been found to be a well organised complement to The Defence Research Institute".

Last autumn, as the first Swedish ufologist ever, I was able to visit a secret radar facility deep inside a mountain in the south of Sweden. The visit was prepared and approved by the Military Intelligence. During five hours I was shown the three story complex and was granted taped interviews with several of the people working there. This facility is one of several in Sweden that on a changing schedule keeps an eye on all airborne traffic entering or leaving Swedish territory.

If I should mention one case were the help from military radar have been crucial I would like to give you this: After sunset on November 11th 1999, two men were loading gravel on a lorry in the outskirts of the small city of Tomelilla in the South of Sweden. One of them made the other aware of something strange passing over their heads. Startled, both of them saw a boomerang-like feature flying overhead, blocking out the stars as it passed.

The time was 8.30 PM and the object was seen between 5 and 10 seconds. In his report one of the witnesses stated that the object was solid and most probably some sort of secret military aeroplane. Investigated by UFO-Sweden researchers Anders Persson and myself, it soon turned out that the two men had seen something real and we decided to check with military primary radar. For a few years now, all military radar "films" are stored on CD-ROM and easy to access through our channels.

Our investigation showed a great number of small radar returns moving together straight over Tomelilla at the exact time of the observation. Their speed were 81 km/h. After consulting meteorological records and an experts on birds it was clear that the UFO was in fact many small "UFOs"; a flight of migrating birds, most probably eiders flying in formation. Eiders do fly at a speed of 65 km/h but since they had a tailwind their speed was greater. The boomerang turned out to be a V-formation seen under night conditions.

Even though some UFO investigations are labelled 'Top Secret' and therefor not available for Swedish ufologists, most reports are declassified after request.

A relationship like this could not happen without UFO-Sweden showing that we are a serious counterpart. It is through our investigations and neutral approach to the subject that this confidence has grown during the years.

When we met in Sheffield, you kindly gave me a very interesting piece of UFO footage. It appears to show two white 'spheres' which arc up like rockets past an aircraft! I have shown this numerous times at YUFOS meetings and we are all fascinated. Could you tell us a little about the case? (and briefly describe it for those who have not seen it!)

CS: The footage you refer to was shot in the city of Vänersborg, East of Gothenburg, on the 23 August 1997. The time was just after five o'clock in the afternoon and the sun was still above the horizon. The witness was testing his new video camera from a balcony outside his apartment and was following a commercial airliner in the viewfinder when a

small, bright ball came flying on an opposite course. Since he understood that this was something out of the ordinary he followed the silvery ball (clearly seen against a thin layer of cloud) away from the aircraft. After about ten seconds, another ball, looking like a copy of the first one, came into view in the left-hand corner of the view finder. On the video you could see how this new ball is catching on the first one, making a small turn before putting itself in a position just behind the first ball. (Thus movement is clearly seen after plotting both of the objects' trajectories). Seconds later both of the balls turns upwards, changing relative positions before vanishing behind the balcony above the photographer. UFO-Sweden has investigated this video without being able to identify the two objects.

Radar returns show just the commercial aircraft, and informal contacts with NATO radar in Norway (through UFO-Norway) gave the same result; the aircraft is seen but not the two balls. We have also tried to determine if the balls could be explained by some sort of reflection in the cameras lens system. So far this seems not to be the case. Birds, which are seen on the video, are also ruled out. Our investigation continues since we are still trying to find a solution to the video.

How does the TV and newspaper media treat the subject? Is it treated with the same scorn and ridicule as it is over here in the UK?

CS: No, I should say that especially the printed media treats the UFO topic in an objective way. Many of them use UFO-Sweden's website (www.ufo.se) for their information. TV is a different game since most of the programmes dealing with UFO's are entertainment programmes. Others are of better quality and I have helped several serious journalists with information and pictures. UFO-Sweden subscribes to a news clipping service. Last year we got 303 clippings - an all time low. The record is more than 800 articles.

The media would have us believe that a number of so-called phenomenon within the UFO field are purely UK, or US-based. Do you receive reports of such things as animal mutilations, crop circles and alien abductions in your country?

CS: Let me answer these questions separately:

Animal mutilations: In 1992 I went through some 200 reports of animal mutilations in the Swedish police archives together with the head investigator Marie Rådén. Not one of the reports had any similarities with the ones you could read about in the UFO literature. The Swedish cases were all clearly made by human perpetrators with knives, scissors and other blunt objects. As far as I can remember no animal mutilations cases have been reported to UFO-Sweden.

Crop circles: Well, we have had our share of crop circles and in 1995 I wrote a book about them. My interest was triggered in August 1988 when I visited Silbury Hill in the UK and saw a formation of seven circles in a field on the other side of the A4. After that I returned to England several times investigating circles, making interviews and flying over the landscape. Paul Fuller was one of the investigators that helped us a lot. Crop circles are nothing new even in Sweden and we have reports of them (singles and not complex ones) since the early 20th century. But it all took new speed in 1991 to explode in 1993. During the coming years around 15 cases every year were investigated by UFO-Sweden. Now the number is down to a few every year. UFO-Sweden has exposed some of the Swedish circle makers and also shown (on national TV and in several newspapers) how you could construct your own circle in a very short time with limited resources. I have spent hundreds of hours investigating circles and focused much on human interpretation of a new and mystical subject.

Abductions: Abduction stories are rare in Sweden. Very rare, I should say. The most famous one (about which I wrote the book *Mötet i gläntan*) occurred in May 1946 and involved one well known Swede, Gösta Carlsson. Carlsson asserts that he saw a landed saucer-like craft in a clearing outside the town of Ängelholm, where several humanoids worked on the crippled craft. After the first meeting he maintained contact with the commander, being taken aboard in a trance-like state from his bed at night. He was also given two artefacts, a ring of gold and a crystal rod. The story is much more complex and has many more aspects but since my space is limited I could only refer to my book (that is in Swedish ? sorry!). I followed Gösta Carlsson for nearly eight years, interviewed some fifty persons and read all material connected to him and the sighting. In

1995 I published the book, together with Gösta who wrote two chapters, where I showed that his story had several problems and could be interpreted in other ways than him having contact with beings from other planets. I think it is rare that a critical ufologist writes a book with a contactee. It is probably even more rare that the contactee allows the ufologist to criticise him in public. However, we are still in contact and book sold its 3,000 copies.

Tell us a little about UFO-Sweden.

CS: UFO-Sweden was founded in 1970 as a centre-point for many smaller groups all around the country. Up to 1980 its main goal was to inform the public that we had "visitors from outer space" and to collect evidence for this. This attitude in combination with internal problems did bring UFO-Sweden to a break in 1980 when some of the original founders left the organisation together with its periodical *UFO-Information*.

