

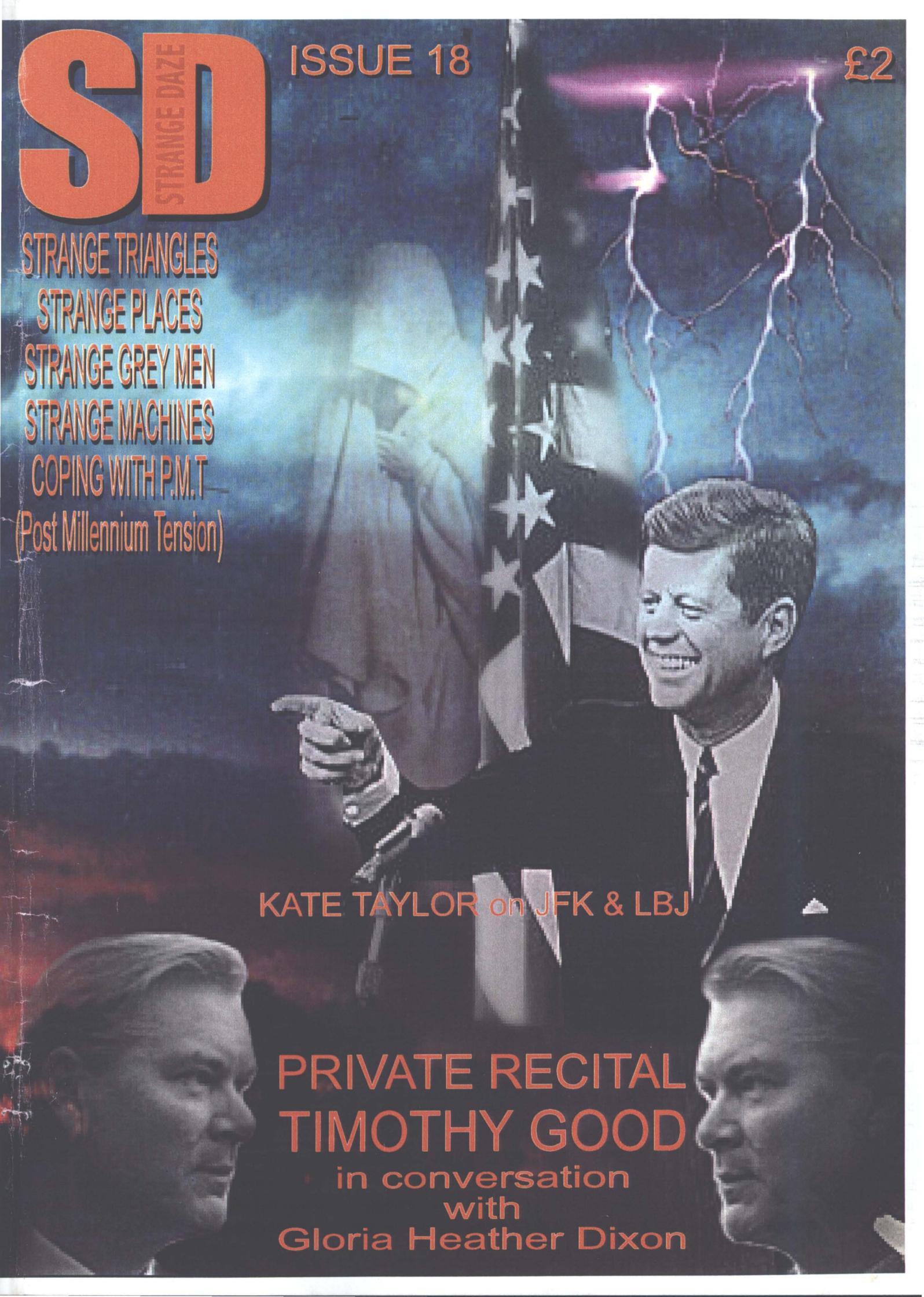
SD

STRANGE DAZE

ISSUE 18

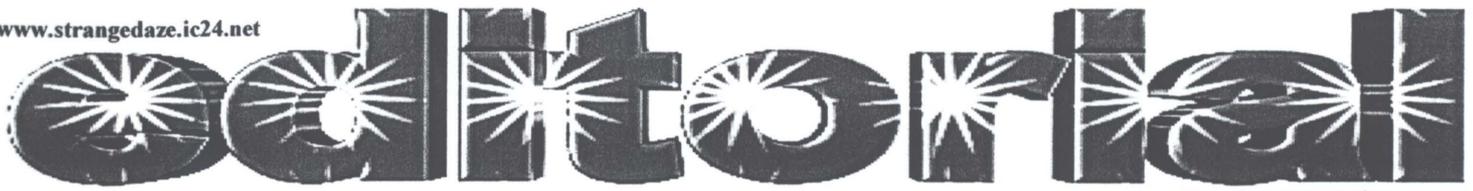
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STRANGE TRIANGLES
STRANGE PLACES
STRANGE GREY MEN
STRANGE MACHINES
COPING WITH P.M.T.
(Post Millennium Tension)



KATE TAYLOR on JFK & LBJ

PRIVATE RECITAL
TIMOTHY GOOD
in conversation
with
Gloria Heather Dixon



AD – 2000, Heading Towards A Brave New World?.....



I would like to welcome readers both old and new to this special bumper issue of Strange Daze. 1999 has been both a fascinating and yet deeply troubled year so far, creating many paradoxes. To isolate some examples of this we need to look to the extensive tragedy and genocide in Kosovo, followed by the recent disaster of epidemic proportions due to the earthquake in Turkey. The horror and grief that has evolved for the people of Turkey is unimaginable, showing Nature's apathy and disregard for mankind, moving in an isolation from us that is indifferent to human suffering. Prior to this, and almost in defence of what was to come, a solar eclipse occurred on August 11th which generated great excitement for many people who travelled to various parts of the UK and the world in order to experience totality and the breathtaking wonder of earth's natural satellite, the moon, covering the sun. A total eclipse occurs only along a narrow track of the earth's surface and therefore many people would have seen only a partial eclipse. For those that observed totality this was indeed an emotive sight making many of us realise the enormous power of our universe. . And so we have these paradoxes, created by man's cruelty to man, nature at its worst, and our solar system creating continued wonder for us all.

Medical technology is also forging ahead at a frenetic speed creating the beginnings of a very brave new world indeed. Cloning and genetic manipulation both in man, animals and the food we eat, is progressing at such a level that maybe there should be real reservations about both the moral and ethical implications here and questions about a futuristic scenario where an individual personality could become obsolete. From a scientific point of view, of course, this is evolving into a science fiction reality..... so where do we draw the line?

Looking towards 2000 AD, many more questions are being realised as people look outside the periphery of their lives and beyond to understand those things of a spiritual nature, and how they connect to the current technology and enormous access they now have to a never -ending flow of information. Where does science fit into all those elusive connections hanging outside those parameters? In March of this year the BBC 's excellent Radio Four ran a mind- provoking 15 minute Questions and Answers programme asking the question *Is there no place left for the soul to hide?* Contributors included Dr. Susan Blackmore and Dr. Peter Fenwick. The essence of this debate was to identify the idea of consciousness and what this means in relation to subjective experiences. In fact Dr. Fenwick felt that a new science was need to explain the subjective... *a science of consciousness*. Contributors looked at the issues involved in the use of four words, *brain, consciousness, mind and soul* and what these words actually mean. If the brain is a physical organ, then is the mind a personalisation of the brain? Therefore what is consciousness and is this part of the brain/mind interface? If this is the case then what of the soul and is this indeed independent of the physical body and therefore can it survive death in a way that has been crucial to the teachings of many religions? *Is there indeed a place left for the soul to hide?* Profound questions indeed and questions that have been asked since the beginning of time, but which are becoming increasingly and critically examined within today's beliefs systems.

Moving on from these ideas it appears that questions of this nature are becoming more defined and visible as the iceberg of these puzzling reports continues melting and people describe an ever-increasing number of extraordinary human experiences. By definition these experiences are indeed revealing and encompass all manner of amazing tales, such as out-of-body experiences, near-death experiences, alien encounters, missing time, visions, time warps and so on. In many ways we need to recognise that all of these curious reports still remain very human issues with a vast sea of theories still lapping at their edges. With this in mind, Strange Daze will be running a series of compelling articles into extraordinary human experiences, in this issue and forthcoming issues, which will be entitled **Strange Places**. We hope that you will contribute with your personal comments and ideas on these experiences and what they may mean in terms of the human consciousness or possibly our interaction with something operating beyond the concept of our understanding at this time.

Is there indeed a place left for the soul to hide?

I am reminded here of a recent excellent and philosophical *Saturday Essay* in the *Daily Mail*. In the concluding paragraphs of his article, the author makes the significant statement that after all the Space exploration that has taken place since Man landed on the moon in 1969 we still cannot answer some fundamental and deeply penetrating questions about ourselves and our own planet. He also makes some thoughtful observations that maybe it is here and to each other that we need to address these questions and where indeed we need to look for the answers.

I have enjoyed hearing from several readers with their comments, please keep them coming. At least I know you are reading Strange Daze and have views and opinions on the issues being raised. Last but not least, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Paul, without whom, Strange Daze would not be possible.

Gloria Heather Dixon

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Transmit:

Extraordinary

sighting

North Sea

drilling platform

end transmit.....

On August 26th 1989, an extraordinary sighting was made from a North Sea drilling platform which has never been resolved and remains a topic of discussion within the aviation community.

At that time, the Galveston Key drilling rig was on location about 100 miles due east of the Wash in the huge Indefatigable Gas Field, roughly halfway between Central England and Northern Holland.

On the morning in question, the sea was calm, a hazy Sun shone through a thin layer of high altitude cloud and visibility was good.

As usual there was constant military air traffic in the

region, because the Galveston Key was directly under a busy NATO refuelling area known as AAR-6.

Just before midday, a small formation of aircraft was spotted from the platform by an engineer called Graeme Winton.

Normally, he wouldn't have given these planes a second glance, but there was something unusual about them which caught his eye and he called out to his colleague Chris Gibson.

Apart from being a highly qualified oil exploration engineer, Chris Gibson was a member of the ROC (Royal Observer Corps) and an acknowledged expert on military aircraft recognition.

He belonged to the Group, Area and National Aircraft Recognition Teams who regularly held ROC contests and often competed with the RAF and organisations from other NATO countries like the well-respected Danish Luftmelderkorps.

Participation in top international tournaments ensured that Chris Gibson's identification skills remained honed to a fine edge and his consistent performance had won him a shelf of coveted trophies.

