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YORKSHIRE UFO SOCIETY

PROJECT RED BOOK

(Vol.4 # 11, May 2001)



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MYSTERY HUMMING

MEXBOROUGH- WE HEAR FROM THE MoD!

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"It's not a nursing home. It's a retirement community!"

THE RENDLESHAM FOREST CASE: POINT / COUNTERPOINT (part 2)

(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. (Last month) Randles started off with some background. Now Hall offers his viewpoint, followed by Randles's statement; the exchange concludes with responses by both.

THE RENDLESHAM FOREST UFO ENCOUNTERS

By Richard H. Hall

On two nights between Christmas and New Years Day in December 1980, UFOs were observed by U.S. Air Force personnel outside the gates of the Bentwaters AFB/RAF Woodbridge NATO base complex in England. Numerous personnel situated in various locations also reported unusual lights in the sky that no doubt included some IFOs, as is common in complex, multi-witness cases.

Based on extensive interviews with Charles I. Halt (Col. USAF Retired), the Citizens Against UFO Secrecy documents, the A.J.S. Rayl interviews on British TV (*), and other published (* I corrected this error - JR) sources, I have reconstructed the encounters in the woods which I hold to be the hard-core sightings on these nights. What other witnesses may or may not have seen and whether or not the lighthouse temporarily fooled some of the personnel in the woods are to me totally irrelevant. Clearly some "false witnesses" are mixed in as well.

The facts of the forest encounters as vetted by Col. Halt (and he may well be mistaken on one or two points) are these. At approximately 3:00 a.m. on the morning of December 27 (most of the contemporary witnesses say December 26), three U.S. Air Force security policemen left the base to investigate a strange glowing object in the woods. These men were SSgt. James Penniston, A1C John Burroughs, and Amn. Ed Cabansag.

Halt states that Cabansag was stationed at the gate to serve as a radio relay, since they were having radio transmission problems. (Contemporary testimony indicates that MSgt Chandler served as the radio relay.) The party also reported wildlife acting in a frenzied manner. A roughly triangular craft-like object was seen hovering just above the ground emitting brilliant light from the underside that illuminated the area brightly. The object also had pulsating body lights. Penniston approached and touched some "lettering" or symbols on the surface of the object.

When the luminosity began increasing, the men retreated and the apparent craft flew away through the woods. They attempted to follow, and during the chase may or may not have confused the notorious lighthouse with the UFO at some point. A couple of days later when mysterious lights were again seen in the woods, Halt got personally involved and had his own sightings. During this sequence he made the tape recording giving a "blow by blow" of what they were observing. Although they did not immediately see a UFO, they found and took measurements at the apparent landing site of two days previous.

While leaving the woods and entering a clearing, Halt saw the "red sun-like light...[that] moved about and pulsed... appeared to throw off glowing particles and then broke into five separate white objects and then disappeared." Immediately after this, he and others observed three star-like lights moving rapidly and making sharp-angle turns. The objects displayed body lights and showed elliptical and then circular form. These descriptions all are typical UFO features.

Some British commentators have attempted to explain this series of sightings as misidentifications of the lighthouse. I think not! Two of the objects were to the north and one to the south, and all were about 10 degrees above the horizon. Furthermore, in 1994 Halt reported in a public talk that during these sightings one of the objects suddenly flew directly overhead and beamed a thin, pencil-like light down to the ground about 10 feet in front of them. He also heard chatter on the radio about similar lights being beamed down into the base weapons storage area.

"We just stood there in awe," Halt said, "wondering whether it was a signal, a warning, or what it was." He was obviously still in awe 14 years later, and completely convinced that the objects were nothing in our inventory. Halt gave positive character readings on Penniston and Burroughs, and read and critiqued my forthcoming report on *The UFO Evidence, Volume II* the case in (December 2000).

So we have highly credible witnesses reporting incredible things. What they reported fits perfectly with decades of sighting reports by thousands of credible witnesses, right down to details of brilliant luminosity, pulsating body lights, E-M effects, animal reactions, radioactivity, and landing-gear-like imprints in the ground. In addition, they fit a pattern of strategic military base intrusions dating back at least to ICBM missile site encounters in 1966. A very strong case indeed!

Some of the internet traffic on this case, which all too often sinks to the depths of ranting and name calling rather than resembling scientific discourse in the slightest, has focused on alleged discrepancies in witness testimony between contemporary statements and comments made many years later. Most of these appear to have originated with the Rayl interviews 17 years after the fact, and have rather simple explanations.

Having been at this business for more than 40 years now, I often get asked in interviews to recall some events of 15 or 20 or more years ago. Unless I have documents or records at hand to refer to, I am very likely to be wrong about some specific details. Normal human memory failings do not necessarily discredit witness testimony.

While reviewing my files in preparation for writing this article, I noticed that Halt apparently had made one or two factual errors, no doubt due to faulty memory. But they are

trivial and do not affect the credibility or strength of the case in the slightest. Such discrepancies do need to be aired out and resolved in order to clarify the record.

At his 1994 talk in Maryland and in other venues, Halt also made the important point that He, Penniston, and the others were very cautious about what they reported, fearing for their reputations and possibly even their careers. These concerns obviously influenced the content of the written statements made in 1980 and early 1981.

The Rendlesham Forest UFO encounters remain among the most credible and significant sightings on record that point to an other-worldly origin.

RICHARD HALL (REBUTTAL BY HIM TO JENNY RANGLES STATEMENT)

Although we agree on many features, my main disagreement with Jenny Randles is that the physical evidence has somehow "become less impressive the more that they have been researched." I am not aware how it is that "we now know with certainty" that the tree markings were axe cuts made by foresters to mark the trees for cutting. This would not explain the coincidence that, as reported, the trees facing the center of the site "all have an abrasion facing in the same direction towards the center...." Then we also have the broken tree branches some 15 to 20 feet overhead.

Some of her arguments mix in speculation or opinion. The radiation readings were not "markedly high" in the sense of putting anybody into danger. In a systematic survey of the site, the team found the radiation to be significantly high in particular locations (such as the center of the site and the holes) in comparison to "control" areas elsewhere. Higher readings also correlated with the abrasions, and not with other areas of the trees.

The infrared "hot spots" also correlated with a point on the trees about 3 to 4 feet above ground (about the height of the abrasions) and, again, with the center of the site. Marks made by rabbits are not a viable option for the so-called holes arranged in a triangular pattern, as if from a tripod landing gear. Col. Halt displayed the plaster casts at his 1994 talk in Maryland and my colleagues and I studied them and took measurements. Each was

circular, about 8 inches in diameter, and about 2-1/2 to 3 inches deep. At what would have been the bottom, they tapered into a round or blunt point about 1/2 inch in diameter. A scale drawing of a vertical cross-section shows an isosceles triangle about the proportions of a funnel. The cast, by the way, contains some embedded pine needles.

Her description of the object seen by SSgt. Penniston as being a "transparent smoky object..." makes it sound somewhat ephemeral. Translucent probably is a better word, since it seemed to be illuminated from within by the red and blue pulsating lights. Clearly, it was a solid object with a surface resembling opaque black glass. Penniston touched it and traced his fingers over the "etched" markings on its surface.