The new UFO-Sweden choose to work along a scientific oriented way careful not to lean towards any particular hypothesis. During the 1990:s UFO-Sweden have investigated and exposed many of the Swedish new age ufologists and distanced itself from the New Age community. UFO-Sweden works closely together with the Swedish Defence Institute on certain cases. Today the organisation consists of 26 local UFO-groups scattered all over Sweden, with 850 members. All UFO investigations are co-ordinated by a head of investigations and his 100+ field researchers and later evaluated by three groups of experienced investigators. We also have 16 people all over Sweden responsible for as many districts. Their job is to co-ordinate local investigations as soon as they have started.

UFO-Sweden publish three periodicals: *UFO-Aktuellt*, a glossy magazine printed in 1700 copies four times a year, with articles on special topics, new cases, investigations and such stuff; *Rapport Nytt*, made in an ordinary copying machine published six times a year and made especially for our field researchers. Here every single case is listed in short format: *AFU Newsletter*, our English magazine published irregularly by Archive for UFO Research. UFO-Sweden produces books and booklets that are offered to members.

Our website www.ufo.se counts 1000 hits a day and is published in both English and

Swedish.

An annual meeting called "riksstämman" is arranged every year. Here representatives from the local groups elects the board for UFO-Sweden (15 members plus 5 substitutes) in a democratic election.

Well, there are many other things of course: helping school children with their projects, give talks, interviews and media support among them.

Clas, do you have many cases which you still cannot satisfactorily explain?

CS: Yes, we do. In our archives we have more than 15,500 cases of which we estimate around 500 to be not sufficiently explained and worth a more detailed study. I am currently working on several very interesting observations.

On the whole, British ufology appears to lean increasingly toward the skeptical, while in the US, the ETH is still extremely popular. Where do you stand? *Could * we be visited by aliens?

CS: Well, of course we could. Everything is possible. No one can disprove that at this moment an army of invisible ice-people from the system of Zeta Reticuli have landed on the street outside my house! The problem is to prove such an event. In my opinion life is abundant in the universe. There are 500 billion stars in our galaxy and hundreds of billions of galaxies throughout the cosmos. To say that we are alone would be naïve. On the other hand: is it likely that some of the life-forms have evolved to creatures like us, with two arms, legs and a head on the top? And that they are travelling through space in saucer-like ships in a way that our own science-fiction writers used long before Kenneth Arnold had his encounter in June 1947? Maybe. But not likely. However, in spite of this I am open to the idea that we could be visited by aliens of any kind even though this is not my first hand choice.

During my more than 25 years in this field I have not come across one single case - thoroughly investigated by reliable UFO researchers, I should add - that has convinced me that we have alien visitors of the interstellar kind. Some of the most thought-

provoking cases have made me keep a door open that we may deal with entities in our own neighbourhood and that visions of Virgin Mary, aliens in the bedroom and meetings with trolls in the woods may have a common denominator.

It is wise to keep a critical mind when dealing with the paranormal and UFOs. The burden of proof is on the shoulders of the ufologists, not the scientists or the military. The ones who cry "wolf" must provide better evidence or stand down and admit that they have been wrong. For me it is not important if UFO's are manned by ET's or just a figment of our imagination (or 100's of other alternatives in between). The thing that makes me go on with my UFO investigations is a burning curiosity to know the reason behind every single report. I have no hidden agenda and no pet theory to defend. Every answer - as long as it is made from valid research - is a good answer. I welcome the knowledge - not the theories and speculations.

Is it true that Sweden has one of the most extensive archives of UFO research in the world?

CS: Yes, UFO-Sweden has the world's largest archives of UFO-oriented material, i.e. books, periodicals, correspondence, videos, pictures, newspaper clippings and 15,500 case studies. We also keep a large microfilm archive with thousands of case studies from Blue Book, the Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish military archives and copies of UFO magazines. Last summer I visited the Centre for UFO Studies (CUFOS) in Chicago and was pleased to note that our archives were larger! (For some time we thought that it was theirs). Our archives are situated at Archives for UFO Research in Norrköping and constitutes of nearly 120 square meters of space crammed with information. We are constantly looking for more and I have travelled all over Sweden, and abroad, to collect valuable UFO material. During the 90's we had more than 60 people employed in UFO-Sweden through an unemployment programme that helped us with much of the work at the archives.

DB: Many thanks for taking the time to talk to us, Clas. Take care, and good luck to yourself, your family, and UFO Sweden.

THE RENDLESHAM FOREST CASE: POINT / COUNTERPOINT (part 1)

(Originally published in *International UFO Reporter (IUR) Fall 2000, Volume 25, no.3*)

Thanks to Mark Rodegheir, Richard Hall and Jenny Randles for permission to re-print this important work in PRB.

IUR Editor's note: This apparent crash/retrieval case event from 1980 has led investigators on nearly as many twists and turns as Roswell. British investigator Jenny Randles, co-author of "The UFOs That Never Were" (2000), has been delving into the details of the case from the very beginning, and her ideas about it evolved over time. Richard Hall, another IUR contributing editor, has also followed the controversy and has some differing views. We thought it would be interesting to have them debate the finer points our pages. Randles starts off with some background, then Hall offers his viewpoint, followed by Randles's statement; the exchange concludes with responses by both.

INTRODUCTION:

By Jenny Randles

THE RENDLESHAM FOREST CASE

Undoubtedly one of the most celebrated UFO incidents of all time, the so-called Rendlesham Forest case took place in a large English pine forest eight miles from the town of Ipswich, Suffolk, in the days immediately following Christmas 1980.

There had, in fact, been a major UFO wave across eastern Britain during that autumn. This included many interesting close encounters, particularly during November, for example an RAF jet radar intercept case just off the same coastline and one of the country's most famous abductions when police officer Alan Godfrey was involved in a missing time encounter at Todmorden, West Yorkshire. Overflights of oil platforms in the North Sea were also recorded.

The subsequent events in Rendlesham Forest have proved particularly memorable for several reasons. There were a number of local encounters - between late on Christmas Night (25 December) 1980 until early into January 1981. Some of the latter events involved USAF servicemen out 'skywatching' and hoping that the UFOs would return!

The two most significant events occurred at around 3 am on 26 December and from late on the night of 27 December through to near dawn on the 28th. In both of these incidents officers and airmen from the USAF stationed at the twin NATO bases of RAF Woodbridge and Bentwaters within the forest itself were

primarily involved. The association of British military personnel has been alleged by some witnesses but is flatly denied by the UK government. No RAF personnel were stationed at these (now closed) NATO bases. They were entirely US operated. But the forest area was surrounded by much military research. Radar had been perfected here just before World War Two and experimental research sites still existed locally, including a high security RAF unit at nearby RAF Bawdsey. It seems unlikely the MoD staff here could have remained unaware of what was happening on their doorstep, but Britain's very strict official secrecy laws precludes any prospect of finding out.

However, the strange lights, objects descending into the forest and claims of landed craft that left physical traces and anomalous radiation inside the woods were witnessed by more than just low grade USAF security patrols. On the second night a party out investigating the first night's landing site traces included senior officers sent to 'sort the matter out'. This team went up to the deputy base commander (later promoted to full commander) Colonel Charles Halt.