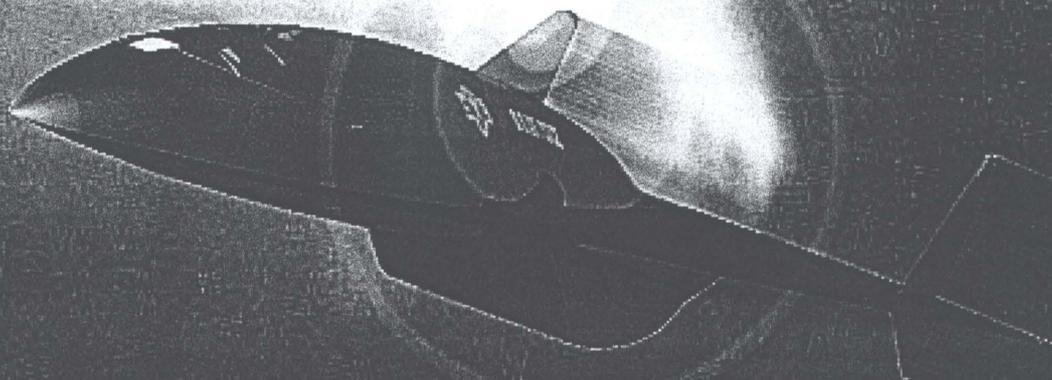
For approximately two minutes, the two engineers watched the aircraft pass directly overhead in a northerly direction at an estimated altitude of about 10,000 feet.

The formation was led by a Boeing KC-135 tanker, closely followed by a sharply swept featureless black triangle, which appeared to be in a refuelling position.

The two other aircraft, which made up the group, were

Chasing the Triangle

Bill Rose



“swing-wing” F-111 bombers with their wings fully extended.

Chris Gibson was completely baffled by the mysterious black triangle and he knew of no aircraft which matched its appearance.

In the following weeks, he discussed the sighting with several close friends within the ROC, although members of this organisation were subject to the British Government’s strict Official Secrets Act, which discouraged him from going public with details of the incident.

In 1991, the ROC was “stood down” and Chris Gibson felt that he was able to talk openly about the black triangle. Eventually, he made contact with leading aviation writer Bill Sweetman, who decided that the unidentified triangle had been a Top Secret American spyplane capable of flying faster than five times the speed of sound.*

“Someone saw something accompanied by three F-111s. The Secretary wants us to talk with McMann and say it was an F-117. I’ll get together with Alex - write up a memo to the Chief or the Secretary.”

Chris Gibson wasn’t going to pin a label on the aircraft and while he accepted that Bill Sweetman was probably on the right track, he limited himself to saying that he had seen a black featureless aircraft with a very unusual appearance which was probably American in origin.

*Mach 5 - 3,800 MPH

OFFICIAL REACTION

As details of the North Sea Sighting were picked up by the popular press, General Walter Hogle of the USAF’s Public Affairs Office tried to dismiss the aircraft as an RAF Vulcan.*

When Chris Gibson was told about Hogle’s comments, he described the suggestion as total nonsense. (Or an eight letter word to that effect!) In December 1992, aviation writer Steve Douglass who has regularly monitored military communications traffic, intercepted an intriguing phone patch conversation on the USAF 6.812 MHz “Mystic Star” VIP channel. He claims to have overheard a USAF general discussing the North Sea Sighting with a member of the Public Relations Department. Apparently, the General said, “Someone saw something accompanied by three F-111s. The Secretary wants us to talk with McMann and say it was an F-117. I’ll get together with Alex - write up a memo to the Chief or the Secretary.”

To date, the only person to really challenge Chris Gibson’s sighting has been US aviation writer Curtis Peebles. In his 1995 book “Dark Eagles,” Curtis Peebles suggested that the black triangle had simply been a third F-111 with its wings swept back.

If Chris Gibson had misidentified the aircraft, this would appear to be the obvious explanation and it would be reasonable to assume that F-111 pilots routinely practised emergency refuelling with wings fully swept to simulate failure (perhaps caused during a combat mission) of the variable geometry mechanism.

This is what USAF F-111 pilot Don Logan had to say about refuelling operations with the wings fully swept.

“The F-111 In-Flight Refuelling Manual directs wings be forward to at least 26 degrees for air refuelling. Fully swept is 72 degrees. An F-111 with fully swept wings

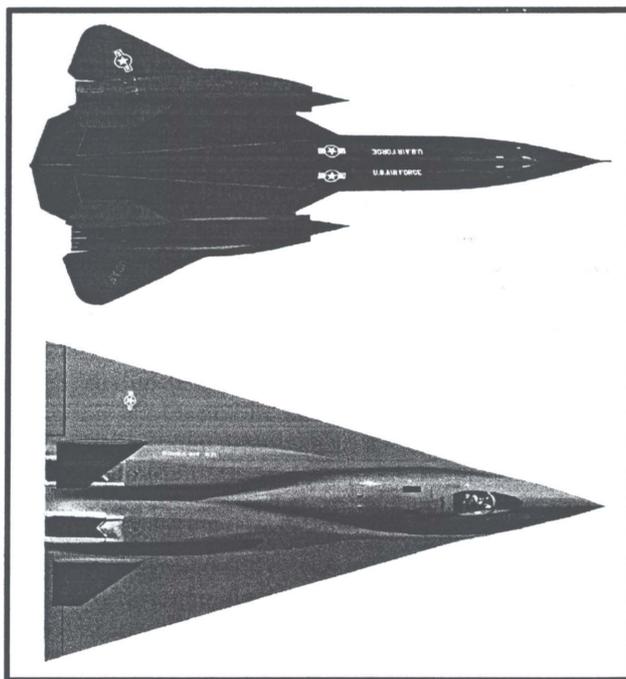
is not very manoeuvrable (in fact, is unsafe) at the 300 knot speed envelope used in KC-135 refuelling. Lowering of flaps/slats is mechanically prevented at sweeps greater than 26 degrees, so they would be no help. I suppose it would be possible to be on the boom with wings fully swept at minimum gross weight, but it would not be safe and I would not want to do it. As the aircraft took on fuel, it would become harder to control and I would require speeds in excess of 400 knots when fully fuelled (100,000 pound gross weight) The landing emergency charts for aft wing sweep at 72 degrees shows a minimum speed at sea level of 300 KIAS. So I would presume at refuelling altitudes a speed of around 375 to 400 would be required”

Clearly, Curtis Peebles had not fully researched his theory and anyone who knows Chris Gibson will tell you that his expertise in the field of military aircraft recognition is virtually unparalleled, thus ruling out any known aircraft.

The last Vulcans were retired from RAF service in 1984, five years before the North Sea sighting.

INTO THE BLACK

Many aviation correspondents reached the same conclusion as Bill Sweetman, deciding that the aircraft Chris Gibson and Graeme Winton sighted in 1989 was a highly classified US prototype developed as a replacement for the elderly Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird spyplane.



Bye- Bye Blackbird, Hello Aurora?

Widely referred to as “Aurora”, the name first appeared in a 1985 Pentagon “P1” weapons procurement document, which mentioned it as a Top Secret multi-billion dollar black programme for the USAF.

Staff at the Washington Post immediately picked up on this detail and made enquiries within the Pentagon. They were told “off the record” that Aurora was connected to the ATB (Advanced Technology Bomber: which eventually became the Northrop B-2A Spirit bomber) project and primarily concerned stealth technology. →

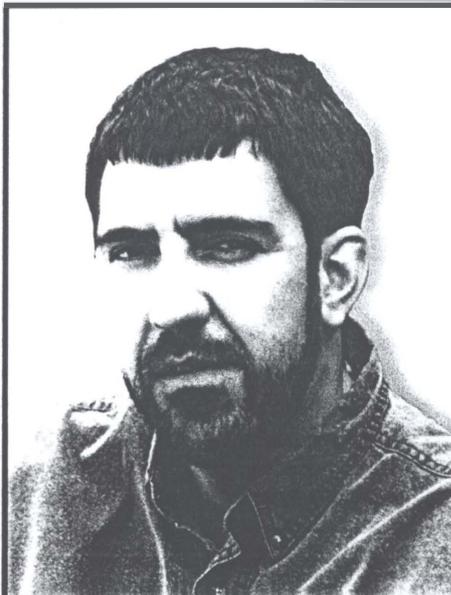
Hypersonic flight is still widely perceived as representing the "cutting edge" of aerodynamics, but German designers like Eugene Sanger and Werner von Braun established most of the ground rules for manned rocket planes capable of reaching the edge of space during WW11.

Unfortunately, (for them) these ideas were simply too far ahead of their time to be technically feasible. After the war, Germany's leading rocket scientists were recruited by the Allies, with the majority of them going to America. Manned space plane research resumed, leading to a linked series military projects known as BoMi, (Bomber-Missile) RoBo, (Rocket-Bomber) and the X-20 Dyna Soar (Dynamic Soaring Spaceplane) which almost reached the construction phase at Boeing before technical shortcomings were discovered.

After the X-20 was cancelled, interest shifted to non-reusable space capsules, although a less ambitious project was already providing the USAF with a manned hypersonic research capability. Known as the North American X-15, three of these air launched needle-nosed rocket planes were built and between 1959 and 1968, they completed 199 flights, setting numerous speed and altitude records which included several brief trips into space.

It would be easy to conclude that hypersonic development came to an end with the last X-15 mission and attention simply switched to the space shuttle programme. However, design studies for hypersonic aircraft continued into the 1970s and there were plans to build a stretched delta wing X-15 potentially capable of reaching orbit and a dart shaped rocket plane called the FDL-5. Nothing came of the advanced X-15, but a full sized mock-up of the one-man FDL-5 was built for the USAF and some observers believe that one or possibly two FDL-5 prototypes were secretly constructed and flown from Groom Lake during the late 1970s. At about the same time, NASA was carrying out a "lifting body" programme to test small (relatively slow) one-man experimental wingless aircraft which utilised new technologies for the forthcoming Space Shuttle programme. In 1975, this lifting body programme came to an end, although NASA wanted to progress to a manned hypersonic test vehicle. This might have been a scaled up version of the HL-10 lifting body launched by rocket booster or an entirely new aircraft called the X-24C.

But the funding never materialised and the X-24C was cancelled, or could it



-CHRIS GIBSON-
Participation in top international tournaments ensured that Chris's identification skills remained honed to a fine edge and his consistent performance had won him a shelf of coveted trophies.

One particular piece of Lockheed artwork from the early 1970s, shows a triangular shaped two seat USAF Mach 8 spyplane loosely resembling the X-24C.

There is no solid evidence that this concept was developed, but such an aircraft would have formed the logical bridge between early hypersonic research and a present day high performance spyplane.

According to one investigator who made a detailed study of Lockheed's financial affairs, just such a bridging prototype was assembled by the Skunk Works and tested by the USAF!