Otherwise, I wholeheartedly agree with her that many questions need to be asked of the witnesses and the physical evidence aspects need to be clarified. As it stands, we have neither the complete evidence (photographs and samples) nor any analysis reports. But I fail to see how the physical evidence is any more or less "substantive" than it ever has been. I suspect that Col. Halt's book will clarify many of the loose ends.

Unless someone can demonstrate convincingly that Penniston's testimony is false, he actually touched a typical, craftlike UFO. If everything else reported by Halt and the others were misidentifications of prosaic things (which I see no convincing evidence of), we still have this non-lighthouse, non-meteor event of very great potential significance. Furthermore, I repeat that the details of this event and all of its attendant supporting evidence fits strongly established patterns in many decades of accumulated data.

Seldom is all of the relevant information available for any single UFO report. Ultimately the case for UFOs of extraordinary origin is based on analysis of the total body of reports, their credibility, their consistency, and the patterns they display. On that basis, I consider the Rendlesham Forest case to be highly significant.

REBUTTAL BY JENNY RANGLES - RENDLESHAM: A RESPONSE TO RICHARD HALL

In reply to Dick Hall's cogent summary and his reasons for considering this case good evidence for an 'out of this world' phenomenon, I should add a few cautions. This is an opinion I have held for many years and it may be correct. But I do think that we must not underestimate the importance of certain reservations.

Firstly, I fear it is very relevant whether the lighthouse was or was not misperceived during the events. The lighthouse was located just where the UFO was described as being seen and, aside from a few references to a strange, smoky, triangular craft, the UFO was mostly described in terms of glows and lights. John Burroughs - in fact - told me he could not really describe it as a machine but as a form that emerged from a bright glow. So we cannot ignore the possibility of a close encounter triggered by an unusual lightsource (which the lighthouse would be if perceived via mist) - particularly if it was never clearly seen at the same time as the UFO as it should have been at some stages.

Further, if witnesses were fooled by the lighthouse and hid this news in subsequent interviews, we need to know why. And inevitably we have to wonder how sure we can be that they were not fooled more than once in the, obviously unusual circumstances that prevailed in those dark woods if we accept that they were ever fooled at all.

Although I respect Dick for basing his views on what Colonel Charles Halt tells him, the fact is that Halt seems to have made errors in his reporting. He seems mistaken about the date of the events, as reported in his memo to the MoD and as repeated by Dick. The date was - I am nearly certain - the 26th not the 27th. We know this not simply because other witnesses say so, but because every piece of documentation other than the Halt memo confirms it. That means, for example, the Suffolk police records that log when they were called out to see the landing site and the records of RAF Watton (Eastern Radar) contacted by Halt during his sighting. Burroughs also has logical reasons for dating the first night to 25/26 December based on his own movements and these were established some years ago and seem strong. Moreover, Halt confirms he dated the events from memory when writing the belated report to the

MoD. All ways up this suggests that Halt got a key fact about this case wrong and this is inevitably discouraging since it confounded UFOlogists for years.

Given this we have to wonder about Halt's other recall for Dick of events such as the leaving of airman Cabansag back at the East Gate as a relay point. Why so? Because this flatly disputes what the witnesses who were out there that night (Halt was not one of them) say. All these witnesses agree that another airman remained by the gate and that Cabansag at least went out into the woods with the men and had a partial encounter. As such Halt's story here - as reported by Dick - conflicts again with everybody else's. I do not doubt Halt's sincerity. He is after all here describing events 20 years ago that he was not a part of since he had no role whatsoever in the first nights incidents.

Another problem I perceive is the risk of accepting witness testimony at face value. Whilst I strongly agree that one should not accuse witnesses of deception without very good reasons (that I do not see present here) the question of how witnesses observe UFOs is notoriously complex. Mundane sources are regularly misperceived by even experienced and well qualified observers in terms that make them seem much more craft like than they actually are. I have seen this happen too often not to be wary if a witness says they saw an alien craft. Yes, they may have done. But it is at least as likely they saw something less structured. You cannot assume that if witness A says they have seen a smoky craft on the ground that this is what was present. Especially not if his companion witness is less specific about it having craft-like structure. Moreover, it has to be taken into account that during the period of close proximity (the only time when what were otherwise just strange lights were seen) there are reasons to suppose that the witnesses were in a trance-like altered state. Their own words suggest this and you cannot ignore the possible implications that this news conveys.

As readers of my IUR article analysing the 1980 signed witness statements will know, I can state directly from their own testimony when putting together *Strange But True?* that Burroughs and Penniston chose to underplay what they stated in their written reports 20 years ago. So we do not need to rely upon Halt's interpretation of their actions as Dick suggests. This news of their concern for their career must mitigate how we judge the

discrepancies between those signed statements and their later verbal testimony - something I have always made clear. But it does not obscure the serious problem that these statements provide. They say that they misperceived the lighthouse when no witness has ever verbally reported such an event. So are these signed reports not just understated but false? If so, why? Or did the witnesses fail to report their misperception when interviewed verbally across the years? Again, if so, why? Either way, it calls into question the true version of the witness testimony. It simply has to.

Finally, Dick argues that British skeptics are seeking to explain this case as a lighthouse and points out that some of the lights seen clearly could not be so easily resolved. That is, of course, quite true. However, this case is not just a battle between an out of this world craft or a lighthouse. It is far more complicated. As I have made clear, the role of the lighthouse in the case is debatable, but even if it was a trigger for some of the sightings it was not even feasibly the cause of all of them. And to be fair to the skeptics they have never suggested that it was. They believe that this case is a mixture of numerous misperceptions joined together by expectation, disorientation and the foibles of witness perception. As I argued, a bright meteor was a likely starting point. And some of the lights seen over the forest by Halt surely must be stellar objects. Any investigator will recognise a description of twinkling lights moving in small box-like patterns and more or less staying in the same part of sky for many hours, only disappearing as dawn lightened the sky causing these lights to then become less and less obvious. This is a classic description of stars plus autokinesis. Any craft behind these lights would - of course - have become more (not less) clear as the sky brightened.

Certainly there are aspects to this case much less easy to resolve. Again I do make that clear. The 'laser beams' fired at the ground are one. However, there was a lot else going on around the forest at that time. Just to cite three things - there were the gas-powered searchlights then located elsewhere in the woods. There was a British naval exercise underway off the coast. And there were lights associated with radar and telecommunications buildings on the Ness which may, or may not, have been involved in covert experimental tests.

It does not matter which - if any - of these things could have been misperceived - the point is that there are many unrelated happenings amidst a complex and confused situation that are at least partly involved in a full understanding of what went on that night. So, even if the lighthouse was totally irrelevant (although I doubt it was) there are so many potential IFO sources around

that this case cannot be as impressive as it has for so long appeared. Yes, it may prove to be a genuine UFO encounter. But I think it is difficult to justify the degree of certainty that we once may have had. The deeper we dig the more problems we discern. That, to me, is the real lesson of Rendlesham and why caution needs to be applied.

ISLE OF MAN UPDATE

By Chris Rolfe (astratech@supanet.com)

Following an article written by Jonathan Slater and featured here in Project Red Book (Vol 4 #), I thought readers would be interested in the following report posted on an number of UFO newsgroups.

The mystery surrounding the Snaefell Mountain incident, may very well be solved in the not too distant future. This is due to a breakthrough in the case, thanks to a tip off.