In addition, on both major nights, witnesses included numerous civilians living in the scattered East Anglian villages nearby. In one case a dog may even have died when it became ill in the immediate aftermath of a close encounter with the glowing object.

No news of these events was officially reported and there was no publicity (even in the local press) in the days following. But far too many people knew something had happened for hope of complete containment and stories quickly emerged into the UFO community in the form of rumours from

people on base. They also came via a British radar establishment 50 miles north (RAF Watton) who had tracked various targets, filed official reports and a few days later had their radar film taken away for study by USAF intelligence officers.

Jenny Randles first published a short item collating scattered tales about this case in *Flying Saucer Review* magazine in March 1981 when little beyond rumour was known to her and two local colleagues, Brenda Butler and Dot Street. For two years these three UFOlogists fought an uphill struggle even with UFO colleagues to persuade them to listen and to get the British government to admit that something had occurred. They obtained nothing but denials and evasions.

In late 1982 a young US Airman, Larry Warren, approached the famed abductee Betty Andreasson Luca to allege that he had been sent home from Bentwaters after talking on the telephone to his mother about his role in a major 'alien contact'. He told his story to UFOlogists Larry Fawcett and Barry Greenwood, then writing the book *Clear Intent* about US military encounters. Greenwood, having read the fuller account of the first two years of largely frustrating British research that was penned for FSR by Randles recognised the case to which Warren referred and used his story to launch a request for FoI documentation.

He was aided in April 1983 by a shock breakthrough in the UK. The British squadron leader (Donald Moreland) who had supervised the US tenancy of the twin bases was retiring and so chose to confirm the occurrence of the incident to a science journal (Omni). Immediately this happened the MoD finally confirmed to Randles in writing (at the fifth time of asking!) that 'unidentified lights' had indeed been seen in December 1980 by USAF personnel from the twin bases and that 'no explanation' for these had been forthcoming.

This was an unprecedented public statement by the British defence ministry and stunned a highly skeptical British UFO community into finally listening to Randles, Butler and Street.

Armed with the Warren statement and this new amazing confirmation by the MoD the group CAUS were rapidly able to achieve a further stunning development in June 1983 when the official report sent by Colonel Halt, endorsed by Squadron Leader Moreland and filed by the British MoD, was released under the US FoI

act. The USAF claimed this copy came from the British government, their own copy having been routinely destroyed (despite the events still being under three years old).

However, six weeks later, in August 1983, Randles, Butler and Street took what was still a publicly undisclosed document to the Defence Ministry in London. They arrived unannounced and were interrogated under armed guard about how they came to possess it! They were risking prosecution under the Official Secrets Act by having this secret file.

The MoD confirmed the document was real, accepted they could not prevent its public release but categorically denied they had supplied it to the USAF as had been alleged by the FoI release. Within two months the British media had discovered (via a UFO conference where it was discussed) the existence of this amazing dossier and a huge public furore erupted. This provoked front page headlines in Britain's top selling newspaper (*The News of the World*) claiming that it was officially confirmed that a UFO had landed in Suffolk.

Within 24 hours BBC television and establishment newspapers such as the *London Times* were shooting down the case, alleging it had now been shown to be a simple misperception of a lighthouse and that the physical traces had easy explanations too. The British government have never officially supported that allegation. But they have never denounced it either.

For 17 years the Rendlesham Forest case has been the subject of massive debate within UFOlogy. Randles, Butler and Street reported their early work in the UK book *Sky Crash* (1984). This had little in the way of eyewitness evidence and was never even released in the US, despite the American associations of the case. Randles followed it with a much updated *From out of the Blue* (1991) - which was only released in the US and never made it to the country where the case itself had occurred!

Two books then did appear in both countries. These were Larry Warren's own story *Left at East Gate* (written with UFOlogist Peter Robbins) (1996) and Randles third book updating the case 'UFO Crash Landing' (1997). This latter featured the first hand testimony of all the key witnesses gathered together for the first time since the incident had occurred. It was -Randles thought - likely to be the last word. She was wrong!

In the meantime the challenge of the skeptics solution to the case had escalated - first through astronomer and UFO critic Ian Ridpath (who made a film for the BBC claiming the case was solved as far back as 1983), then scientist Nicholas Humphrey who made a film for Channel 4 TV that was praised by *New Scientist* as resolving the case as a simple misperception (1987) and latterly through the outspoken net publications of British UFOlogist James Easton.

In 1997 - during his attempts to find positive evidence to challenge the skeptics - Easton had discovered important documents that he believes turn the case on its head. These made him into a skeptic. These documents were the original witness statements. They date back to just a few days after the incident and conflict with their later verbal testimony. They had been in the possession of an American UFO group for many years but had never been openly discussed until Easton revealed them to a largely unaware UFO community. Their implications are discussed by Randles in *Seeing the forest for the trees* (IUR, Summer 1998).

Randles has also written a major reassessment of the case, taking into account the latest arguments of the skeptics and appraising these in more favourable light than she expected to do. This appears as a lengthy chapter (*Rendle Shame Forest*) in her co-authored book *The UFOs that Never Were* (with Dr David Clarke and Andy Roberts) (2000).

As time has gone by new witnesses - especially USAF personnel who were stationed at the twin bases in 1980 - have come forward, often after leaving the service and so feeling free to talk. Many of these - notably Colonel Halt - and two of the three security patrol officers who had a close encounter in the forest in the early hours of 26 December (Sergeants Jim Penniston and John Burroughs) - have gone on camera to tell their story first hand.

In November 1994 these three appeared together for the first time in a British TV documentary (*Strange But True?*) about the case and jointly put together by TV producer David Alpin and UFOlogist Jenny Randles. This documentary became the most watched factual TV show about UFOs in British history and was watched by a quarter of the entire population on first transmission. Randles 1998 book about the case was based on the research work done during the creation of this

production.

Rumours have been strong that Colonel Halt intends to write a book telling his own story, but this has yet to be confirmed. Claims about the existence of physical evidence (such as fuzzy photographs of the UFOs) often surface and are believed to be genuine. Halt has - and occasionally shows to select audiences - plaster casts of the landing traces. A live tape recorded by Halt into an office dictaphone during the second night's events was long rumoured to exist and did appear unexpectedly in 1984 when a copy was sent to the UFO community by one of Halt's former colleagues (then a base commander in Texas). Little time elapses before the next revelation about this extraordinary case.

Now internet gossip columnist Georgina Bruni is to publish her take on the events (said to include new witness interviews and a complete demolition of the skeptics arguments) in her book *You Can't Tell The people* - scheduled for UK release to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the case.

It would now seem the appropriate moment to examine where we stand two decades on. After all this remarkable episode may be the one case in UFO history to seriously challenge Roswell for both longevity and notoriety. And, just like Roswell, it divides the believers and the skeptics into very polarised camps. We should try to see why this is so.