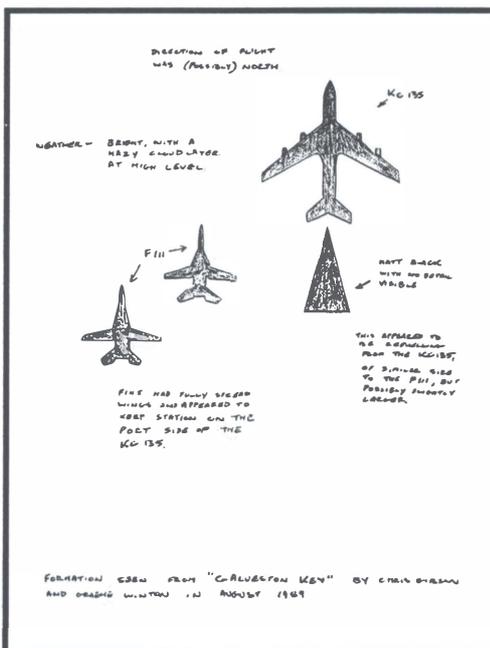
CONSTRUCTORS

Officials at Lockheed-Martin remain tight lipped about hypersonic programmes and the company has made every effort to distance itself from discussion of an Aurora spyplane. In his 1994 book "Skunk Works," the late Ben Rich (who controlled this highly secretive black budget division of Lockheed) claimed that a Colonel Buz Carpenter had been responsible for

the 1985 "P1" Weapons Procurement Document. According to Rich, Colonel Carpenter arbitrarily assigned the name Aurora which was nothing more than competition funding for the B-2. Rich also attempted to dismiss the rumour that Lockheed's Skunk Works had been chosen to build America's "first" hypersonic airplane, rather conveniently forgetting to mention that the manned hypersonic X-15 had flown thirty years earlier and the Space Shuttle routinely reaches very high Mach numbers. Rich recalled one occasion when he phoned President Reagan's scientific

advisor Jay Keyworth to tell him that the idea of developing a hypersonic vehicle was ridiculous. Apparently, he advised Keyworth of the enormous difficulties encountered building the Blackbird and maintained that *any aircraft would come apart if an attempt was made to fly it much faster than Mach 3.2*. Of course, this is totally misleading and while there would be thermal management concerns for any aircraft sustaining hypersonic flight for more than a matter of minutes, methods of dealing with these problems have been understood since the 1950s and progressively refined.

On February 4 1986, Ronald Reagan made his State of the Union Address and announced that the DoD (Department of Defence) would fund development of the NASP. (National Aerospace Plane) Although this was essentially a military project,



SKETCH by CHRIS GIBSON

5 have been taken over by the USAF as a black project?

NASP was heavily promoted as a civil programme with

the name "Orient Express" being added by White House spin doctors. The NASP project had soon slipped from the public's gaze and it was renamed as the X-30A, with a coordinating office being set up at Wright-Patterson AFB under USAF control. A massive amount of supercomputer time was allocated to running complex aerodynamic simulations and contracts for the development of an X-30A airframe were awarded to General Dynamics, McDonnell Douglas, Rockwell, Boeing and last but not least - Lockheed!

In 1988, some three years after the "P1" document mentioned Aurora, a story appeared in the New York Times which announced that a Top Secret hypersonic reconnaissance aircraft with a stealth capability was under developed for the USAF and it would soon replace the Lockheed SR-71. This led to further speculation inside the aviation community about airframe and engine technologies with suggestions that Aurora might be powered by newly designed air breathing PDWE (Pulse Wave Detonation Engines) running on cryogenic methane, which might be capable of carrying the craft into LEO (Low Earth Orbit) when switched to full rocket mode.

SHUTDOWN

In March 1990, the SR-71 was officially retired from service and the Pentagon insisted there was no longer any need for a manned strategic reconnaissance aircraft.

Air Force chiefs maintained that in future, the USAF would primarily rely on satellites for intelligence gathering, with support from the advanced version of the Lockheed U-2 and pilot-less drones. Few experienced observers accepted this and it seemed likely that a new aircraft was already semi-operational. Rather intriguingly, there were also claims from well informed sources that a US wide area spy satellite system was being retired alongside the SR-71, which reinforced arguments that Aurora existed.

From about 1990 onwards, the USAF codename "Senior Citizen" began to circulate around US defence contractors and this was thought to be the official USAF designation for Aurora, although the name now appears to belong to a stealthy theatre transport aircraft developed by Boeing.

In 1991, an RAF air traffic controller detected an unidentified aircraft leaving RAF Machrihanish, a remote base in Scotland, allegedly used on occasion by US Navy SEALs (special forces) and a temporary home for F-117As during the 1980s. (Before the F-117A officially existed)

The unidentified radar target observed by the Air Traffic Controller quickly accelerated to Mach 3 and when he contacted RAF Machrihanish, they told him to forget what he had seen.

Questions were raised in House of Commons and Defence Minister Archie Hamilton responded by simply saying that Aurora was, "... a matter for the American authorities."

More unusual engine noises were reported from various locations in the Southwest United States and in February 1992, there were several night-time sightings of a large unidentified diamond shaped aircraft at Beale AFB, California.

In March 1992, a mysterious "doughnuts on a rope" contrail was photographed above Amarillo, Texas and this was apparently accompanied by a deep rumbling sound.

One month later, strange radio messages were picked up between an unknown aircraft with the call sign "Gaspipe"

and Joshua Control, which is the radar station at Edwards AFB.

This was a particularly interesting intercept because the pilot reported that he was flying at 67,000 feet, although checks confirmed there were no NASA operated SR-71 or USAF U-2s operating that day and 67,000 feet is above the service ceiling of all current USAF and USN fighters.

When the US magazine Aviation Week and Space Technology contacted Edwards AFB, they were told there was no record of an aircraft with the call sign "Gaspipe."

Throughout 1991 and 1992, scientists at CalTech recorded a series of supersonic booms which were reminiscent of those produced by the Space Shuttle.

But the Shuttle wasn't flying at that time and seismological readings indicated that the shock waves were created by two unknown aircraft travelling towards Nevada at speeds between Mach 3 and Mach 4.

Further analysis suggested that the aircraft were on approach to Groom Lake and they were actually decelerating from a higher speed!

Lockheed-Martin have been cited as the most likely contractor for these prototypes, although Northrop-Grumman are another possibility, with development taking place at their highly secretive Advanced Technology and Design Centre in Palmdale, California.

In response to journalists questions in July 1992, USAF Secretary Donald Rice tried very hard to dismiss the idea of an aircraft like Aurora.

He said, "I can tell you that there is no airplane that exists remotely like that which has been described in some articles."

Martin Faga, who was Director of the NRO (National Reconnaissance Office) also denied the existence of Aurora. He said, "We at NRO have no such vehicle and the Air Force has said the same. I don't know what the Navy, Army, NASA or anybody else is doing, I'm just saying that NRO doesn't have an Aurora, or anything else like it!"

In December 1992, an aviation researcher made an FOIA application to the NRO, asking for information on Aurora and Project Aquarius.

Bearing in mind Martin Faga's statement, it came as something of a surprise when the NRO declined to confirm or deny these existence of these programmes, citing Executive Order 12356!

By 1993, the X-30 NASP "Orient Express" project had almost completely faded into the background and the Clinton Administration finally announced that they were unwilling to fund further research into a concept which seemed decades away from realisation.

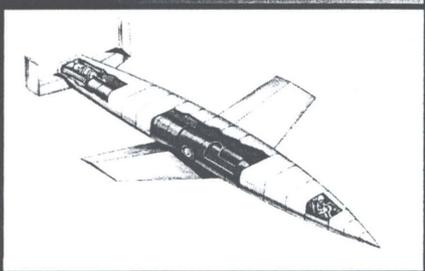
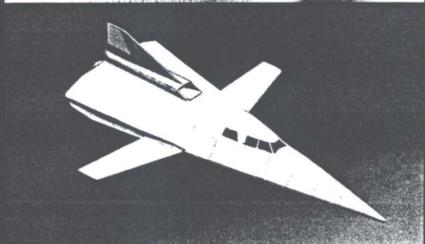
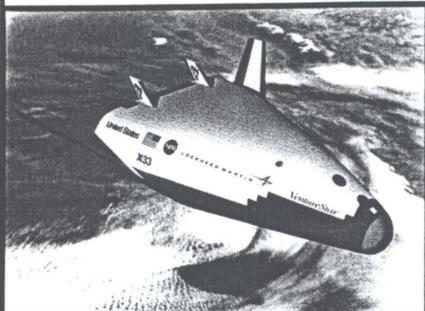
One year later, the Senate Appropriations Committee allocated 100 million dollars for the refurbishment of three SR-71s, which would be used to close a perceived intelligence gathering gap revealed during the Gulf War.

Many aviation correspondents treated this funding announcement as clear evidence that no expense would be spared to debunk reports of Aurora and proof that the refurbishment was a cover-up surfaced when the USAF actually shut down all SR-71 operations for six months during 1996. *The following year, the SR-71 was permanently retired without ceremony.* →

IN THE REAL WORLD

Two or three years ago, it was universally accepted that a hypersonic spyplane had entered limited service with the USAF/NRO.

However, many aviation correspondents now believe that



Things that make you go....
..Hmmm..

Lockheed Martin X33 (upper)
Lockheed Spyplane (middle)
Sanger Spaceplane (lower)

two or three prototypes were built and tested, but serious technical problems and spiralling development costs brought the programme to an abrupt halt. That said, there can be little doubt that a new U.S strategic spyplane exists and has been operating in small numbers for a number of years.

Based on more conventional technology, this aircraft could be seen as an evolutionary step forward from the SR-71 Blackbird.

It probably features the same 75 degree delta shape as the North Sea triangle, but has more in common with the experimental YF-23A stealth fighter which was

developed as a competitor to the Lockheed-Martin F-22A air superiority fighter.

Powered by two very advanced variable-cycle engines which run on conventional (or reasonably conventional) aviation fuel, the revised Aurora probably has the ability to sustain speeds above Mach 3 at 100,000 feet and it will be easier to fly than the complex SR-71, especially at low refuelling speeds.

Bristling with electronics and synthetic aperture radar, the aircraft will return "real time" digital images from areas of interest, directly to the US via secret relay satellites in geostationary orbit.

One possible incident involving this spyplane took place in England during 1994 and it led to questions being asked in the British Parliament.

RAF BOSCOMBE DOWN, SOUTHERN ENGLAND.

On the night of September 26 1994, an unidentified aircraft crash landed on Runway 23 at RAF Boscombe Down and this created a major security alert, followed by a complex cover-up.

Two days after the accident, a USAF C-5 Galaxy transporter arrived at RAF Boscombe Down and the mystery aircraft is believed to have been loaded inside and flown to the States.

The destination of the C-5 was allegedly Air Force Plant 42 at Palmdale, where all the major defence contractors have secret facilities.

Initially, the crashed aircraft was reported to have been a highly classified Northrop-Boeing TR-3A "Black

Manta" tactical spyplane flown by the USAF, but later more reliable reports suggested that an even more unusual aircraft was involved, perhaps operated by the CIA.

Of course, the British MoD, (Ministry of Defence) maintained that nothing like this took place at RAF Boscombe Down on September 26 1994.