Suffice to say that we are on the trail of a pair of drones, and have possibly identified a Royal Navy frigate which was ordered to turnabout and begin a covert search.

We have also discovered a possible remote base that these two drones came from.

We even have a possible US/UK name for the secret project, linked to a Research & Development facility on mainland Scotland, as well as a link to another incident in the Scottish Highlands.

That being the Isle of Lewis incident, that occurred on 26 October, 1996 when many witnesses on the Island heard an extremely loud explosion, and witnessed smoke and debris falling from the night sky into the sea, which resulted in a two day search involving RAF Nimrods, RN ships, along with fishing vessels, and possibly USN ships.

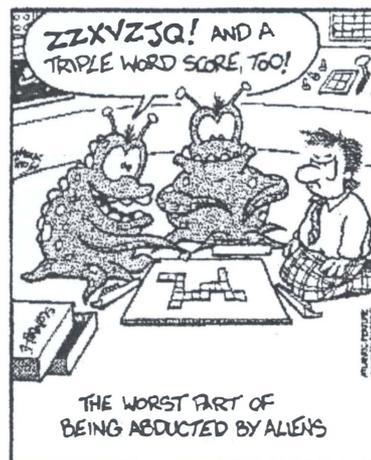
As in the Isle of Man incident nothing was found!

We have also been tipped-off that a certain defence contractor on mainland Britain, took receipt of a damaged drone, which had navigation and guidance system problems.

It now seems clear that some kind of cover up has occurred with regard to the IOM incident. We also know of a woman on the Island whose son works for the police, who was involved in the search for whatever struck the communications mast on top of Snaefell mountain. When his mother asked him about the incident he told her he could not talk about it.

When we receive more information we will of course let you know.

Chris Rolfe
Director Research/Investigations
UFO Monitors
East Kent



PLEASE STOP HUMMING

by
JONATHAN SLATER

Many people from different parts of the world are been kept awake at night by irritating humming noises

But despite efforts to find the source of the humming sound, no one is any the wiser as to where it's coming from.

The most famous case is The Taos Hum, which is a faint, low-frequency humming noise heard in and near the town of Taos, New Mexico. Not only is the hum's source a mystery, but only about 2 percent of Taos residents -- about 1,400 people can hear it.

Some people perceive it as being louder indoors than outdoors. More mysterious still, some people who are bothered by the sound have tried earplugs and other acoustic quieting devices to block it out -- to no effect.

The hum has been the object of complaints in the Taos, New Mexico area since 1991, and the city of Albuquerque investigated similar complaints in 1989. Most people say the noise begins abruptly, never abates, interferes with sleep and is more noticeable inside a house or car than outside.

Some describe it as sounding like a diesel engine sounding in the distance. Some people ascribe other health problems to it, including dizziness, headaches and nosebleeds.

After publicity about the phenomenon in New Mexico, about 100 people called the Taos residents with similar complaints from Taiwan, most western U.S. states, Wisconsin, Michigan, Vermont, Massachusetts, New York and Maryland.

Here in the UK the most famous humming noise can be heard in the city of Bristol and the surrounding areas.

The phenomenon is a humming noise that is mostly heard at night. It has been afflicting hundreds of people for over 30 years and it shows no signs of stopping.

The problem is that no one knows what causes the noise.

And more recently people in outlying areas in Somerset and Wiltshire have started complaining of hearing the same noises.

In a recent survey taken about the Bristol Hum the following information was released.

- The hum sounds like a diesel engine.
- Most people are over the age of 50 who can hear the hum
- At least one partially deaf person hears the hum without using a hearing aid
- J. Hall of Bristol committed suicide in 1 October 1996 after having been driven crazy by the hum
- The hum is perceived as loudest when the modulation frequency is 2.5 - 3.5Hz
- On a 30 mile E-W base line using the loop antenna for direction finding, taking multiple readings along the line, no change in angle was measurable, indicating a very distant source
- Taking a detector into a railway tunnel with 15ft - 20ft of soil and rock overhead did not measurably attenuate the detected signal.

The people who suffer from the Bristol Hum. Say it's a bit like living near a main road.

If the traffic goes by at a constant speed, with no braking or accelerating, it can be tolerable if not exactly welcome.

But if you live near traffic lights or on a hill where there is a lot of stopping and starting, the effects are very different, and very intrusive. The Bristol Hum is like that.

It is a very low, almost inaudible noise. It isn't always there - if it was, it would become part of the background and ignorable. But when it starts up, it is obvious that it isn't in the imagination.

All kinds of reasons have been put forward for the Hum. Some sufferers have inner ear problems, which give the same effect.

The Hum comes and goes and affects people with no physical problems. The humming sound is worse on the northern side of Bristol than any other part of the city.

Then in the *Sheffield Star* dated Saturday April 7th 2001 an article appeared about a humming noise that is keeping Sheffield awake at night. Nick Ward wrote the article

Like most people who can hear it - and not everyone can - Debra Percival, of Ringinglow describes it as a humming noise like a fridge.

It keeps her awake at night and she's not on her own.

So many people have complained that Sheffield Council's Public and Environmental health department has been called in to investigate.

But all inquiries so far have failed to solve the mystery.

In the meantime there's much debate regarding what may be causing it.

Pamela Ruddy, of Bland Lane, Wadsley, has a theory shared by many.

She says: "It sounds like a generator of some kind. Before reading your article I thought the noise was confined to this area only and seriously thought that I may have to move house to escape it - but apparently not."

Other theories over the source include super market and office building air conditioning units around the city.

Agnes Alger, of Wasdale Avenue, Halfway, reckons it sounds like a pump. She says sometimes it is so loud, it is like being in a works machine shop. On other occasions it is barely audible. She said: "Until I read your article I thought I might be going gah, gah. Thank you for publishing it and saving my sanity."

Maureen Abbot of Waterthope Crescent Westfield, was also relieved to read the article.

"I had thought it was something wrong with my ears or my head not being able to deal with modern 24-hour life."

Maureen says it sounds like a "hum punctuated by Morse code".

Her theory: "Power lines, aeroplanes or the fact that there is always someone's fridge, washer, boiler going at all the times."

Rhonda Cowen, from Hutcliffe Wood Road, has a somewhat different theory.

She reckons the noise might be coming from Hutcliffe Wood Crematorium and says it's been going on for years.

Rhonda said: "It started after the crematorium was brought up to European standards."

She wrote to the environmental services in 1994. But when the matter was investigated the department were satisfied the crematorium was unlikely to be the source of the noise.

But Rhonda is having none of it. "I'm almost certain it's coming from there. It seems to be louder in the summer and depends on the wind direction.

"Thank you for your article, several other people in our neighbourhood have now said they can hear it, what a relief."

And a crumb of comfort at least. The council has promised to take another look at her theory.

Meanwhile Mrs Anne Uden says she has been plagued by the noise since moving to Elgin Street, Crookes, nine years ago.

She says: "I have always thought it must be the radio mast at Crosspool...but it could be UFOs of course."

University lecturer Anna Mercier has been irritated by the sound since she moved to the city from Italy three years ago.

She says: "Since I came to Sheffield I have been distressed by a noise in my house, very similar to the one described in the article. I tried to investigate."

So far she has had a report from an acoustic consultant and an audiological test proving her hearing is normal.