POSITION STATEMENT 1 (JENNY RANGLES)

LIGHT THROUGH THE FOREST

The events in Rendlesham Forest, Suffolk, UK, in late December 1980 have taxed the imagination of UFOlogists for 20 years. I have evolved alongside them and written three books (plus a 20,000 word chapter in the book *The UFOs that Never Were* - London House, 2000) - constantly seeking to move from confusion towards resolution. The 'Bentwaters incident', as sometimes misleadingly called, is perhaps the most complex in UFO history. It is no simple matter to resolve what took place. For a start there are several other sightings mixed in and two primary events - one in the early hours of 26 December, the other overnight on 27/28 December. Both involve civilians and military observers located at various points around this large pine wood in south eastern

England. Both, in their own way, are shrouded in controversy.

This case is often portrayed as a straight fight between the 'lighthouse theory' and a semi literal translation of witness testimony that suggests an unearthly object hovered low or landed inside a clearing in the forest. Various other lights were seen during various points on the two nights, but the large conical object on both nights is the key incident.

Unfortunately, as with all multi-witness cases that emerge from decades of memory the data is not sufficiently well defined to allow straightforward choice.

For a long time I argued vociferously against the lighthouse. When the theory - that these airmen had mistaken its coastal glow whilst disorientated within a woodland setting - first appeared in 1983 I checked it out on site and dismissed it, because first hand observation and study of available witness testimony decreed this answer to be wholly inadequate for the evidence that it had to explain.

I think some skeptics simply 'know' that UFOs cannot exist and so any answer, provided that you dismiss awkwardly intrusive counterpoints, is more acceptable than the horror of considering the case to be a 'real' UFO.

I do not follow this practice. Yet I have become more tolerant of the IFO possibilities, not less so, in this case. New facts that have come to light require such careful thought. In consequence, this case, whilst not done and dusted by any means as some are alleging, is certainly in the melting pot again.

Here are some of the reasons:

1: One by one the seemingly impressive pieces of associated physical evidence have become less than impressive the more that they have been researched.

(a) Witnesses saw score marks on the sides of trees at the landing site. We now know with certainty these were axe cuts left by the foresters to denote that the area was scheduled for felling.

(b) Radiation was apparently recorded by Lt. Colonel Charles Halt (then one of the USAF deputy commanders) and seemed to suggest a genuine anomaly left at the landing site by the UFO. But, when exact figures became

available some years afterwards I learned from a plant biologist that the levels were not markedly high and pine forests can artificially increase figures. Besides which half the forest was seemingly irradiated according to readings described on the Halt tape (made live in the forest on the second night) and no significant attempts were made to protect either the witnesses or the public from this. Which seems to infer that those involved did not regard the levels as significant. Moreover, there is a major nuclear power station (Sizewell) on the edge of the forest - and so even if anomalous radiation was recorded, a more mundane possible source exists. As such the credibility of anomalous radiation created by a UFO has shrunk with time as better investigation has proven possible.

(c) Then there were the holes in a triangle found in the ground at the landing site (or more correctly what was later assumed to be the landing site when damage found here was back related to the UFO seen in the same part of the forest). I was shown similar marks by a forester in 1983. They were made by rabbits. He thought rabbits had caused the 'landing traces'. So did a Woodbridge police officer called out to look at them by the base commander just hours after the sighting. The holes had probably been made weeks before and had frozen over in the sub zero temperatures. I do not know if this resolves the landing traces, as I never saw them, of course, but at the very least this is a viable option given the predominance of similar marks in this part of the woods.

There are still some 'trace' anomalies that remain interesting. A massive hole smashed through the top of the pine canopy was seen by the USAF officers and witnessed by a forester and appears hard to explain. Photographs of this and the lights seen nearby were taken (according the famous tape recording made by an office dictaphone). So were soil samples. If and when this evidence surfaces then new questions will need to be asked and answered.

But, for now, the physical trace evidence has proved much less substantive than it first appeared to be.

2: Something was seen in the sky on night one and it alerted USAF patrolmen to an object falling into trees. They then went out to investigate. Astronomer Ian Ridpath had argued for many years that this falling light was a bright fireball meteor observed by many

others in northern Europe. The problem was that for this theory to work, the dates in the official report written by Colonel Charles Halt and sent to the British MoD had to be wrong. He has dated the first event as around 3 am on 27 December. The meteor was definitely seen at 2.50 am on 26 December.

It seemed unlikely that a senior USAF officer would make such a fundamental error in an official report. Only years later did we establish with near certainty that he did. Source after source (police records, witnesses as they went public after years of silence, radar records from an East Anglian base, etc) all confirm that the date was not what Halt's report alleges. He then himself confirmed that he wrote the memo from memory, not the actual witness statements written soon after the events (and which correctly date the sighting). So we now know that the incident that triggered this case happened at virtually the same moment as the meteor event. It is hard to ignore a possible link.

3: But, of course, a meteor far from solves this case. Even if by chance it dragged these men into the forest on a wild goose chase, it falls badly short of the 'Christmas Tree' or 'burning aviation fuel' like lights seen as glows through the trees by investigating airmen (Burroughs, Cabansag and Penniston). These were near ground level inside the pine wood. Something strange was looming ahead of them and not just for a few seconds that a meteor was in view.

I have to say that I still do not know what this was. The key to the skeptics theory is that they were walking towards the Orford Ness lighthouse - and thus towards the coastal strip about four miles away (Orford Ness).

On here at that time the lighthouse sat (mostly pointing out to sea but its sweeping beam reflected inland off low cloud as I have seen for myself). Another light source was lit buildings on a covert research site that up until the mid 1970s had been home to an 'Over the Horizon' radar research facility that - locals claim - provoked TV reception interference, generated waves of EM energy and (many suspected) was a factor in the creation of green energy balls seen to emerge from the sea at this point on several occasions.

Indeed one such case was written up by *Flying Saucer Review* magazine before the Rendlesham Forest events happened. This 'green fireball' (similar to those that appeared

in and around Los Alamos in the late 1940s) was witnessed in February 1975 - two years after the experimental radar (code named Cobra Mist) was supposedly shut down. The green ball was seen at close quarters on the beach near the Sizewell power station by a postman and his dog - both of whom were severely effected by the physiological effects that it generated.

If Cobra Mist had ended when alleged, then it had nothing to do with this event or (by default) the other green fireballs seen later around the Ness. But there is evidence that further research did continue into the 1980s - perhaps via a reformed project known as Cold Witness. Data on this venture is still withheld by the British government - including its location - although Orford Ness was a known candidate for experimental energy beam work .

So - not just the lighthouse - but also perhaps more nefarious goings on - could have been the source of Christmas lights seen ahead of the airmen as they trudged the forest. Their stories tell of how they tried to reach these lights but constantly failed as if they backed off. This may be a common perceptual illusion familiar when you assume that something is a few hundred feet in front of you but in fact is really still several miles distant (as any lights on the Ness were, of course).