They claimed that the mysterious twin tailed aircraft which was briefly glimpsed on Runway 23 under a covering of tarpaulins was simply a piece of special equipment designed to simulate helicopter landings on the deck of a warship. The MoD also insisted that no C-5 Galaxy transporters had visited RAF Boscombe Down during 1994.

Eyewitness reports and photographic evidence provided by aviation enthusiasts proved this to be a complete lie.

Trying to play down the incident, MoD officials explained that local police had been asked to set up roadblocks along the A345 Amesbury to Salisbury Road and aircraft spotters were ordered to leave the area because an emergency situation had arisen with an approaching aircraft.

They claimed that an RAF Tornado fighter-bomber testing a highly classified towed anti-missile system had run into difficulties and the pilot requested permission to make an emergency landing at Boscombe Down.

Nobody recalled a Tornado landing at this time and it seems clear this was simply part of a hastily conceived cover-story.

A question regarding the Boscombe Down crash was tabled in the British House of Commons on December 1 1994, when Martin Redmond asked for an explanation from the Secretary of State.

Nicholas Soames made the following response. "I am aware of a press report of such an accident. Staff at Boscombe Down have confirmed, however, that there was no crash at the unit on that date or indeed, so far this year. The only flying which took place that night was the launch of two Royal Navy Sea King helicopters in support of an exercise."

There have been claims that a series of DA- Notices* (No 2 requests) were issued to the editors of UK national newspapers and television companies asking them not to report the Boscombe Down Incident.

This has proved impossible to confirm, but it is a fact that very few accounts of the incident have appeared in the UK media.

A non disclosure request, which is issued by a department within the MoD called DPBAC. (Defence, Press and Broadcasting Advisory Committee)

The current six part DA-Notice system replaced the eight part D-Notice system on August 1 1993.

INTO SPACE

As something of a side issue to this story, it has been suggested that another design to emerge from the Aurora programme is a two stage manned (or unmanned) spaceplane.

This may have been secretly commissioned in the wake of the 1986 Challenger shuttle disaster which had serious consequences for U.S military space operations.

Said to use the codename Brilliant Buzzard or Blue Eyes, this system may comprise of a compact lifting body vehicle launched from the back of a larger "mothership" that is based on the experimental Mach 3 XB-70A Valkyrie bomber from the 1960s.

Three or four pairs of these vehicles may be operating

from Groom Lake, within the White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico or possibly one of the Utah test sites.

There have been several good sightings in the U.S. which fit the descriptions of these craft and Lockheed-Martin are thought to have built the spaceplanes, while Boeing are probably responsible for the larger launch vehicles.

Using this spaceplane system it should be possible to conduct rapid response global reconnaissance missions, although launching small satellites in LEO is probably the main undertaking.

Work on black domain hypersonic projects has almost certainly made it possible for Lockheed-Martin to develop and build NASA's prototype X-33 spaceplane in record time, despite technical problems with liner bonding in the second liquid hydrogen storage tank and difficulties with the new linear aerospike engine.

NASA's small manned X-38 lifting body space vehicle has also evolved very rapidly and this craft will primarily function as a lifeboat for the International Space Station, but may be chosen by the European Space Agency (ESA) as a replacement for their cancelled Hermes spaceplane.

Meanwhile, visible but relatively small scale American research into hypersonics continues, with NASA and the USAF undertaking a number of unmanned "X-plane" programmes.

...there can be little doubt that a new U.S strategic spyplane exists and has been operating in small numbers for a number of years. Based on more conventional technology, this aircraft could be seen as an evolutionary step forward from the SR-71 Blackbird. It probably features the same 75 degree delta shape as the North Sea triangle.....

FINAL WORDS

Unlike the majority UFO stories, Aurora is not an open ended mystery and there are thousands of defence industry workers and military personnel who know the true story.

A decade has passed since the "North Sea" sighting and America's black triangle remains highly classified.

For 15 years, the Pentagon insisted the "stealth fighter" simply didn't exist, so it may be some time before Aurora, or whatever the USAF now calls it, is declassified.

Just prior to completing this article, I asked Chris Gibson how he felt about the fact that 10 years have passed since his sighting and there has been no official explanation.

"How do I feel ten years on?" He answered dryly. "Older, but no less frustrated. It was such a gift, a straight up view, almost from a text book. I've always wondered why the USAF didn't come up with the F-111 story in the first place and their silence on the

subject seems to confirm that they have something to hide. I feel that until the powers that be deign to open up the box, there is no point in jumping up and down demanding answers. I'm quite philosophical about it and I'll wait and see. It's quite reassuring to know that others have sighted such aircraft over the last 10 years. All I want is someone to say 'That's what you saw.' But I won't lose any sleep over it."

HISTORY

- 1979 Rumours circulate that Lockheed has developed a Mach 4 spyplane.
- 1985 Pentagon "PI" Weapons document mentions Aurora Project.
- 1986 President Regan announces Orient Express spaceplane programme.

- 1986 Challenger Space Shuttle Accident. This had a serious effect on the USAF's spy satellite capability and may have encouraged rapid advancement of the Aurora programme.
- 1988 The New York Times claims that a 3,800 MPH spyplane is under development for the USAF.
- 1989 Mysterious triangular shaped aircraft sighted above the North Sea by Chris Gibson and Graeme Winton.
- 1990 SR-71 spyplane retired.
- 1991 Unidentified aircraft flies out of RAF Machrihanish, Scotland. Tracked by radar at Mach 3.
- 1991 Supersonic booms in Los Angeles area.
- 1992 Unusual vapour trails sighted above Texas.
- 1992 Unidentified aircraft flying at 67,000 ft above California.
- 1992 Dart shaped aircraft with a lifting body appearance almost collides with a 747 airliner above California. Unknown aircraft is travelling at high supersonic speed. USAF denies knowledge.
- 1993 X-30 "Orient Express" spaceplane cancelled.
- 1994 SR-71 Returned to service. Seen in aviation circles as an expensive disinformation tactic.
- 1996 Fake Aurora refuelling picture appears without permission of the photographer on front cover of Encounters magazine and starts to circulate around the Internet.
- 1997 SR-71 quietly retired without ceremony.
- 1998 Sightings of triangular shaped aircraft in the US which could be a more conventional replacement for the SR-71.
- 1999 Lockheed-Martin X-33 hypersonic rocket vehicle built.

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SD Thanks Bill for supplied illustrations.



BILL ROSE

Bill Rose has written articles for many technical magazines and Journals, but is probably better known as a photojournalist. He has worked on photographic assignments around the world for various publishers and now runs his own business which specialises in P.R photography.

He has a B.A in Economics, completed some undergraduate studies in astronomy and he holds a recognised qualification in scientific photography. To date he has contributed to eight technical books and has illustrated several others. Bill's long term interests include astronomy, space flight, military aviation and UFO phenomena.

STRANGE PLACES

Steve Robbins - Nightshift

..... It was not travelling at any great speed and eventually, Steve says, it was right overhead. From this angle he describes it as cigar shaped and a dull bluish steel colour with a luminescence, like a neon light. It shone; particularly around the perimeter and was pulsating a bright white/yellow light. There was no sound. Eighty yards away from where he was standing there were four enormous crude oil receiving spheres and by this time it was so low he felt it was going to hit the spheres. It didn't, it cleared them with what seemed like feet above. **With great trepidation Steve jumped on his bike and pedalled like mad round the roadway to behind the receiving spheres. There was absolute nothing there!...**

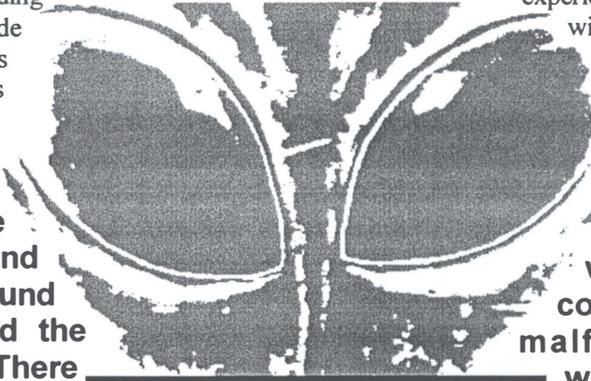
He rushed into the control room where his colleagues were having a meal, whereupon they all enquired as to what was wrong as he was so white he looked as though he seen a ghost. He explained what had happened to both his colleagues and supervisor, who all immediately went outside to investigate, but there was nothing there. His supervisor contacted Teeside Airport to find out about aircraft activity. However, there had been no aircraft either landing or taking off within the last hour. Fylingdales was then contacted, and Steve was asked questions pertaining to a UFO report. Steve felt there must have been someone else who had seen this object, and therefore proceeded to call various departments across the plant. He received a call from a security guard at the tank farm, which was situated one and half miles away, who had also seen this object and described it in a similar way to Steve as well as heading in the direction that Steve had observed it. The supervisor was in fact already concerned about security at the plant due to the fact that four weeks prior to these sightings another employee had reported an object trying to 'land' on the main road at the plant.

A few days after these events Steve experienced some electrical problems within his home starting with his television bursting into flames, while he and his wife were watching it. They had to throw it through the window. The television was three years old. During a

three-day period and always when Steve was there many other electrical appliances failed. A vacuum cleaner, toaster, hairdryer, iron and mains alarm clock all failed and even a battery powered portable radio and electric drill failed. The electricity board were contacted and installed a mains voltage recorder, but they reported there was nothing wrong. Neighbours had not experienced any electrical problems. I talked

with two electrical engineers independently about these electrical problems, and they were puzzled about the electrical events.

These problems continued for Steve when he was at work, and when he was there computer terminals would 'go out of sync' as his colleagues referred to the malfunctions that occurred whenever Steve was around.



In June 1981, Steve Robbins was working as plant operator for a petroleum plant on Teeside. He was on night shift and at ten minutes to midnight he was returning to the control room when he looked up into the sky and saw an enormous flying object, which he describes as about one hundred foot in length and twenty to twenty five feet wide. It was flying between two towers and he was able to estimate the height of the object to be between one hundred and one hundred and twenty feet. Travelling on a downward trajectory, he thought it was going to hit something.....

He went to work offshore in 1983 and the problems with all electrical equipment continued to occur until 1988, when they subsided.

Approximately two weeks after these events, Steve began to experience some inexplicable events in his bedroom.

The first time this happened he was lying in bed, asleep, when he was awakened, by a high-pitched humming in his ears. His first realisation was that he was flat on his back and the he was unable to move a muscle. He felt strongly that this was not a dream, that he was awake and could move his eyes. He was aware of the room about him and the darkness. He tried to move, but couldn't. When his eyes adjusted to the darkness he realised that there was something in the room...three or four figures dressed in black...barely discernible in the darkness apart from dull cloak like habits. He wanted to scream but couldn't. He remembers **a slight gurgling from his throat**

that is when he says they communicated with him, not in voices as he remembers, but like a thought transference. He was told that they would not harm him or his wife, who was in bed next to him, and family, two sons. He tried to awaken himself, still believing that must be a dream, but it was not. **Still terrified, He tried with all his will to move a muscle, but couldn't. He could feel sweat trickling down his forehead into his eyes and hoped to God his wife would not awaken.** They communicated, not to worry, and that she would not know anything about this, and he remembers thinking,

'what the hell do you want?' ...