She also insisted on an investigation from the Electricity Board because her house is near to an electricity generator but nothing proved conclusive.

She adds: "I was persuaded, until I read the article that the noise was a specific problem of my house, or at least my area, and I was determined to move soon! "I was very depressed to learn that even moving would not solve my problem."

Sally Singleton, of Bents Green, writes: "Thank goodness someone else has noticed this. I live at Bents Green and have noticed it for at least the past three years.

"It sounds like a generator running, and I have attributed it to the water treatment works further up at Ringinglow Road, which vibrates through my water pipes."

Andrew Gannon is so fed up he's decided to look into the problem himself. He says: "Basically there would appear to be three possibilities. The noise exists at a very low frequency inaudible to some people.

"Or the noise does not exist at all and people 'hearing' the noise are really suffering from tinnitus.

"Or it could be that the noise stimulates tinnitus in the people hearing it?"

Andrew believes a loud very low frequency noise is being generated possibly by water, sewage or gas pumping machines.

He said "Low frequency noise can travel long distances and permeates structures. Earplugs give me little comfort as the noise easily vibrates through the standard type.

"The only solution is to use Blu-Tack"

THE SOMERSET HUM

Pamela Bridges told how she has been plagued for the last six months by a persistent mysterious hum at her 300-year-old thatched cottage in Somerset.

Mrs. Bridges, aged 64, is the latest person to report a controversial and apparently growing

phenomenon, which was highlighted last week by a group of women in a Cheshire village.

In a storyline which could have come straight out of TV's *X-Files*, the villagers say the noise, from a so far unidentified source, can only be heard by women.

The latest reports follow a series of cases in the West, including the notorious Bristol hum which has been talked about for 30 years.

There are a number of theories from gas pipelines to traffic and radio waves to explain the noises. It is believed that women are more sensitive to some sounds than men.

Mrs. Bridges said the noise began in June after she had a new telephone line installed at her four-bedroom home of 40 years in Cliff Road, North Petherton, near Bridgwater.

She described the sound as a mid-range drone and said it became so bad she was unable to sleep.

For three months she spent the night with family and friends, but now manages to sleep for about three hours by using earplugs and taking medication.

Her case has been investigated by experts from BT, the local council, SWEB, and gas and water engineers, but they all remain baffled after failing to find the cause.

Mrs Bridges said the noise starts in the evening and continues all night. Wet weather seems to make it worse.

Mrs Bridges said: "It is a terrible thing when you dread going into your own bedroom but cannot sleep.

"I am hoping that other people in the village who have heard the noise will get in touch, so we can find out where it's coming from."

MEXBOROUGH- case ajar

By Dave Baker

This will probably be the last report on the Mexborough footage investigated by YUFOS over the last few months and featured numerous times in these pages.

Basically, we have reached a dead-end in our avenues of research, and have run out of further options.

Regular readers following the saga will know that I had written to the Civilian Air Authority and the MoD in a final effort to trace the aircraft in the footage – if that is indeed what they were.

I deliberately avoided writing the letters as a ufologist, or member of a UFO group, as I suspected I would be more likely to get a serious reply if I contacted them as a member of the public. I did not mention the term UFO, and explained that I thought that the objects were military aircraft and that I merely wanted help in identifying them. I even pointed out that it was an ex-member of the RAF who had suggested that the objects could be military aircraft, and that it was a spokesman from RAF Leeming who had suggested that I write to the MoD and the CAA asking for their help

For the record, here is the letter I wrote to the MoD.

Dear Sir,

I wonder if you can help me. My name is Dave Baker, and I was recently given a piece of camcorder footage which shows two as-yet unexplained objects flying in the sky over Mexborough.

The video was taken between 4:00pm and 4:30 pm on Saturday the 13th March 1999.

I have had the footage investigated by a video analyst named Tim Farrow, of T.J.F. Video productions in Cornwall, but unfortunately the resolution of the footage is too poor, and the objects too small and distant in the field of view to enable workable enhancement. However, Mr. Farrow is an ex-RAF officer, and he feels

that these objects are almost certainly military aircraft. (See enclosed report)¹

I understand that normally the RAF does not fly at weekends, and the footage was indeed taken on a Saturday. However, I have been told that on 26th March the intensive bombing campaign against Yugoslavia started, and that this could have been part of the "working up" phase to get the RAF into a war-fighting capability.

Based on the general direction of the objects' flight path, and the information given by Mr. Farrow, I thought it was possible that these aircraft may have been en-route to RAF Leeming.

However, after contacting Leeming, I was informed that there were no aircraft from the base anywhere near Mexborough on that day. It was suggested by Flight Lieutenant Pleasant that I contact you at this address instead, and that you may be able to help me further.

I would really like to be able to explain the objects in this footage to my satisfaction, and the only way that this seems possible is to track down these military aircraft, if that is indeed what they are.

Could you tell me if there were any scheduled military operations at that time, in that area?

If it would help, I can send you a copy of the camcorder footage for analysis.

I hope that you can help me close this mystery once and for all!

Yours truly,

David Baker

The letter I received in reply is on the next page.

¹ This was the report featured in PRB



From: Mrs L C Unwin
 Directorate of Air Staff
 4a1(Secretariat)
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
 Room 8245, Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB

Telephone	(Direct dial)	020 7218 2140
	(Switchboard)	020 7218 9000
	(Fax)	020 7218 2680
	(GTN)	#

Mr D Baker
 224 Bellhouse Road
 Firth Park
 Sheffield
 South Yorkshire
 S5 6HT

Your Reference

Our Reference
 D/DAS(Sec)64/3
 Date
 23 April 2001

Dear Mr Baker

Thank you for your letter of 29 March concerning video footage of 'unidentified flying objects' seen on 13 March 1999. This office is the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for correspondence relating to 'UFOs.'

Firstly, it may be helpful if I explain that the Ministry of Defence examines any reports of 'unidentified flying objects' it receives solely to establish whether what was seen might have some defence significance; namely, whether there is any evidence that the United Kingdom's airspace might have been compromised by hostile or unauthorised air activity.

Unless there is evidence of a potential threat to the United Kingdom from an external military source, and to date no 'UFO' report has revealed such evidence, we do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each reported sighting. We believe it is possible that rational explanations, such as aircraft lights or natural phenomena, could be found for them, but it is not the function of the MOD to provide this kind of aerial identification service. We could not justify expenditure of public funds on investigations which go beyond our specific defence remit.

With regard to your particular observation, we are satisfied that there is no corroborating evidence to suggest that the United Kingdom's airspace was breached by unauthorised air activity on 13 March 1999. Military aircraft do sometimes fly at weekends to prepare for operations or to complete training, so it is possible that this may have been what is seen on your video recording. However, in order to confirm whether any military aircraft were flying over Mexborough on this day, a check would need to be made with every Squadron in the RAF, RN and Army Air Corp. Records of individual sorties are not generally kept for long periods and it is unlikely that any details would be found even if it were practical to conduct such investigations. I am, therefore, unable to assist you with your enquiries on this occasion.

Yours sincerely,

L.C. Unwin

I was disappointed but not in the least surprised with the answer I received from the MoD. Apart from the last paragraph which deals with my case individually, it is basically a form letter, the sort of thing that they have been dishing out to ufologists and members of the public for years.