The possible effects of an energy field tied to secret experiments is only informed speculation. But we do know that the lighthouse was shining that night. So there ought to be clear evidence that these airmen saw both the lighthouse and the UFO close together, as from the landing site area you can see this beacon .In all verbal interviews the USAF airmen have given since the events both Burroughs and Penniston insist that the UFO was not the lighthouse (and Burroughs told me that he was very familiar with this beacon because he had picnics in the woods). But they always fail to say they saw the lighthouse near to - but separate from - the UFO at the same time.

Although in my nocturnal visits to the forest this beacon was never prominent or in any way describable as a craft of any sort (a key reason why I have struggled to accept this misperception theory) it was certainly in view . Of course, it is possible that the UFO swamped the lighthouse. Just as it is possible that the initial UFO was also seen at the same

time as the meteor now suspected of dragging the men into the forest in the first place. But if so - a UFO appearing at the same time as a meteor, a lighthouse in much the same place as a second UFO subsequently seen when inside the forest. These are worrying coincidences that any seasoned investigator would beware.

The official reports signed by these men soon after the events do indicate a rather confused story. One man seems to say they only saw lights that they later identified as a lighthouse (a story never reported in any interview given by these men before these statements were revealed by James Easton in 1997). Another does not mention this misperception at all and just describes the UFO. The third says they saw strange lights and then got fooled by a lighthouse beacon that they pursued for some distance before identifying its origin. It is possible these accounts imply that they saw both the lighthouse and the UFO together.

But even this interpretation fails to answer why Burroughs and Penniston in several lengthy interviews during the 1990s never once said - 'well, actually, we know the UFO wasn't the lighthouse because we saw that too and whilst we briefly did not recognise its identity we soon realised what it was and it was definitely not the UFO'.

This devastating rejoinder would have demolished the lighthouse theory and the fact that it was never used by these witnesses is a serious concern. I have heard suggested that the story of the lighthouse misperception was imposed onto the statements to play down the case. But why were Burroughs and Penniston willing to openly answer questions about the beacon whilst not reporting what was in their signed statements? Statements they had to know could emerge at any time.

Indeed, if this suggestion is true it brings us right back to the old argument as to whether they actually saw the lighthouse after all, because if the misperceived beacon reported in their statements was fabricated for some reason then that light becomes a potential source of a bona fide misperception since there is now no evidence that they actually saw and recognised it on the same night.

Ironically here, their silence compounds the role of the lighthouse, whereas an open admission of their original signed statements would effectively kill it off. Indeed official

fabrication of the lighthouse chase hardly damages the primary sighting - indeed used effectively it proves the real UFO was NOT the lighthouse. So it seems hard to comprehend any reason why it would be invented to prop up 1981 written statements on orders from above but that were then denied for 17 years.

There is, of course, far more to this case than this short report can indicate. Each of my books has told its own updated version of the story as bit-by-bit, witness-by-witness, new pieces have been added to the unraveling threads of this very complicated mystery.

It is clear to me that serious questions need to be asked of the witnesses. And I am happy to give them the opportunity to answer. Although we have to know why they do not seem to have talked about their signed statements and why accounts written just days after the events are at best ambiguous and substantially diverge from their later verbal testimony, we have to let them try to explain.

Equally, it is very hard for me to see how a modest, distant pulsing lighthouse (which is all this source ever appears from the forest) could have become a perception of a transparent smokey object that lit up the area as bright as day. I have considered all sorts of possibilities. For instance, that any experiments on the Ness created a misperception / or hallucination via generated EM waves. Or, more mundanely, that localised mist (there was some around near the coast) could have yellowed and difused the lighthouse glow enough to create a prismatic mirage effect. But these are guesstimates, and not without their own significant difficulties I am first to admit.

It is very hard to reconcile the fingers of evidence pointing at the lighthouse with the sheer improbability that such a gross misperception could have caused such panic. Yes, witnesses do misperceive. Yes, environment and suggestibility can create difficult conditions that turn mundane things into extraordinary perceptions. I have seen a telegraph pole silhouetted against the rising full moon misperceived by one honest witness as a UFO and attendant alien. So anything is possible. But subjectively here the turning of the modest lighthouse into an extraordinary close encounter is a stretch.

Besides which there are two substantial reasons to doubt that this case is fully resolved.

Firstly, Burroughs and Penniston both say that in close proximity to the ethereal object they were subjected to massive physiological and psychological effects. They both talk of a wave of energy rippling through the trees, of their hair standing on end within this EM field, of how they entered an altered state and seemed almost in a trance and how time and space became seriously distorted. It is possible that such effects might be induced by any experimental energy fields connected to the research on the Ness. But that, of course, can again only be speculation. But it is very hard to conceive that these events - if they happened - could have been induced by a blinking lighthouse, even if it was enhanced via a mirage! So if these witnesses are telling the truth (and I have no reason not to think they are) then this case must self evidently be much more than a meteor/lighthouse misperception.

Unfortunately, there are reasons for caution. On an internet forum Colonel Halt was asked about the lighthouse and said that he saw this at the same time as the UFO. However, he described the lighthouse as being located much too far south. This is significant because a second lighthouse (actually the Shipwash lightship) was in 1980 located where he was describing what he thought was Orford Ness. From the landing site this lightship looked much like you would expect a distant lighthouse to look (it was further away than the one on the Ness). The real beacon on Orford Ness was sitting on the ground, larger and closer and resembling a 'landed' object because of the undulating terrain between it and the witnesses.

Since the location of the UFO described by Halt was in fact more or less where the Orford Ness lighthouse was located then his net testimony suggests a worrying possibility. Perhaps the airmen honestly believed they DID see the UFO and the lighthouse together. They did not mention seeing the lighthouse because it was some distance to their south and nowhere close to the UFO dead ahead. However, this scenario only makes sense if what they thought was Orford Ness lighthouse was in fact the Shipwash lightship - leaving the 'UFO' seen ahead of them as an anomaly. However, if so then this anomaly was positioned virtually right where the Orford Ness lighthouse was actually located.

It is very difficult to interpret Halt's net interview any way other than this. And if he

mistook Shipwash for Orford Ness lighthouse, can we be sure the others did not do so as well?

Perhaps the future of this case revolves around what happened during this close encounter phase. We need to know what Cabansag (the third man out there with Burroughs and Penniston and whose initial statement is the most muted of all but yet who has never since spoken of the events) might report about the close encounter. Skeptics are suggesting that the Oz Factor sensations described by Burroughs and Penniston were either provoked by fear that was caused by their lighthouse misperception or are simply a confabulation because the original signed statements make no reference to them.

I find the idea that fear could generate the well reported electrical effects hard to accept and I do not believe the alternative - deliberate deception. Burroughs and Penniston have both well justified why their signed statements underplay this part of the story (see my 1998 article in IUR.). And I know that both men, and Halt, referred to the close encounter phase when I first began to seriously investigate this case (that is back as far as 1983).