... 'just you, for a little while'...

was the reply.

Some time later Steve felt able to move again and he got out of bed and went downstairs, where he consumed several cups of coffee....it was dawn. **He felt grimy and dirty, as though he had been on a long journey.**

He had several more of these experiences over the next two years, although he never actually saw the hooded figures again, only sensed their presence.

Since these events occurred Steve has experienced several precognitive dreams, which he describes as totally different from other dreams, disturbingly powerful and compelling, with a real quality to them that is quite impossible to ignore.

Significant points resurfaced at any time throughout the day for months and years afterwards and they just would not go away. Among these 'vision' type dreams were the Chernobyl and Lockerbie disasters. These dreams which occurred, six months prior to the events themselves were so specific and had such clarity that when he saw the news about the Lockerbie disaster he was in total shock. In fact when I interviewed him and talked specifically about this dream with him it was so emotive for him that a respite was taken from the interview.

Another change that has occurred in Steve since his sighting is his ability to tune into people upon first meeting them in an intimate way. This he found extremely disturbing and intrusive.

It appears that Steve was receptive to other unusual phenomena from being very young, six to seven years old, ranging from out of body experiences to being aware of **other beings communicating with him**. His grandmother on his maternal side also experienced paranormal phenomena and was noted for her unusual abilities.

Those are the events as related to me by Steve.

Some of you probably already have theories as to what happened to Steve. For example: **HALLUCINATIONS** caused by gas or oil. This would have had to be a joint experience as a witness 1½ mile away also saw a similar object. **ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS** particularly as described by Albert Budden. This is a possible avenue of investigation particularly in the area of Teeside where there are many chemical and power facilities conducive to this.

SLEEP PARALYSIS/HYPNAGOGIA AND OTHER SLEEP STATES during the bedroom experiences? This is a possibility and although not entirely dismissed by Steve himself,

he finds it hard to accept this was in any way a contributing factor.

All of these are very interesting and could be valid, but what they mainly show is that if we are not careful, we may force conclusions on the case of Steve without fully understanding it. I am not here to give you the definitive explanation, what I do wish to emphasise is that **SOMETHING** happened to this man of such feeling as to cause changes in his whole way of life, dramatic changes that occurred in Steve after these unusual events, which were possibly triggered by his initial sighting of a 'UFO'.

I would now like to explain the changes in Steve as a person after these experiences. Prior to these events, Steve was a man whose main concerns in life involved his family, wife and two sons. He worked hard and enjoyed a few pints at his local pub. He was sceptical, but still open minded about UFOs and related subjects, and basically did not particularly look beyond the parameters of his own life to anything on the periphery.. He paid the mortgage and made sure that all was well within 'his world' After his UFO sighting at the petroleum plant in 1981, Steve changed quite dramatically, and feels that these events have altered his life, beliefs and the way he views the world., he explained these feelings in a letter to me and I quote from parts of it...

'These experiences have changed my life, but it wasn't one blinding flash type overnight wonder, indeed it has been much more subtle, a slow realisation process. My life is lived now to the full, I watch little TV or read newspapers. There just doesn't seem to be enough hours in the day for what I need to do'. My attitude towards people and confrontational situations has changed. I believe for the better. I will go out of my way to help people, I follow my intuition totally...as long as it feels right it will be right and this is something in which I now have complete faith. I personally have no fear of death and having lost that fear, I can now live my life. To be free of the fear of death means that I can now appreciate life, as just a current phase of eternity'.

**To be free of the fear of death
means that I can now appreciate
life as just a current phase of eternity**

With regard to having intimate access to people he has just met, he says....

'This is something I can do with such ease that it still astounds me to this day, but I try to leave it switched off to overcome feelings of guilt and intrusion.'

To sum up his feelings on his sighting and the subsequent events he

says...

'I keep my sanity by believing in myself..I believe in what happened, I will never be able to explain it, but at least I can now accept it.'

I have met Steve several times now and there is no doubt in my mind that he has described some strange and compelling events, and a continued sequence of unusual occurrences which affected him in a very personal way. My gut feeling is that he has undergone some bewildering changes. These changes are indeed significant, as many researchers are well aware. They have become of great importance and relevance, when following up a close encounter experience, which so often then encompasses other activity, very often of a paranormal nature, and which one would think should be locked within the paranormal field of study,but it is not. The gateways between a close encounter experience and subsequent paranormal events are linked in a way that we have yet to understand.

What is of enormous relevance here is the fact that the changes that have occurred to Steve, are changes that occur in many of those who undergo a close encounter experience. I feel that these maybe more important than the incident itself, as these experiences are about PEOPLE, so whatever these experiences are, is possibly irrelevant, as they are perceived in a very personal way. What is of real relevance surely must be the changes in people both spiritually, psychically and creatively. Interestingly Steve started to write poetry after these events, something he had never thought about prior to this. His interest in environmental issues increased in an overwhelming way. The additional factors of having access to people's thoughts and precognitive dreams are indeed impressive when researching this case. The changes are startling, but as I said before they do not stand alone. They have happened to many close encounter witnesses and it is essential that we look at this area very closely in order to gain an insight into whether indeed there is a pattern emerging from those who undergo extraordinary experiences like this

This is where the "Anamnesis Project", which the late Ken Phillips initiated, comes in. I believe that this should become a priority when investigating these inexplicable events, as it appears that these experiences may be prevalent in a certain type of person, often people, who have a life history of inexplicable or paranormal type events. We possibly need to begin by looking principally at the people themselves, *then* at the incidents they report. We must remember that an investigation of the close encounter experience can be in very muddled waters, and we are all amateurs where these unusual events are concerned. What we must never forget is that these events are primarily about people and not just about the incidents reported.

Finally, is the area relevant? There have also been other observations of strange objects appearing and disappearing into the Teesmouth during this time, one report involving witnesses from the A19 Service station. Because of the time lapse between the investigation into Steve's experiences and these other reports they were very difficult to follow up and therefore these other observations may have been readily explained if investigated at the time, and possibly had no connection with Steve's sighting. Also, one year later, in Redcar, Cleveland and reasonably close to Teeside, a couple experienced some bizarre events at their home during the night, where they describe observing an unknown object that appeared to be in their garden. They also observed entities both outside and in their home.

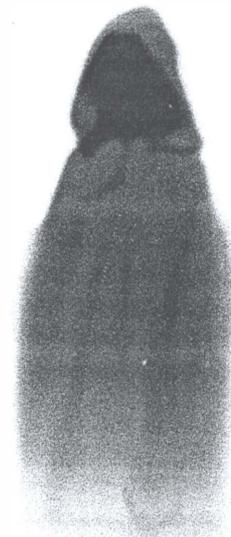
The wife claims that her husband actually physically disappeared. Philip Mantle has documented this case in his book *'Without Consent'* giving major details of this event. I only mention this as it occurred a year after Steve's sighting and is in the vicinity of Teeside.

FOOTNOTES AND UPDATE

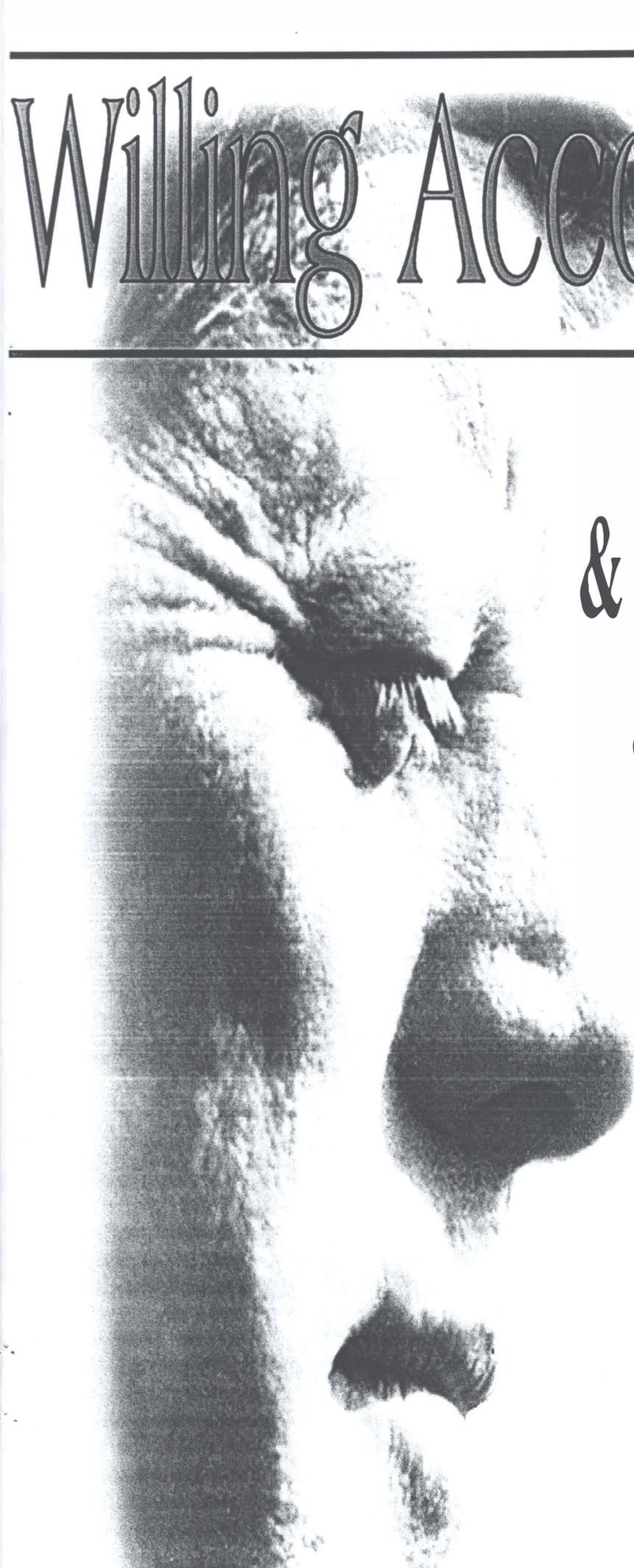
As these notes were taken from my original interviews and investigations in 1994/95, I would like to give a brief update to more recent communication with Steve Robbins and other theories that may of importance here. These have been mentioned in this article briefly, but electromagnetic pollution could be a relevant factor (See SD Issue 17, article by Albert Budden) although to my knowledge Steve never suffered from a major electrical strike. Kate Taylor's article on Hypnagogia, lucid dreaming and the bed-based abduction scenario (See SD Issue 17) is possibly pertinent here too. Certainly the paralysis that that Steve felt during his bedroom experiences may have a connection with sleep paralysis combined with hypnagogia creating the effects he felt during the 'events' in his bedroom.. This, however, may not explain some of the other experiences, such as the precognitive dreams and visions and also his unusual and early memories from childhood, where he experienced feelings of being out of his body and actually outside his home. This is a multi-faceted case and as I said before it would be difficult to force our conclusions on this significant case and let us not forget the central theme here...the human consciousness.. and how little we understand about consciousness as a whole..