Unfortunately, as far as their comments on my case is concerned, there is probably more than a grain of truth in what they say. It *would* be difficult to try to trace any military air activity over Mexborough two years ago: but not impossible. It's just that it would cost too much time, effort and money to do so, merely to please some annoying Yorkshire git with a spooky video. No bombs were dropped on Mexborough, no aircraft were buzzed or members of the public strafed, so obviously nothing of defence significance happened.

So, Dave, just bugger off will you?

So basically, if the Ministry of Defence cannot help, who can?

I may still get an answer from the CAA, but I fear that if they bother to answer at all, it will basically tell the same story as the letter from the MoD; that their records do not go far enough back to help me, or that they do not have the time or resources to make a search.

This is basically what I expected, and a problem of investigating cases that have grown "old" - which in most cases can mean weeks, let alone two years.

I may be wrong, but I do not think that the objects in the footage -if they are aircraft- are civilian anyway. The two objects appear to be flying much too closely together to be anything other than gliders, and I think that given the wingspan of these craft, their appearance would be obvious on the footage.

So, having failed to hire the MoD and CAA to help us, where do we go from here? There are, unfortunately, only a few options.

LETTER CAMPAIGN

The MoD point out the obvious: that they would have to check with every RAF base etc in order to help me, and that - basically - they cannot be arsed.²

In a way, I cannot blame them, for here at YUFOS Towers we certainly do not have the time or resources to send out letters to every RAF & Army base and flight -training school in the country. RAF Leeming did appear to have kept their records, so that isn't a problem. If we happened to reach the right base, they may well be able and willing to help us. We just might have to send out a hundred or more letters in order to find the right one. And frankly, we cannot afford it. Now I know what the USA's Fund for UFO Research is for!

FURTHER COMPUTER ANALYSIS

The Mexborough footage has been investigated by two independent video analysts, both of whom expressed the opinion that the footage itself cannot be enhanced and examined further. The footage was taken using a low-end model of analogue camcorder, on full zoom, and so the resolution is poor to begin with. Bearing in mind that the objects are *very* small within the field of view, I fully understand this problem and do not think anyone else would be able to improve this other than contacting the *true* professionals, by which I mean the military, or the baddies in Will Smith's *Enemy of the State*. And somehow, I don't think they would be willing to lend a hand...

The footage was appraised basically using only the knowledge of the men themselves, based on their *opinions* and *estimations* of the objects' size, altitude, distance from the camera, speed etc. In other words - and no disrespect to anyone involved- the two computer experts have no more a professional and reliable answer than that of myself, UFOIN's Andy Roberts and Dave Clarke, who were the first to view the footage outside YUFOS, or the opinions of the most casual YUFOS member who watched the video once.

To stress further, Bill Rose' suggestion of micro-lites, Tim Farrow's near-certainty that the objects were military aircraft, and Andy Roberts view that the 'UFOs' are herons, are all as likely as each other.

If we were able to find another video analyst willing to examine the footage, it is more than likely that they would produce yet another, completely different explanation which would be just as viable.

² *Technical Northern phrase meaning "bothered"*

And we could go on forever in that way. Unfortunately we once again have neither the time nor the resources to do this.

OTHER FIELDS OF RESEARCH

Of course we could ignore the military aircraft theory completely and follow up research into other areas, such as birds. It had been one of our original plans to show the footage to an ornithologist, and of course we still could.

But what would this truly prove? If Bill Oddie himself were to nod sagely, scratch his beard and pronounce the Mexborough objects were definitely herons, we still could not close the case. His opinion is no more valid than that of ex-RAF officer Tim Farrow, who concluded that they were 95% likely to be military aircraft. Or aviation expert Bill Rose's theory of micro-lites or hang-gliders.

We have already attempted to prove Bill Rose's hypothesis, but enquiries into likely sources proved fruitless. I am satisfied that none of the local airfields hired out equipment on the day in question, but as stated before, there are so many privately owned micro-lites and hang-gliders these days that we have an impossible task on our hands. Even if we could find a list of every owner in the country, and had the resources to contact each and every one, how many of them would know just whether they were active on the day and time in question – for sure?

THE END?

So that is where the case lies. Ajar. (I refuse to remain optimistic enough to declare the case open – I really think that we will never know for sure – and I am certainly not considering it closed. Something still may turn up...one day.)

It is a pity, because so many UFO cases are bound with nothing more than the word of the witness/es and in the end become nothing more than stories.

Here we have actual evidence – something which can be examined and investigated, yet it is still not enough.

All we can say is that the Mexborough Footage *does* show Unidentified Flying Objects – maybe not Flying Saucers, mind – but it is likely that they were always remain that way. Unidentified.

* NEXT MEETING *

Tuesday 12 June 2001

7:00pm – 10:00 pm

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REVIEW: DR. RICHARD WISEMAN AT THE EDINBURGH SCIENCE FESTIVAL

by Gordon Rutter

(Thanks to Gordon for permission to re-print this report in PRB – Ed.)

For more information see the Edinburgh Science Festival reports at
<http://www.forteantimes.com>

Tuesday, 17th of April

The final talk of the Edinburgh International Science Festival was destined to be a Fortean classic. Since the start of the Festival Richard Wiseman had been conducting investigations into some of the many reported hauntings in Edinburgh, surely one of the most haunted cities in the world. This had gathered an enormous amount of publicity in newspapers, on television and on radio as well. Tonight was to be the much anticipated announcement of the results. Some information had already been given to the press prompting such headlines as "scientists prove ghosts and the afterlife" and even getting a certain Edinburgh Fortean to appear on the radio (erm, that's me if anyone was wondering - LBC rang me up for my comments). All of this advance publicity lead to a capacity crowd at the Royal Museum of Scotland lecture theatre.

At 8 o' clock sharp 400 people listened to the results from one of the largest investigations into ghost behaviour ever undertaken. Richard started off with a caveat - the work and results had only been finished some 24 hours previously and there had been very little time to really look at the results - the evening was very much to be regarded as a preliminary glimpse of a work in progress.

Instantly scotching the newspaper headlines we were told that the results were very much a mixed bag. But before we were given any results the scene was set as the lights went down and Richard told us a ghost story typical of those told nightly by the many guides of ghost tours the city wide. He used the story as a springboard to lead us directly into the \$64 000 question - what actually is going on?

At the turn of the century Victorians were producing portraits of the living surrounded by the dead, double exposures debunked by many including Harry Houdini. At the same time the rise of the medium was in full spate - seances were taking place everywhere often

involving manifestations of ectoplasm and even full figures. Charges of fakery abounded and at the same time science took an interest in the subject and also that of haunted houses. Cameras were left overnight in places, recording equipment was run and witnesses interviewed.

An analysis of 924 reports from the 1930's onwards by Harte and Havers (1996) gives the following breakdown:-

Report type example %

Visual shadows seen 31
Auditory footsteps heard 21
Olfactory cigar smoke smelt 2
Tactile temperature changes 8
Sensed feeling of being watched 11
Object movement doors opening 18
Equipment failure Lights blowing 9

Richard pointed out that these experiences are reported by people and as such they can't be ignored, but why do they have them and why are they associated with particular places?