So this part of the story is not a recent elaboration as some critics contend. We cannot simply dismiss it as being irrelevant. I think this close encounter phase is now the most important aspect of the whole story.

However, also, to me there is the issue of the local civilian witnesses. I have talked to several of these people and consider them very credible. Some saw things on the second night (when Colonel Halt led a team of men taking samples at the alleged landing site). Others saw things in the early hours of 26 December.

It is certain that most of these witnesses did not misperceive the lighthouse. They knew exactly where it was and cannot be accused of disorientation or unfamiliarity with the area as the foreign servicemen might be. A couple of these witnesses probably did see the meteor. But there are several very interesting sightings that are much harder to resolve. Reports of inverted cones that moved slowly across the sky and fell into the forest. Stories about tingling electrical fields. Rippling bands of Christmas Tree like lights in the sky that were not like anything locals had seen in the forest before. Indeed stories that mesh very well with those of the puzzled

USAF witnesses - including the odder (and Halt's story - where, for example, beams of laser like light were supposedly fired at his parties feet. Together these strongly enhance the case.

The skeptical approach has largely not tried to meet the challenge of the civilian witnesses. But they are vital to any honest understanding of it.

I have said, in *The UFOs that Never Were*, that perhaps given recent challenging revelations about this case it is now in need of a doctor. But reports of its demise are premature. However, the skeptics do have a case

more difficult to resolve) parts of Colonel and like it or not there are reasons to pay attention to what they say.

In UFOlogy one important truth is that no case - however impressive - is immune to the possibility of resolution. We must not get carried away with the belief that this is such a significant encounter that it cannot, like other cases have before it, turn from UFO to IFO. Unfortunately, it very well could.

(Richard Hall's counter-point argument will feature in next month's issue of PRB)

MEXBOROUGH: THE STORY CONTINUES...

By Dave Baker

Following video analyst Tim Farrow's report on the Mexborough UFO footage (see last issue), I decided to pursue Tim's theory that the UFOs could in fact be military aircraft. This was in an effort to cover all possibilities, as previous investigations into the theory that the UFOs could be hang-gliders or microlites, had proved fruitless.

Aware that I could well be trying to trace a needle in a haystack, I started on the Tim's assumption that if these were military aircraft they would be en-route to an air-base in a north-easterly direction from Mexborough, within 150 miles flight.

After some enquiries, it seemed that the most likely base was RAF Leeming, at Northallerton, North Yorkshire.

Although the RAF rarely fly at weekends, I had been informed that this rule may have been changed: on the 26th March 1999 - only thirteen days after the footage was taken - the RAF had launched their intensive bombing campaign against Yugoslavia, and that military aircraft could have been in use as part of a pre-war "warming-up" exercise.

With this in mind, I wrote to RAF Leeming, included a copy of Tim Farrow's report, and asked if they had any aircraft in the area at the time.

Only a few days later, I received an answer from Flight-Lieutenant DM Pleasant, who - in part- had this to say;

"I am writing in response to your letter dated 12 March 2001 in which you ask for information on air activity on 13th March 1999.

"I have checked our records and find RAF Leeming had no jet aircraft airborne on that day and although our University Air Squadron would have been operating the Bulldogs they would not have been anywhere near the area of your sighting."

And:

"Judging by the area of the sighting and your description of the aircraft it seems likely that they may have been civilian light aircraft..."

He goes on to suggest that I contact the Civilian Air Authority and the Ministry of Defence - which I had planned to do if the more direct approach to Leeming drew a blank.

I obviously could go on writing to individual RAF bases for ever and still not find the source of the military aircraft -if that is what the 'UFOs' are, of course.

I see no reason why the CAA and the MoD should not be forthcoming with my request, and I await their answers with interest.

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. 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."

BARNESLEY

A few weeks ago my friend, who lives near Wombwell, Barnsley, told me that she saw what looked like an orange ball of fire in the sky as she was leaving her house one evening, she didn't elaborate further and said it was strange.

This Wednesday (14th March) I was travelling to College in Barnsley at about 6.30pm and something in the sky caught my attention. At first I thought it was an aeroplane about to crash as it looked like an orange ball of fire travelling across the sky, it seemed to have a tail but wasn't travelling at a great speed.

When the thing didn't come crashing down but seemed to be rising, I realised that it wasn't a plane after all. I watched it until I drove down into a dip and could no longer find it.

When I arrived home that evening, I rang my friend and asked her to describe accurately what she saw that night a few weeks ago. Without any prompting from me she told me exactly what I had seen. (Jo)

YUFOS verdict: More than likely an aircraft leaving Sheffield airport. The "ball of fire" is more than likely the reflection of the sun on the aeroplane, and the time is about right for flights from Sheffield.

BATLEY

My father was out in the garden when he spotted a constellation of Shiny metal objects in the sky. It was a nice sunny, cloudless day.

At first he thought that it was a cluster of weather balloons

He went to find his binoculars, by which time they were very far away. A friend of my dad came at this time and we showed him the 'silver balls' and he was very unsure too.

As I watched..I was certain that another had joined the cluster. It is very hard to give details on this event, because I had no other objects to compare it to (in order to estimate the size/altitude/distance/speed, etc)

There were 4 witnesses of this.....me, my father, his girlfriend, and my father's friend. (Francis)

YUFOS verdict: This sounds very much like a flock of birds, reflecting the sun from their feathers. (see PRB Vol:4 # 4-October 2000 for a near-identical report.)

HORBURY

Personally, I have not seen the UFOs over Horbury, but my mother used to work nights at an 'old people's home', overlooking Horbury. And at nights, she and her friends have seen the UFO's.

She says they appear to be at least 2 miles away, and look like car head-lamps, in the sense that they glow a yellow/white colour, and have linear properties, rather than being a single ball of light. I hope you understand that I mean by this.

She and her friends saw quite a number of the lights, but were unsure whether they were UFO's or bright stars, but on one occasion, one of the lights 'jumped' a number of times before disappearing.

Both she and her old friends saw the lights. This happened about 1-1/2 years ago. I would calculate that the area in which the UFO's were seen is over fields, in the outskirts of Horbury. I have heard that Horbury is a well-known spot for seeing UFO's of such kind. (francis)

BRIDLINGTON

I was walking dogs along with my friend's mother, overlooking Bridlington (we were at Barmston Beach), it was a hazy day with pretty poor visibility. As I looked on towards Bridlington, something caught my eye, because it was big, black, and high off the ground.

As I looked closely, I realised that what I was seeing was something out of the ordinary. At this point, my friend's mother (Sue Eden) had not seen anything. I am a very very strong believer of UFO's, and if I had kept the sighting to myself, then I know that sceptics would have ridiculed me and my beliefs, but I quickly called to Sue and pointed in the direction of the UFO, she saw it instantly, and suddenly, it changed shape (or it could have turned round), but anyway in less than a second it had disappeared into the haze. We couldn't believe what we had just experienced, and I stayed in exactly the same location for a few minutes, gathering all the info I could, so that I could make my own mini-investigation.