On a final note, I have remained in communication with Steve over the years. He is an extremely interesting and articulate man, who retains a very pragmatic approach towards these strange events that occurred all those years ago and feels comfortable in looking at all ideas and theories to possibly explain them. He has never been focused on making these events fit any one theory as proposed by the imagery so evident in today's climate. There is no doubt though that these things have changed him in many ways and he has explored those experiences that do not fit within the parameters of his life. He has a wholly individualist approach to what happened to him and does not immerse himself in the alien or UFO culture that has become so prevalent in today's world. I have a great admiration for him in this respect, as it is so easy to do this and then lose sight of looking beyond the image-makers.

I hope to meet with Steve again in the near future when I would like to be able to conduct an in-depth interview with him about his thoughts and reflections six years on after our initial interview. This would take the form of his personal reflections about his extraordinary human experiences in 1981, and also his view of the issues involved with all unusual phenomena and the increasing trends towards new age beliefs.



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Willing Accomplice?

Lyndon Johnson & the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Friday 22nd November, 1963, Dallas, Texas.
At 11.50 am CST President John F. Kennedy's motorcade departs Love Field for central Dallas.

Reaching downtown Dallas the motorcade takes the planned route along Main Street to the intersection of Houston Street, the beginning of Dealey Plaza. The motorcade takes a right turn onto Houston Street and proceeds towards the Texas School Book Depository, taking a left turn onto Elm Street.

At 12.30pm the shots which would send shockwaves around the world ring out. The Presidential limousine rushes the fatally injured Kennedy to the Parkland hospital where he is pronounced dead at 1pm. Less than two hours later, Lyndon Baines Johnson is sworn in aboard Air Force One while a grief-stricken Jackie Kennedy looks on.

A new chapter in the history of the United States and of the world had begun.

Kate Taylor

Lyndon Johnson's ascension to the Presidency was the fulfilment of a lifetime ambition.

At the time of the assassination many people pitied him for having been thrust into such responsibility, ill prepared and under such cruel circumstances.

In the course of this article, however, we will see evidence that Johnson could well have been groomed for the Presidency prior to the assassination. We will also see evidence highlighting the possibility that he knew more about the assassination than he ever let on. Once LBJ had assumed the Presidency he began to make his mark, beginning with reversing Kennedy's plan to withdraw from Vietnam, and by setting up the Warren Commission to investigate the assassination. To the outside world Johnson projected the image of a grief-stricken man reluctantly pushed into the limelight and a most difficult job. Closer examination of the facts, however, reveal that LBJ was nothing of the sort.

By the time he reached the Presidency, Johnson's political career was chequered with many scandals and dubious practices, which, the evidence suggests, may well have culminated in his involvement in the assassination. We shall come soon enough to LBJ's possible role in the assassination, but let us first take a few minutes to familiarise ourselves with the rise to power of this most determined of men.



When she had earlier been asked if she would change her clothes for the swearing-in, Jackie declined saying, "No, I want *them* to see what *they* have done"

Johnson's political career began in 1932 when he decided to swap teaching for politics. At this time Richard Kleberg was running for Congress, and the canny LBJ, never one to miss an opportunity for self-promotion, joined his campaign. Kleberg won and was elected Congressman for the 16th Texas district. In 1935 Johnson was noticed by then President Roosevelt who appointed him as Texas state director for the National Youth Administration (a group to help the young unemployed).

1937 brought an opportunity for Johnson to make Congress with the death of Austin district Congressman James P. Buchanan. LBJ seized an opportunity which would propel him further towards his ultimate goal of Presidency, and when Johnson ran for Congress he had the backing of FDR.

At this time one of the most useful people to Johnson's career was Sam Rayburn, the House Democratic Leader and a close friend of LBJ's father. Significant in this period is Johnson's increasing popularity with the Texas oil barons: "With Rayburn's ready help he ingratiated himself with Texas oil men by defending the [oil] depletion allowance. Yet Johnson's support of depletion was not for free. It gained him the animosity of many party radicals ... but it paid off in Texas where he and Rayburn shook down the subservient fat cats for the 'good of the party'...."

The oil barons and the depletion allowance would come to be highly significant in the Kennedy Presidency; cutting the allowance was one of Kennedy's main aims.

A seat in the Senate was the next obvious step for the ambitious Johnson. After a defeat in 1941, Johnson was finally elected in the notorious "landslide" election of 1948, in which Governor Coke Stevenson was the clear favourite. The election was one of extra votes being "discovered" in the 13th District box. However, investigation showed that not only were many of those who had voted deceased, but that they had all voted in alphabetical order ... Rigging the vote was a favour that Johnson had called in from Senator George Parr, who had now decided that his best interests lay with LBJ rather than Stevenson. Parr canvassed his area, which had previously been a big supporter of Stevenson, and achieved a remarkable change in the area's political feeling, so much so that the over-confident Johnson team announced their victory before realising that they were short of an overall majority. George Parr made the necessary phone calls and the 87 necessary votes, a "correction" were announced. Such behaviour aroused suspicion at the time and earned Johnson the sarcastic nickname "Landslide Lyndon". Johnson, however, was by now gaining enough power to get away with such things, "Throughout the war years... the influence of Lyndon Johnson 'among the people who count' - that is among the wealthy and influential of Texas - had grown. His ability to 'get things done' for prominent people who needed things done had become legendary. His connections with Brown and Root, the Texas contractors who supported his campaigns so generously, and who in turn had prospered so fantastically on wartime government contracts as to become world-wide operators was more than a legend - it was a scandal."

As with the oil barons, we will see later how Johnson's friendliness to big business, in particular to defence contractors, is significant in assessing his role in the assassination.

After a spell as Senate Majority leader, in 1960 LBJ stepped down from the powerful position to take on the relatively powerless office of Vice President to JFK. At the time there was great and open surprise that the ambitious Johnson would take such a downward move in power. Many have suggested that Kennedy offered Johnson the position out of courtesy, never expecting that he would accept.

When asked at a Democratic convention why he had made such a move, Johnson stated that he had been told that "one quarter of all Presidents die in office". Was this a case of many a true word being said in jest? Theories abound that Johnson would have only accepted such a shift in power if he knew that his time in power was coming soon enough.

One thing is certain, there was little love lost between Johnson and the Kennedys. There are many indications that Kennedy was unhappy with the way that Johnson had accepted the Vice-Presidency and the way that they were now stuck with him, "Consequently they [the Kennedys] had so relegated the Vice-President to the wings that he had become a national television joke - the worst kind: "Lyndon Johnson? Who's that? - Where's he?"

Now that we have the background to LBJ's political career, let us move forward to 1963 and a mysterious event which preceded the assassination.

On 11th October of that year Kennedy issued NSAM#263 which laid plans for the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam to start by the end of 1965. Kennedy's view of the military situation in Vietnam was that it was improving, and he planned to hand over control of the war to the Vietnamese by the end of 1965. However, as Colonel L. Fletcher Prouty (X in the movie JFK) notes, v "Just four days after Kennedy's death ... Lyndon Johnson and most of the same JFK cabinet viewed the situation in an entirely different light. They saw the military situation deteriorating ... All of a sudden, these same people saw this program [NSAM#263] as a failure." An official document from the time states, "These topics dominated the discussions at the Honolulu conference of November 20th" vi Prouty again, vii "On that date John Kennedy was still alive and President ... Yet this report says that his cabinet had assembled in Honolulu to discuss 'these topics' which were the very topics of NSAM#273 (which reversed NSAM#263), dated November 26, and a vital step on the way to a total reversal of Kennedy's policy ..."

Prouty rightly notes that this policy would not appear in the White House until after the assassination, yet it was written and discussed before that took place at a meeting to which JFK had not sent his Cabinet, viii "Who could have known, beforehand, that this new-non-Kennedy agenda would be needed in the White House because Kennedy would no longer be President?"

At the time of the Honolulu meeting both Johnson and Kennedy were in Texas, LBJ's absence from the meeting as a senior member of the Cabinet is intriguing. Why wasn't he there? Could it be to give him 'plausible denial' if the meeting were later discovered? Incidentally, in their Texas visit the security protocol that President and Vice-President should never be at public events was repeatedly violated, with Kennedy and Johnson together on many occasions, most noticeably the motorcade on 22nd November. Why was this violation allowed to happen on so many occasions? Were the security services also involved?

Ending the Vietnam War would also have ended many big business contracts, most notably Bell Helicopters, suppliers of the ubiquitous "Huey". We saw earlier what a friend big business had in Lyndon Johnson early in his political career. Did it continue into his Presidency?

11-22-63

Conscious of just how close his 1960 election victory over Richard Nixon had been, Kennedy knew that if he was to win the looming 1964 election, he would also have to win the hearts and minds of Texas. It was decided that he would pay a two day visit to the Lone Star State on 21-22nd November.

On the night of Thursday November 21st, Madeleine Brown, LBJ's mistress for many years was at a party thrown by oilman Clint Murchison, a friend of Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover, x "The impressive guest list included ... Richard Nixon, George Brown [of Root and Brown], ... H.L. Hunt..."

The events Brown narrates are certainly significant as far as the assessment of LBJ's involvement is concerned. Brown tells how, when the party was winding down, Johnson unexpectedly appeared. xi "Tension filled the room upon his arrival. The group

immediately went behind closed doors. A short time later Lyndon, anxious and red-faced, re-appeared ... he spoke with a grating whisper - a quiet growl into my ear, not a love message, but one I'll always remember."

Brown notes that Johnson then proceeded to a party at Fort Worth's Cellar Door club where many of JFK's secret servicemen stayed drinking until 4am. Again, this was direct violation of security protocol - they should have been at the President's hotel -and again it begs the question of whether they and Johnson knew what was going to happen.

On the morning of November 22nd Brown received a surprise phone call from Johnson, xiii "It was evident that the tone of fury in his voice from last night had not yet dissipated ... His snarling voice jolted me as never before - " ... that goddamn f*cking Irish mafia bastard, Kennedy, will never embarrass me again! ... I've got about a minute to get to the parking lot to hear that bastard!"

As his mistress Brown would have been one of the people closest to Johnson, and it is possible therefore that he would have been less guarded with her. Though we must be wary of reading things into Brown's account which may or may not be there, Johnson's behaviour as recorded by her certainly raises questions.

As is continually reiterated in the Warren Commission report, it was known that Dallas would be a difficult and hostile city for President Kennedy to visit. When in Dallas only one month before JFK's visit, US ambassador to the UN Adlai Stevenson had been spat upon and jeered at.