Previously Richard and his team had participated in an investigation at Hampton Court where the Haunted Gallery (where else) was said to have visitations from Catherine Howard the 5th wife of Henry VIII. Visitors were given a questionnaire to assess their belief in the paranormal and they were then asked to mark on a map the location of any experiences they may have during their visit. A massive 431 people had experiences of which 44% were in the Haunted Gallery and the remaining 56% in the associated Georgian Rooms. Of these people 47% had at least one experience, most frequently a feeling of temperature change but also dizziness, a sense of presence and a sighting of a form. 19% of these people felt the results were likely to have been caused by a ghost. The experiences mapped to two main locations and the

investigators were treated with the rare pleasure of meeting the reincarnation of Catherine Howard!

Overnight monitoring was planned at these locations - thermal image filming, magnetic field measurement and air temperature measurement. If the instruments showed anything the video was subsequently checked. 2 Bumps were recorded - one was attributable to a guard doing his rounds but the second also showed a magnetic anomaly. This turned out to be a cleaner, complete with vacuum cleaner. No paranormal activity but evidence of bricked up doors causing temperature fluctuations was the order of the day.

Next Richard moved on to the work in hand. The Science Festival was an opportunity to investigate the prisons of Edinburgh Castle and the vaults at Niddrie street, the latter involving 250 volunteers.

On the night of the 4th of April monitoring equipment was left running in the old prison cells. Two rises in temperature were found but the video showed absolutely nothing - either on the thermal camera or a normal Hi8 camera. The investigation then moved to the Underground City of Edinburgh. 10 vaults were rated by one of the local tour companies, Mercat Tours, from very haunted to not very haunted based on the number of experiences reported on their tours. These ratings were kept secret from the team of investigators.

Again a questionnaire was completed and people were left singly in each of the 10 rooms and asked to report. The vaults are part of the arches of a bridge in Edinburgh and they were converted into living and working space and they were used from 1790 to about 1820 when excessive damp rendered them useless. They were filled in and rediscovered in the 1980's and then tours started in the mid '90's. Two of the rooms are regarded in the most haunted category - rooms 4 and 9, with number 4 winning by a short (disembodied) head. Reports from here included a large, aggressive man with big boots who would breathe on people, and push them. Also reported here are a small boy who seems more playful than harmful. Not content with haunting one room big boots is also reported from room number 9, but this room also boasts a large black bird flapping round peoples faces, feelings of icy cold, discomfort and once even the sight of a naked man hanging from the roof! When the data was analysed all those who

knew something about the history of the area were removed to make sure there was no bias. Of the volunteers 2 actually refused to enter the rooms, but of those who did enter 44% reported at least one experience. These experiences ranged from being watched, burning sensations, a figure crossing a doorway, sounds of breathing, touches on the body and pulling on clothing. When the data was compared to the ranking of the vaults there was found to be a strong correlation between incidents reported and ranking. Naturally the press have reported this as evidence of ghosts - but Richard wanted to know if there were any physical attributes which may be responsible. 51 % of the participants in haunted vaults reported incidents and 35 % of those in none haunted vaults reported something. Was this due to air temperature, air movement, magnetic field effects, light levels or even the size of the vaults?

When these characteristics were examined there seemed to be no temperature differences, magnetic field strengths or general light level effects attributable to the requisite rooms. Air movements and magnetic field fluctuations within the haunted rooms seemed to be greater than in the non haunted rooms, but the differences were so small that more investigation is needed on these aspects. When the external light level (the darker the door space), the floor space and the room height were examined there did seem to be a positive correlation. The bigger the room and the darker the door space the more likely the room was to be regarded as haunted, both in the survey and in general.

Of those who reported experiences the majority were believers to start with.

Visual records were taken during the investigation - photographs were taken before and after groups arrived, these included Polaroids, digital photographs and standard 35 mm shots. Of some 200 photographs 3 showed anomalies. All were recorded in the before photographs and the incident was not seen in the after shots. From room 9 a digital camera showed a green circle of light, from room 4 a Polaroid showed a green blob which could not be replicated by the team (despite pressing thumbs on developing shots and dripping water from the vault ceiling on the photographic material). Room 9 also showed a fog like mist in the corner on one of the 35 mm

shots.

All told the results seem to show a stability of effect (plottable to floor space and external light levels) and the picture anomalies need more investigation. Richard, the team and the audience were all impressed by the results and the audience most surely appreciated an unbiased investigation into the paranormal. It is true that more work needs to be carried out and that the psychological aspects of the reports need to be investigated, but that is all for another time.

Richard did leave us with one final item in a true Blair Witch Project twist. A local psychologist, not a strong believer, but curious nonetheless, was taken into a room similar to those in the investigations.

For logistical reasons this was in a slightly different area of the Underground City. One difference was that this person was left slightly more alone than any of the others (at all times

the 250 volunteers were never more than a couple of rooms away from help). A camera was set up in the room and our intrepid psychologist reported all her feelings direct to camera for a full 20 minutes. She didn't expect anything to happen but then she started hearing breathing in a corner and it then moved towards her, constantly going quite as if it didn't want to be heard but then resuming. She kept the commentary going for the full 20 minutes but the tape was decided to be too harrowing to show at this evenings event, only a post event debriefing was shown with a clearly distraught subject.

All told the event raised more questions than answers, but Richard is looking forward to looking into these questions as well. Just remember to watch this space for more details.

Gordon Rutter

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."*

LANCASTER

I think it was 1979 or 1980. It was in the summer school holidays, a friend named Simon, (sorry I can't remember his last name, as I have not seen him for about 13 years or so) and I had been playing football on what we used to call the Top Car Park on Lancaster Drive, on the border between Padiham & Hapton in Lancaster.

I think it must have been around 9.30pm, as it was quite dark but not night (if you know what I mean). Simon and I decided to walk up

towards his house when we noticed this object hovering in the sky.

It seemed to be roughly about a mile away and hovering over what was Polver Plastics (which was a chemical producing factory in Hapton). now between Lancaster Drive (which was one of those state of the art purpose built 70s council estates) and Polver Plastics were fields so we had no view point but this thing was massive.

It looked like the size of a double decker bus (close up, but it was at least a mile away and in the sky) We ran to Simon's house and called his mum, who at first did not believe us until she came outside and saw it for herself, we

then tried to get Simon's dad to come downstairs and out of the house to see the object but with a blink of an eye it was gone.

The object itself seemed to be oblong in shape, dark orange glow with a dark line through the center (like a strike through if you will) going from left to right not top to bottom. The object just seemed to hover there, probably in the region of a thousand feet or so up. It was there for around 5 minutes or so and then just vanished.

I can also remember a strange silence while it was there, I don't know if this was because we were not paying any attention to anything else or what but I remember it none the less I have never really told many people about this and we did not report the sighting but I hope you find this info useful

(Stuart Andrew Morgan)

CRICH, DERBYSHIRE

On the morning of Saturday the 21st of October 2000 around 1am-2am, Sarah was suddenly awoken by a bright light shining through her bedroom window.

"A bright light woke me and I looked out of the window and saw a red and green light flashing over Crich in Derbyshire".

The weather conditions on that night were slightly misty but I could see the lights very clearly.

The whole sighting lasted around 10 minutes and then the object went bright white and just disappeared.

When asked what most convinced her that she was observing something unusual she replied?

"It woke me up with the bright lights it didn't make any noise like a helicopter or a plane and then it turned bright white and then just disappeared".