I took note of the landscape, building trees etc. in to hope that I could trace the exact position of the UFO on an OS map when I got home. I also took note of the furthest object that I could see in the horizon, which was a line of trees.

When I got home, I used the map to calculate the position of the UFO, it's size, the direction it went, and it's speed.

All that I can remember from this, is that the object was about 75 feet from the ground, with an estimated diameter of 25-30 feet. It changed shape/or changed direction, and shot away from us at an incredible speed, without appearing to have accelerated.

When it happened, I looked around for any other possible eyewitnesses, but there was no one around.

I will always remember this event, because it was so special to me. This happened 3 years ago (Francis)

EPSOM

My parents in law, who are in their 60's were calling to a house in Epsom, Surrey about 5 years ago.

It was night-time. While my mother in law sat in the car, she saw a light coming from the sky,

it filled the whole sky, and when she looked at it there was a 'craft' in the light.

She was obviously very frightened, being on her own.

My father in law, by then had come out of the house, and also saw the light and the 'craft'. Unfortunately there was no one else around, so they have no other witnesses.

They still talk about it now, how frightening it was. (Pat)

LINCOLNSHIRE UPDATE

On Thursday 5th of October 2000 around 7:15pm in the Morrisons car park on Tritton Road Lincoln, Mrs Sandra Gregory and her daughter Sarah Gregory noticed a crowd of up to 30 people looking upwards into the sky.

"We were just going into Morrisons when we saw this bright light in the sky, just above Stage 2 on Tritton Road"

It was very bright and looked like a disco ball. We watched it for about 4-5 minutes then the object just disappeared.

The weather conditions on that night were calm and clear. The object seemed to be solid.

The witness estimated the object was at rooftop level and within ¼ mile of where she and the other witnesses were.

When asked what most convinced them that they were observing something unusual, She replied " Because the brightness of it and the way it just hovered and then shot off like a bullet." (Sandra Gregory)

The other day I e-mailed the (C.R.O) Community Relations office at RAF Waddington to ask if the base received any telephone calls about this object. I received the following reply:

From: Mrs J.A.Wheeler (CRO) RAF Waddington

Dear Jonathan

We had a few enquiries regarding this subject from the public on the night of the 5th October 2000.

RAF Waddington did nothing in response to these phone calls.

CONCEPTUALIZING UFOs

By Richard H. Hall

Analysing UFO data and reasoning about it has been extremely controversial due to a number of factors, primarily disagreement about which data are mutually agreed upon as requiring explanation. In this article I attempt to provide a conceptual framework and guide for thinking about and theorizing about UFOs.

On a related issue, various labels and epithets often have been substituted for rational discussion in characterizing our philosophical opponents. No doubt this is due to the frustrations of trying to deal with a complex and unorthodox subject that has little recognition among scientists, the news media, or other important opinion-makers in society. What does it mean to be "pro-UFO" or a "believer"? How apt are the labels "debunker," "scoffer," or "skeptic" as applied to those who disbelieve in UFOs and/or profess strong criticism of the views (not to mention the motives and intelligence) of "believers?"

Interestingly, the ad hominem arguments tend to emanate far more from the "scoffers" than the "believers." Whereas many of us think that Phil Klass, other CSICOP people, and Donald Menzel before them are mistaken in their professed viewpoints, we do not usually attribute evil motives to them.

Before proposing a conceptual scheme as a guide to thinking about and studying UFO sightings, I will attempt to define some terms and also suggest ways to encourage more civil debate of the issues. People see things in the sky (and on the ground) that they cannot explain and term them "UFOs." Although UFO has long since become a synonym for ET spaceship in the popular mind, let us continue to think of it literally as meaning an unexplained flying (sometimes landing) object or phenomenon.

The large majority of such reports turn out to have mundane explanations, including aircraft seen under unusual lighting or weather conditions, rocket or missile launches, and fireball meteors. The percentages of explained versus unexplained are scientifically meaningless, but typically are something like 80% to 20%. The scientific question is: Do the

sightings that remain unexplained after careful investigation represent one or more phenomena of potential scientific significance? Should time and money be spent in gathering and analysing better data in a systematic way?

In past years the U.S. Air Force and most self-styled skeptics have extrapolated from the high percentage of explained cases (sometimes artificially high due to ingrained negative attitudes) to the unexplained cases. "If we had more complete data," their argument went, "we could also explain the rest of the cases. Only insufficient data prevents us from explaining 100% of the reports." Of course, this argument totally ignores the *content* of the unexplained cases.

How do we determine whether the unexplained cases represent something new and important that deserves some level of priority investigation? By spending time and money to test that hypothesis along with its antithesis! However, those already convinced that there is nothing of scientific interest in UFO reports will see no point in investigating further. Their minds are made up. They see only "noise" and no "signal" in UFO reports. A good term to describe a person who takes this position is *Scoffer*.

On the other extreme are those who accept practically everything seen in the sky as evidence of extraterrestrial visitation. Scientifically oriented UFO investigators resent being labelled as "believers," which implies an uncritical acceptance of dubious data bordering on slack-jawed faith. A good name for the uncritical ones would be *Believer*.

Practically everyone else fits somewhere in between these extremes. Although a range of attitudes and approaches is involved, a good general term for people in this central category would be *Skeptic*. (It probably is a losing battle to suggest this terminology since the term "skeptic" has been pre-empted by the Committee for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), but it would be a more accurate use of the term in its historical sense. CSICOP members tend to be either Scoffers or Debunkers.) A neutral

alternative might be *Investigator*, though that would exclude anyone who ventures an opinion on the subject without actually doing some investigation, or reading the serious literature, which also applies to many CSICOP members.

Within the centre category of people who have some degree of interest in studying or investigating UFO reports, there are several levels of interest and/or attitude. Some of these I will define as:

Doubter: Tends to think that UFO reports probably have mundane explanations for the most part, but finds the reports interesting and worth studying.

Debunker: Tends to focus on criticizing the foibles of UFO believers and tries to find flaws in hardcore UFO reports.

Advocate: Sees UFO reports as potentially very important and argues for careful scientific study and investigation.

Proponent: Is strongly convinced that UFO reports represent probable other-worldly visitors and focuses on presenting the data in support of that view.

The reader may use his or her imagination in considering real-life examples of each category. These labels should not be used in a pejorative manner. Members of each category can be entirely rational in discussing and debating the issues, and the sooner that is understood the better chance we will have of engaging in a civil give-and-take that will help all of us to gain an approximation of the truth. Facts, logic, and science should be the means of settling disagreements.