On November 21st right wing leaflets proclaiming JFK "wanted for treason" were distributed in the city, and on the day of the assassination itself, a full page hostile newspaper ad which sarcastically declared "Welcome, Mr. Kennedy, to Dallas" appeared in Dallas's *Morning News* (Commission exhibit No. 1031).

Planning the events of the trip, it was decided at his White House visit on October 4th, would be left to John Connally, Governor of Texas, and longtime friend of Lyndon Johnson. xiv Knowing that Texas would be a challenging visit, Kennedy had hoped that as both Vice-President and a Texan, Johnson would assist him in the trip. However, as Robert Kennedy later recalled, this was not the case, xv "When the President was going to Texas, trying to get the political situation settled in Texas, Lyndon Johnson would be no help. That made it difficult for the President. The President was looking forward to his trip to Texas just because of the fact that there was so much trouble in Texas. He thought it would make it more exciting, more interesting ... And he said to Jackie ... that Lyndon Johnson was incapable of telling the truth. And then I had these terrible experiences with him coming back [as President on Air Force One] - when he lied again and where he treated Jackie, the whole business, very badly..."

We must question why it was that Lyndon Johnson was so unwilling to help Kennedy "settle the political situation" in Texas. Was it simply that he resented helping Kennedy, it was no secret that he (and indeed J. Edgar Hoover) disliked the Kennedys on a personal level, or was it perhaps due to more sinister motives?

Lyndon Johnson's behaviour aboard Air Force One after the assassination is that of a man utterly determined to



'After tomorrow those goddamn Kennedys' will never embarrass me again - that's not a threat - that's a promise'.

2.38pm CST Judge Sarah Hughes, whom Johnson had appointed, swore Lyndon Johnson in on board Air Force One using a Roman Catholic prayer book in place of a bible; a bereft Jackie Kennedy looked on.

When she had earlier been asked if she would change her clothes for the swearing-in, Jackie declined saying, "No, I want *them* to see what *they* have done" (my emphasis), had she already realised that the assassination was not the work of a "lone nut"?

Finally, after he had been sworn in and had gone against Jackie Kennedy's wish by delaying the plane, Lyndon Johnson allowed Air Force One to depart.

On the day of the assassination itself, security protocol was violated when both the President and the Vice-President were together at a public event (the motorcade). The security services' other preparations for the day were extremely poor, open windows along the motorcade route went unchecked; the protective bubble was left off President Kennedy's limousine.

be President. In the above quotation Bobby Kennedy refers to Johnson delaying the airplane's departure from Dallas by saying that Bobby himself had requested it did not depart until he had taken the oath of office. However, what actually happened was quite different:

At 2pm (CST) on November 22nd Johnson called Bobby Kennedy. The call was to find out the finer points of furthering his own career, xvii *"Lyndon Johnson had an important question: Am I truly President before I have taken the oath of office? No-one on the funeral plane knew the answer. Dumbstruck by grief, few of them cared. But Lyndon Johnson cared very much ..."* Furthermore, according to Jeff Shesol, Johnson even lobbied the rest of the plane's passengers to reach the consensus that the plane should not leave until he had been sworn in. xviii



An interesting event in the motorcade was that Lyndon Johnson started to duck before anyone else in it had even realised the noises they were hearing were gunshots. It is clear from the Zapruder film that it actually takes quite a few seconds for Kennedy himself to realise that something is wrong and that he is hearing gunshots. Is it possible that Johnson had been forewarned?

Only a few hours after the swearing-in, Lyndon Johnson was already phoning several former members of Kennedy's staff, to talk about plans for his 1964 election campaign. xxii. By any reckoning, this is extraordinary behaviour from someone who had become President only hours before, and again raises the question of whether LBJ was more prepared for the Presidency than official sources would like us to believe.

In a supreme display of self-interest and lack of consideration for others, LBJ asked Bobby, xix *"A lot of people down here think I should be sworn in right away," Johnson insisted, "Do you have any objections to that?" Kennedy was taken aback, stunned into silence. "I didn't see what the rush was", he reflected. "Jack had been dead only an hour. It would be a comfort to the family if he returned to Washington as President Kennedy - But I suppose that was all personal."* Shesol notes xx that to fill the silence left by Bobby's shock, Johnson questioned him as to the finer points of being sworn in.

**"It would be a comfort to the family if he returned to Washington as President Kennedy - But I suppose that was all personal."
Robert Kennedy**

From the start of his Presidency, Johnson was unwilling to set up a Presidential commission to investigate the assassination, preferring that the FBI (headed by his old friend J. Edgar Hoover), and the state of Texas handle it instead. However, by November 29th he had been persuaded, and telephoned Hoover to hear his suggestions for commission members. Investigations

were planned into the assassination by other bodies, and Hoover's response in this phonecall appears to show that he also knew more than he ever let on: xxiii

Hoover: ... I think it would be very, very bad to have a rash of investigations on this thing.

Johnson: Well, the only way we can stop them is probably to appoint a high level one to evaluate your report and put somebody that's pretty good on it that I can select ... and tell the House and the Senate not to go ahead ... because they'll get a lot of television going and I thought it would be bad. (My emphasis).

To answer LBJ's shocking questions, RFK called Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach xxi. Kennedy phoned Johnson and told him that any judge could swear him in, he did not, however, tell Johnson, that it was constitutionally necessary for him to be sworn in, and indeed it was not. As Vice-President the Presidency fell directly to Johnson after the assassination. However, it would seem that LBJ wanted 15 to emphasize just who was President now. So, at

Many of those Johnson approached to be on the Commission were extremely unwilling, as the transcripts in Beschloss's excellent *Taking Charge* show. Earl Warren himself, who would later head the Commission, was reduced to tears over the matter, as LBJ relates in a phone call to Richard Russell, another unwilling

J. Edgar Hoover

... I think it would be very, very bad to have a rash of investigations on this thing.....



commission member: xxiv

Johnson: *And he [Earl Warren] started crying and he said "I won't turn you down [to be on the Commission]. I'll just do whatever you say.*

The fact that he could pressurise even US Chief Justice Earl Warren to be on the Commission shows just how much power LBJ had here. Hugely discredited by researchers over the years, the Warren Commission was to be the official version of the events of the assassination. It was important that Johnson, and his friend of almost thirty years J. Edgar Hoover, had people on the Commission whom they could trust to give the "correct" version of events which would clear them of any possible blame - and that these people had felt the power of the President right from the moment of their appointment to the Commission.

An example of the dogmatic tone of the Warren Commission's report is its statement that there is no evidence that Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby knew each other. However, reading any well-researched book on the subject will show the opposite to be true. Oswald had been seen in Jack Ruby's Carousel Club on numerous occasions in 1963-4. xxv

When in jail for the murder of Oswald, Ruby himself had some interesting comments to make on the assassination and on Lyndon Johnson. Ruby pleaded with Earl Warren to arrange transfer for him to Washington on many occasions, stating that his life was in danger because of what he knew, Warren, however, told him that was not possible. xxvi In 1964 Jack Ruby wrote to a fellow inmate: xxvii

"Johnson is going to try and have an all out war with Russia ... Isn't it strange that Oswald ...should be fortunate enough to get a job at the Book Bldg. two weeks before the president himself didn't know when he was to visit Dallas, now where would a jerk like Oswald get the information that the president was coming to Dallas. Only one person could have had that information, and that man was Johnson who knew weeks in advance as to what was going to happen because he is the one who was going to arrange the trip for [the] president, this had been planned long before [the] president himself knew about [it], so you figure that one out. The only one who gained by the shooting of the president was Johnson, and he was in a car in the rear and safe when the shooting took place ... If Johnson was so heartbroken over Kennedy why didn't he do something for Robert Kennedy? ... "

We saw earlier how Johnson's reversal of NSAM#263 led to the escalation of the Vietnam War. Jim Marrs perceptively asks xxviii *"Did he [Ruby] know that Johnson and the people behind him wanted war - only mistaking Russia for Asia?"* When we consider the odd Honolulu discussions, the swiftness with which NSAM#273 came

into being on Nov. 26 - even before the Warren Commission was set up - and how much of a friend LBJ had been to defence contractors in the past, that he wanted war does not seem so unfeasible.

Jack Ruby told the Warren Commission that he knew who killed Kennedy and also that *"a new form of government is going to take over the country"*. xxix His claims were not taken, nor was he ever questioned fully by the Commission. xxx Was this under direction from Johnson or Hoover? Jack Ruby was proving to be a loud-mouthed thorn in Johnson's side, and his fears for his life were confirmed in 1966 when he developed cancer on **December 9th** of that year and was dead from it on **January 3rd 1967**. This was shortly after a retrial had been scheduled for him - a trial which Ruby would probably have won. xxxi Whoever those behind the assassination were, they could not afford to have Ruby free to talk to the press. Dozens of other assassination witnesses also fell prey to this kind of "censorship".

From all of the above we have seen how Lyndon Johnson's behaviour in one of the saddest periods of US history must lead us to question the accepted degree of his involvement in the assassination. If Lyndon Johnson was indeed involved then I am inclined to believe from the available evidence that it was at the level of a "willing accomplice". For whoever the "high cabal" behind the assassination were, LBJ would have been the perfect man to take office. His desire to be president and overwhelming vanity were common knowledge, as was his contempt for the Kennedys. His friendship with incredibly powerful Texas oilmen and millionaires such as H.L. Hunt, his aiding of big business such as Root and Brown and his friendship with J. Edgar Hoover put him in a uniquely useful and powerful position for the "cabal".

Fletcher Prouty believes that one reason why Kennedy was assassinated was to increase the business of war - at that time war was the biggest business in the US. As Prouty notes xxvii \$220 billion were spent on Vietnam, but most after 1963 - only \$3 billion had been spent on Vietnam prior to Kennedy's assassination. Kennedy's death paved the way for more money and more defence contracts for the War.

What other possible motives were there for Johnson to be involved in the assassination?

1). LBJ had many major scandals coming to light which would have undoubtedly ended his political career. These included the Billy Sol-Estes/Henry Marshall affair, as well as the Bobby Baker insurance scandal and the murder of Doug Kinser. xxviii Though investigations of these were looming while he was Vice-President, once Johnson reached the Presidency they mysteriously never came to fruition.

2). Kennedy had planned to reduce the oil depletion allowance. After the assassination the oil depletion remained unreduced. Did Johnson's oilmen friends have something to do with the assassination? It is important not to underestimate just how powerful or well-connected people like H.L. Hunt and Clint Murchison were.

3). Johnson desperation to become President was well known. It was widely expected that Kennedy would drop him from the 1964 running ticket, effectively removing Johnson from any chance of ever becoming President. With Kennedy "removed" Johnson's Presidency would be 16

secure.

Throughout the whole of this article we have seen that evidence, though circumstantial, exists which appears to connect LBJ with the assassination of Kennedy on a higher level than he ever admitted. It was Johnson himself who sealed much of the official documentation on the assassination until well into the 21st century. When Madeleine Brown asked him why xxxiv, he "said humorously, "Remember Box 13?"