(Sarah Clements)

HAYLING ISLAND EAST BEACH FRONT

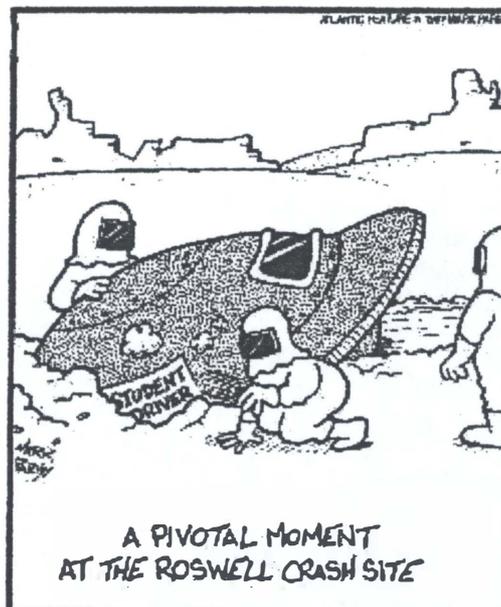
I was night fishing on the beach at Eastney one Friday night in September 2000 around 1:00am.

When out off the pitch dark I saw two beams of lights like searchlights criss-crossing each other on Hayling Island East Beach Front.

"There was two light beams alternating on the beach criss-crossing each other I could not see or hear any aircraft or helicopters the whole thing lasted around 20 minutes and then it just stopped and it went pitch black again".

That's all I can remember and as I mentioned on my email I dismissed it as maybe a aircraft searching but the criss-crossing didn't make any sense. I did tell my wife but forgot all about it until I read your message. Hope this helps

(Mr Raymond Lee)



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

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

URI PITCHES IN FOR CUP (BBC News on line 25 April, 2001)

Paranormal expert Uri Geller has attempted to save the FA Cup Final in a mind-bending experiment. On a visit to south Wales, Geller summoned the mind power of the nation to call the roof to close.

The retractable roof of the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff has been jammed open for three weeks and the exposed pitch has fallen into a poor condition.

Earlier this week worried Football Association chiefs ordered new turf be laid before the final on May 12.

The Israeli-born psychic, who first demonstrated his powers in 1969, said: "I want to fix the roof, I want to activate it.

"We will visualise the roof mechanism and all you have to do is send your mind power."

Dropping in on BBC Radio Wales studio in Cardiff on Wednesday, he encouraged Wales at One presenter Phil Parry to join the massive effort.

He called on everyone in Wales to use mental energy to shift the huge stadium feature, which is unique in the UK, in time for the world's most-watched club football competition.

The FA has shifted competitions to Cardiff while Wembley Stadium is being rebuilt.

"Believe that your mind power is going to release the jam that made the roof stop working," Uri asked. "I am not joking. I know, to some, this may sound comical or rather bizarre. But we will send the instruction.

"After three, shout out the word: 'Move!'

"You do want Liverpool and Arsenal playing there on May 12, don't you? What we should do is use our mind power to make the retractable roof move again."

Stadium officials said later that the roof was expected to be working normally again on

Thursday.

A three day operation costing £100,000 to relay the stadium's turf was also due to begin then.

SECRET OF THE INDIAN ROPE TRICK IS FINALLY REVEALED: IT'S A HOAX

(David Brown, Independent UK 14/ 4/ 2001)

The secret of the Indian rope-trick, which has intrigued generations of scientists and magicians, has been uncovered by a Scottish academic after a five-year investigation.

Peter Lamont, a former president of the Magic Circle in Edinburgh and now a researcher at the city's university, revealed the truth at Edinburgh's International Science Festival last night.

He has discovered that the trick has never been performed and was invented by an American newspaper as part of a circulation drive 111 years ago.

The *Chicago Tribune* caused a storm when it printed a report from India of a boy climbing an unsupported rope and disappearing at the top. The paper claimed he was followed by a man armed with a sword who also disappeared before parts of the boy's body fell from the sky and landed in a basket at the base of the rope. The man reappeared and emptied out the basket, revealing the boy to be in perfect health.

Versions of the story spread world-wide, but little notice was taken of a short note published by the *Chicago Tribune* four months after the original story that admitted the article was a publicity stunt. It assumed readers would realise it was a hoax because the story was bylined "Fred S. Ellmore".

Mr Lamont discovered the truth after a painstaking search that revealed the bizarre theories of others who claim to have "solved" the trick. "It is a legend which the West constructed," said Mr Lamont, 37, who is now planning to write a book on its history.

One Viceroy of India is said to have offered a £10,000 reward to the person who would reveal the secret so he could impress the visiting Prince of Wales. And one expert claims it involved twin boys, one of whom would actually be murdered.

It is thought the hoax may have been inspired by the Indian street act of balancing a boy on a pole.

"I suppose I have destroyed some people's beliefs," said Mr Lamont, of Edinburgh University's Koestler Parapsychology Unit.

COULD HAIRS FOUND IN BHUTAN BELONG TO THE LEGENDARY YETI?

Hairs found in a Bhutan forest could be those of the legendary Yeti, say makers of a TV documentary.

The cluster of hairs was found in a cedar tree by scientists who accompanied the documentary team. Sonam Dhendup, a local Yeti-hunter and guide, said the tree was the animal's lair. On returning to Britain, the team handed the hair to Oxford geneticists for analysis.

"It's not a human, it's not a bear, nor anything else that we've so far been able to identify," says Bryan Sykes, professor of human genetics at the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Oxford.

"We've never encountered any DNA that we couldn't recognise before, but then, we weren't looking for the Yeti," says Sykes, the first geneticist to extract DNA from archaeological bone specimens.

Sykes says that all other hairs handed in by the Yeti-hunting team were easy to identify, turning out to be pigs, for example.

An earlier, skin sample from Bhutan reputed to be from a Yeti was shown by Sykes to be that of a bear. But he is mystified by the hair sample. "We don't know what it is; it's behaving most peculiarly," he says.

Rob McCall, an evolutionary biologist from the University of Oxford, reported finding scratch marks inside the cedar tree, which resembled claw rather than nail scratches.

McCall also discovered odd footprints just a

couple of hours old. They revealed a short print with a narrow heel, plus toe pads rather than claws.

In Bhutan, locals call the Yeti the Migyur. One eyewitness, a former royal guard called Druk Sherrick, told the programme that it was an apelike creature about 3 metres tall. "The face was red, with a nose like a chimpanzee's," he says.

FAMILY FLEES HOUSE WITH 'CHILLING HISTORY'

(Greg Di Cresce, police reporter, Winnipeg Sun 26 April 2001)

A North End family spooked out of their home by a "cruel and possessive" demon are trying to win it back through prayer.

"A tortured soul has staked its claim to our house and will not let go. It's beaten my wife, terrifies my children and causes bad things to happen. It's forced us out," said 26-year-old father, William Hudson, while standing beside a pastor and a minister in his Manitoba Avenue home.

Yesterday, Hudson said he had brought the pair of clergy to 492 Manitoba Ave. to exorcise the "evil spirit." The clergy said they came to "simply bless the home" but confirmed the residence seems to house a "tormented soul."

"We hope that through the Bible, and Jesus Christ we can get these people back into their home," said Pastor Dan Murdock of Chief Cornerstone Church.