That being said, it would be helpful to confine discussions to one of the two following broad hypotheses which can then be further refined:

(1) Nonexistence. UFOs are a collection of mistaken observations based on sociological, psychological, and other human error factors. If true, this should be of great interest to sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists given the worldwide nature of the UFO phenomenon.

(2) Existence. UFOs represent a real unexplained phenomenon. The scientific question then would become: What is the nature of the phenomenon? Is it (a) literally a natural phenomenon, (b) evidence of a secret

military weapon system, or (c) evidence of some kind of visitors from elsewhere?

If everyone who considers himself part of the rational center (as opposed to the irrational extremes) were to adopt this approach, it would greatly improve communications and expedite scientific research into UFOs. Neither Scoffers nor Believers have very much positive to contribute to a resolution of the UFO controversy. The rest of us in the centre, if we could work together and engage in civil discourse, might succeed in accomplishing something worthwhile. And regardless of the outcome, society would benefit substantially from either debunking "the UFO myth" or establishing it as something very important for once and for all.

*** * NEXT MEETING * ***

YUFOS
proudly present:

DR. DAVID CLARKE

**"WORLD WAR ONE
UFO MYSTERIES"**

on

Tuesday 8 May 2000

7:00pm – 10:00pm

at

THE THREE CRANES
Queen Street
Sheffield City Centre

Members - £2:00
Non-members- £3:00

ON THE TRAIL OF A MODERN-DAY DINOSAUR

(CONCORD MONITOR (on line) -March 2, 2001, Concord, New Hampshire)

They call it li'kela-bembe, and they revere it for its fierce reign over the Boumba river. They have never told a soul about this muscled beast that feasts on molombo fruit and pummels crocodiles with its serpentine tail - because nobody ever asked.

Nobody, that is, until last November, when Concord businessman David Woetzel went crashing through the virgin forests of Cameroon on the trail of this much-rumored but ever-elusive modern-day dinosaur.

Now, thanks in part to Woetzel, this mysterious li'kela-bembe may be roaming into range of a camera lens for the first time.

"The odds are 75 to 80 percent that these types of creatures exist," said Woetzel, who serves as president and CEO of CCR Datasystems on Airport Road when he's not slashing and slogging through African swamps.

For all his slashing and slogging, Woetzel never found the beast. But he did gather dozens of consistent eyewitness accounts from natives up and down the Boumba and Laponji rivers - compelling enough evidence to send the British Broadcasting Company and a group of scientists on a full-scale expedition to the region.

"This is big news," said Woetzel, who kept his trip a secret until this week, when the BBC group left for Cameroon. "Once this gets out, everybody and their brother will be wanting to go over there."

If they can tear themselves away from Jurassic Park III, that is. Which begs the question, why battle through the snake-infested brush of Africa on the dim hope of finding something the rest of the world seems content to relegate to theaters and museums?

Because this truly is a lost world, Woetzel says. These natives have never been prompted

by breathless reporters or primed by promises of fame and money.

In fact, Woetzel and his companion, William Gibbons, were told they were the first whites to penetrate the forest and swamps along the Boumba and Laponji rivers.

"We didn't know what to expect," said Woetzel. "We went into this pretty naïve."

Ignorant of the jungle's whims, Woetzel was, however, no newcomer to the world of dinosaurs.

He is a longtime crusader for creationism, lecturing on the topic of "Science and the Bible" all over the country. He also has his own Web site, www.genesispark.com, dedicated to the idea that humans and dinosaurs have coexisted throughout history, and makes an annual plea for creationism to a Concord High School law class.

So when he got wind of Cameroon missionaries returning to North America with stories of river-dwelling dinosaurs, Woetzel jumped at the chance to build new credence into his cause. "Everybody knows dinosaurs are supposed to be extinct. It's a huge credibility problem for evolutionists," he said.

For centuries, tales of dinosaurs have drifted up from this steamy corner of equatorial Africa. Writers and explorers have described dinosaur-like drawings on cave walls in the Congo basin, and talked of a beast called makele-imbembe. In 1980-81, Dr. Roy Mackal gathered numerous eyewitness accounts of a river-dwelling beast with a long neck and tail inhabiting the Likouala swamp region.

In recent years, political unrest has halted such expeditions to the Congo. But the thickly forested regions of Cameroon have remained outside the fray - and unsullied by prior expeditions.

Dubbing their adventure "Behemoth or Bust" after the behemoth described in Job 40:15, Woetzel and Gibbons raised their own funds, gathered the bare necessities and (after a quick consultation with fellow beast seeker Robert Rines, a local Loch Ness enthusiast) set out for Africa. They flew to the Republic of Cameroon, bumped across the frontier to a settlement called Welele, then hired pygmy guides to trek into the interior.

Sleeping in tents and thatched huts, Woetzel and Gibbons waded through waist-deep swamps and sliced through tangled vegetation to reach the river. They ate bananas by the bushel, fought off all manner of strange bugs and learned not to drink the water.

In pockets of roughewn civilization throughout these hostile lands, they met the Baka people, natives intimately acquainted with their surroundings and utterly fascinated by these white men.

"It would be like an alien ship had landed," Woetzel said. "The kids would come up to you and scratch your skin."

What didn't surprise the villagers were the dinosaur sketches Woetzel had brought along. To put their credibility to the test, Woetzel first showed them sketches of animals he knew existed in that region, such as crocodiles and hippos. He then showed them sketches of animals with which they wouldn't be familiar, such as grizzly bears. Finally, he showed them the sketch of the long-necked herbivore described in past sightings.

"We approached it very carefully," Woetzel said.

And the villagers passed the test every time, identifying the familiar creatures, passing over the foreign ones and pronouncing li'kela-bembe at the sight of the brontosaurus-like drawing.

It was about as big as an elephant, they said, with a snake-like head and a long, powerful tail. The people feared it for its ferocity toward other creatures, and told stories of the animal overturning canoes in search of food.

"There's no question in their mind about the existence of this creature," he said. "Consistently, village to village, they picked out the li'kela-bembe, called it the same thing, described it the same way."

Second-hand descriptions are one thing, though. What happens if someone actually finds this creature?

While mainstream science has certainly had no problem making room for new discoveries, Woetzel believes the existence of a living dinosaur, if proven, would force major changes in national parks, prestigious museums and practically every book and article on dinosaurs.

"The idea of living dinosaurs strikes people as very odd," he said. "In the same time frame that a squirrel-like creature evolved into a human being, we have these creatures that have not changed one wit."

And though Woetzel's alternative theory of creationism remains a hard-sell in the secular world, its basis - that life did not come about by chance - may be gaining followers. Within the last decade, a new scientific approach known as the Intelligent Design movement has taken hold in some circles, calling into question the cornerstone Darwinian philosophy of Naturalism.

Scientific theories aside, Woetzel's adventure is, if nothing else, a conversation starter that titillates with all the water-glass ripple effect of Jurassic Park.

"I start talking to people about it - my doctor, my mechanic - and they won't let me out the door," he said.