For the past three nights, William, his wife Martha, and their five children have fled the home in fear and slept at a relative's house. And to make matters worse, on Tuesday night a group of crooks pried into the house, emptying it of food, clothing and electronic equipment.

A cop who dealt with the break-in was moved to do some paranormal policing after hearing of the couple's plight. He brought a priest to the home to bless it with holy water.

"We were happy the policeman believed us. You know, we thought we might be going crazy," mom Martha said. She said she didn't think there was a "demon in the house" until bruises on her hands, ribs and arms started to appear.

"It was like I wrestled with an animal on certain nights," she said. Area residents said the house has a chilling history.

"We're not sure if someone died in there, but everyone we know who has lived there has battled a ghost," next-door neighbour Debbie Houle said.

"The last person left after a fire gutted most of the house last year," she said.

Last night, the Hudsons, with Pastor Murdock and Reverend Comber McDonald, used holy oil to bless all the bedroom doors. They also led the family in prayer to help cast out evil.

"If we don't get it out of here we want to move, but I don't know if our housing co-op will let us," William said. "They tell us the only way they'll let us move to a new place is get someone else to take over our lease."

WITCH CASTS SPELL TO PROTECT NESSIE (*Shirley English April 25 2001*)

A white witch, with a broken leg from falling over his black cat, cast a protective spell over Loch Ness yesterday in a bid to stop the latest monster hunter finding the elusive beast.

Bookmakers William Hill seemed unperturbed by the intervention of Kevin Carlyon, 42, a High Priest of the British Coven of White Witches from East Sussex, and slashed the odds on Nessie being found from 500-1 to 100-1.

Mr Carlyon, a former wrestler in a flowing orange cloak, jogging bottoms and trainers, travelled north in an effort to scupper the plans of Jan Sundberg, 53, a monster hunter from Motala, Sweden. Together with six scientists Mr Sundberg plans to trawl the loch over the next 12 days with the aim of trapping any monster living there and taking DNA samples.

But in a clash at the lochside at Drumnadrochit marina, near Inverness, the two men traded insults before going about their business.

As Mr Carlyon stepped from his stretch limo near the water's edge where Mr Sundberg was explaining his expedition to the assembled media, the Swede shouted at him: "If you come any closer I will have you arrested."

The High Priest replied with a distinctly unmagical insult and then threatened to throw the monster hunter in the loch.

He then borrowed a cigarette lighter to ignite his incense sticks, intoned a few magic words and threw a stone talisman covered in runes into the murky depths.

Mr Carylon said that he had summoned the elements of earth, air, fire and water, to Loch Ness "that it may be safe and the creatures here not harmed." He went on: "On this day this talisman was created and blessed, to prevent any harm coming to a creature in Loch Ness. So may it be done." He said that Nessie should be left in peace.

Mr Sundberg said that he was not bothered by the white witch and called the magical intervention "mumbo-jumbo." He said: "I am leading a serious expedition." This is the Swede's second attempt to find Nessie, who he believes is a monster-size eel. He hopes it will swim into his seven-foot-long unbaited net. A sonar alarm will let the team know when anything is caught.

Yesterday, locals were divided over the latest antics surrounding their legendary neighbour. Willie Cameron, of Loch Ness Marketing, said: "You couldn't buy this sort of publicity."

But Gary Campbell, president of the official Loch Ness Monster Fan Club, sneered. "They have no chance of catching Nessie with that stupid net. Have they never seen Jaws? That net couldn't trap a fish," he said.

A long-suffering police officer keeping an eye on events said: "I can't believe grown men behave like this."

MOMO MYSTERY REARS ITS HEAD ONCE MORE IN LOUISIANA, MO. (*Brandy Warren, Everyday Magazine on, May 2, 2001*)

LOUISIANA, MO. - Almost 30 years after their moment in the national spotlight, the people of this small Mississippi River town are still split on what to believe. And now outsiders are stirring things up again.

In 1972, many put stock in stories about the Missouri Monster, or "Momo," a large, hairy creature with a nasty stench that some believe roamed nearby Star Hill, about 80 miles north of St. Louis.

And many didn't. They figured some of the believers were tippin' the bottle.

The buzz began when a 15-year-old girl reported seeing Momo outside her home. The sighting sent a slew of armed locals into the hills, looking for the beast. Some even planted bait, hoping to be the hero who captured Momo.

Reporters flocked in from around the country to give Louisiana, population 4,000, its 15 minutes of fame.

After a few weeks, the buzz -- not to mention the reported stench -- died down. Old differences of opinion faded. People went back to their lives.

But they're talking about it again, since an organization based in Tucson, Ariz., spent a week on Star Hill, just north of downtown Louisiana, looking for any traces of the almost-forgotten monster. Mostly, the effort brought laughter. When someone brings up Momo, a light enters people's eyes and a smile crosses their faces.

The children of the '70s, who believed, are now grown up and raising their own children. Momo seems like a fable to them.

But for the International Society of Cryptozoology, the visit is serious. Its members examined the area April 14-20, collecting witness statements and checking whether that locale could provide enough food to sustain a Bigfoot-like creature.

Richard Greenwell, secretary of the organization and a zoologist, said this was just one of many trips the group makes each year. The society was formed in 1982 to document and evaluate evidence about animals that have been reported to exist but never verified.

Its Internet Web site boasts that cryptozoologists in the past 200 years have discovered many now-familiar animals, including the gorilla (in 1847), the giant panda (in 1869) and the giant gecko (in 1984).

Greenwell said most of his trips have been to the Pacific Northwest.

Greenwell said there does appear to be enough food to support such a creature. But he said it will take more than testimonials of the locals to convince him.

"We don't accept things on faith," he said. "We evaluate information. Sometimes it takes years

to reach a conclusion. This is just one piece." On this particular trip, he was joined by Bill Riley, a Hannibal native who also claimed to have seen the creature in July 1972. Riley said Momo chased him onto the porch of a farmhouse along Highway 79. He described the beast as around 8 feet tall, and putting off an odor he described as a mixture of sulfur and feces, only worse.

He said he didn't tell anyone about the encounter for six years, fearing no one would believe him. He finally confided in his future wife.

When Riley made this trip to Louisiana, one of several in recent years, he said many other locals came forward with stories of their encounters, some as recently as 1996.

A lot of people don't want to admit publicly what they saw, out of fear of being the butt of humor, he said.

It is true that mere mention of Momo can send Louisiana residents into gales of laughter.

"I believed in it then," said Candy Barnett, who at 44 has changed her mind about the sightings in 1972. "I think I would actually have to see it to believe it."

Mary Shrum, 52, owns a farm outside of town and said she's never seen anything out of the ordinary - only raccoons, coyotes, deer and the like. No giant, hairy creature and no nauseating smell. "I just don't believe it," she said.

Some do believe it though, people such as Beverly Siders, 54, of Elsberry, who grew up in Louisiana. Siders said she doesn't have a reason to doubt those who say Momo exists. "I believe there's something out there," Siders said.

But exactly what might be out there remains to be documented. Maybe it was a bear or some other already discovered creature. Or a prank.

The cryptozoologists' visit was not completely without incident.

Some of their gear disappeared during the week. Police Chief James Graham said that after his officers asked questions about it around town, the researchers heard a knock on their motel room door and found the missing equipment sitting outside. They saw no sign of anyone - or anything.