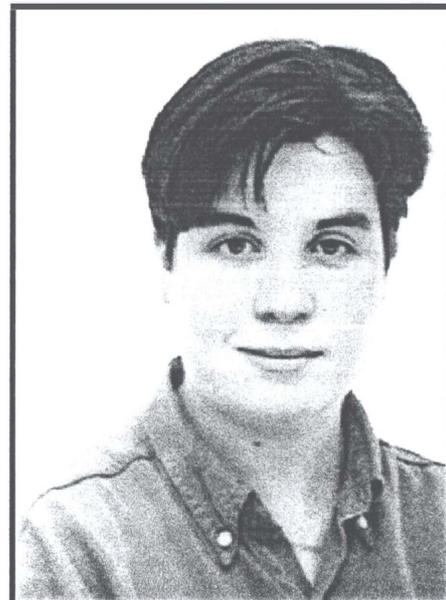
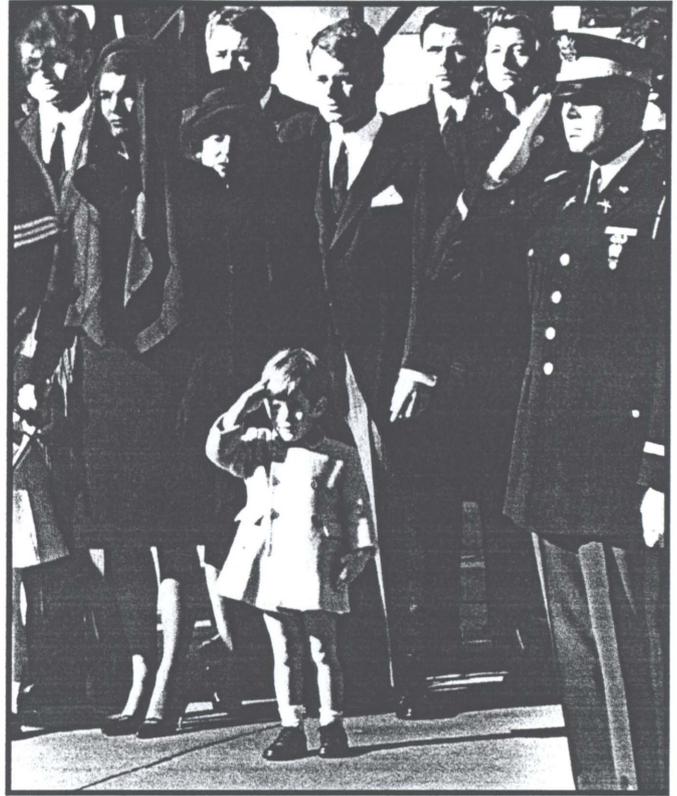
In a situation like this where much of the hard evidence has been sealed from public view, and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future, circumstantial evidence is likely to be the best that we can get. I leave you with a thought of Colonel L. Fletcher Prouty:

"It is the body of circumstantial evidence that proves the existence of conspiracy. "

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- I. See J. Evetts Hales, *A Texan looks at Lyndon* (Texas, 1964), p.
- ii. Op.cit. p.14
- iii. Op.cit. p.21
- iv. Op.cit. p.73
- V. *JFK: The CIA, Vietnam and the plot to assassinate John F. Kennedy* / L. Fletcher Prouty (Citadel Press, 1996.) Chapter 18.
- vi. I bid
- vii. ibid
- viii. ibid
- ix. For more information on this see esp. Ch.18-19 of *JFK ... Texas in the morning* / Madeleine Duncan Brown (Baltimore, 1997), p. 166.
- xi. I bid
- xii. ibid.
- xiii. Op. Cit. p.167
- xiv. Warren Commission Report, p.48
- xv. *Robert Kennedy: In his own words* / Eds. E.O. Guthman, J. Shulman (London, 1988), p. 411
- xvi. This untruth even made it into the Warren Report: (p.72)
- xvii. *Mutual Contempt* / Jeff Shesol (New York, London, 1997), p.115
- xviii. Op.cit p.114
- xix. Ibid
- xx. Op.cit., p.115
- xxi. Ibid.
- xxii. *Taking Charge* / Michael R. Beschloss (New York, 1997), p.21
- xxiii. Op. cit. p. 51
- xxiv. Op.cit. p. 72
- xxv. *Crossfire* / Jim Marrs (New York, 1989), p.410.
- xxvi. Op.cit. p.427
- xxvii. Op. cit. p.430
- xxviii. Op. cit. p.431
- xxix. Op.cit. p.429
- xxx. Ibid.
- xxxi. See *Crossfire* pp.429-433 for more information on Ruby's curious death.
- xxxii. *JFK ...*, Ch.19
- xxxiii. For more information on these, see "*A Texan looks at Lyndon*".
- xxxiv. *Texas in the morning*, p.186

This article is dedicated to the memories of
**John F. Kennedy Jr.,
Carolyn Bessette and
Lauren Bessette.**
May they rest in peace.



KATE TAYLOR

holds a Master's degree in Classics from Oxford University and a Bachelor's degree from the University of Leeds.

She is employed as a member of Oxford University's Early Printed Books Project, where she puts her language skills to good use, cataloguing foreign books printed before 1640.

She is currently preparing a book on hypnagogia and alien abduction, and is particularly interested in Area 51, 'black' projects, and the assassination of President Kennedy.

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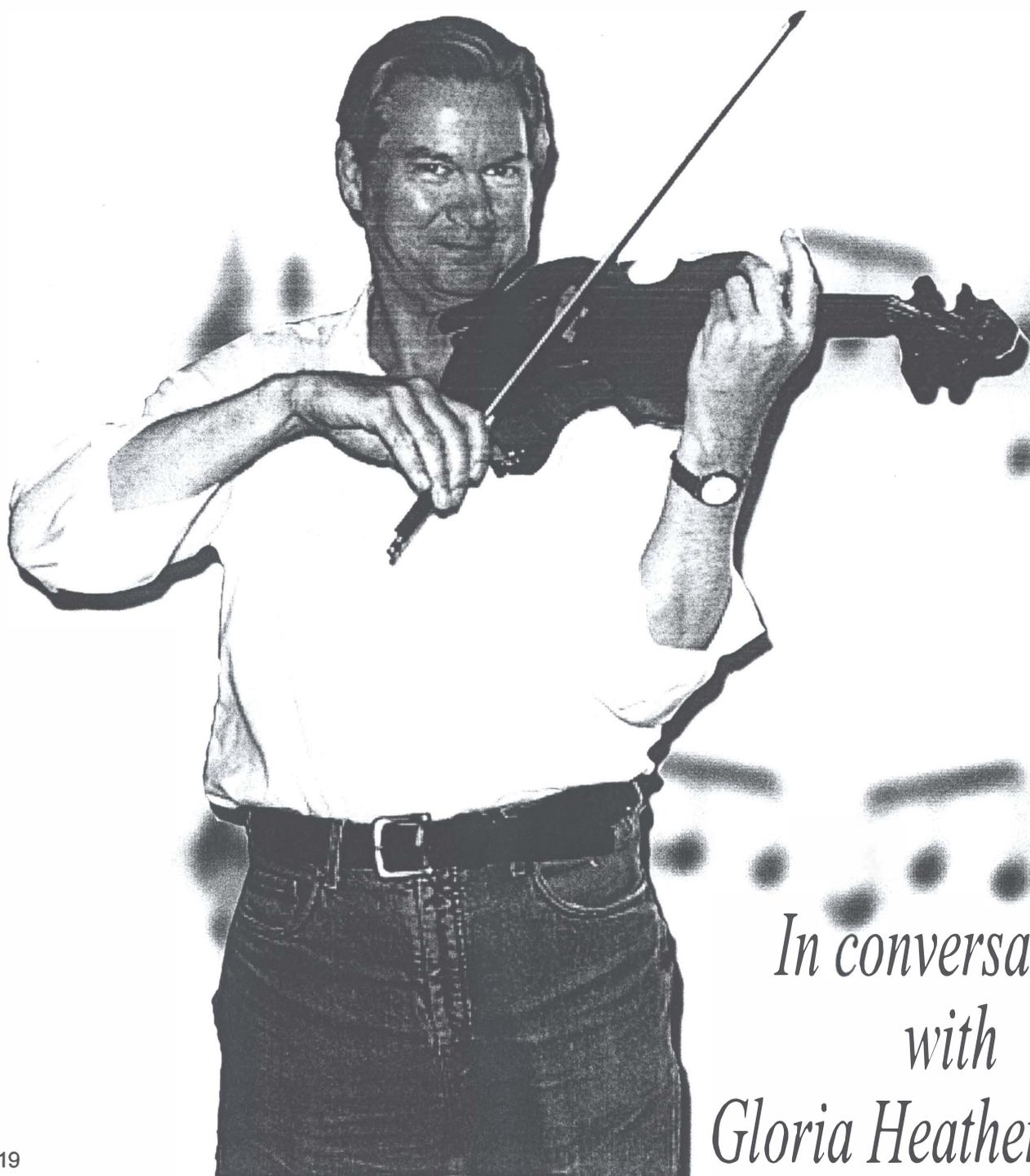
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*In conversation
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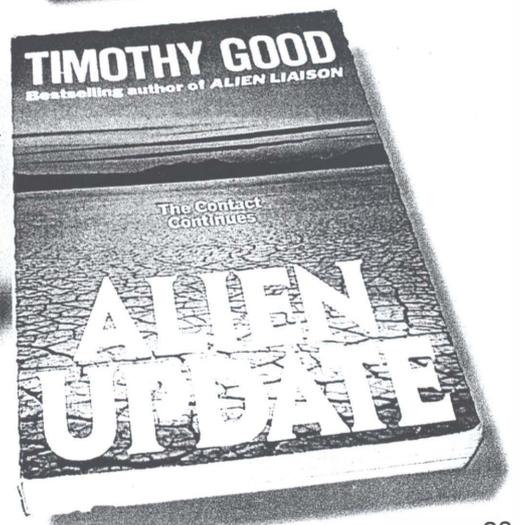
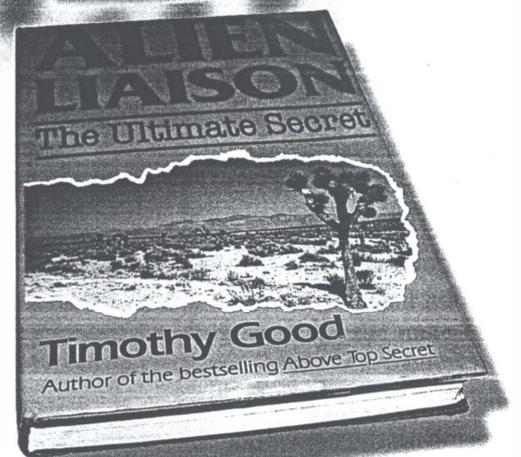
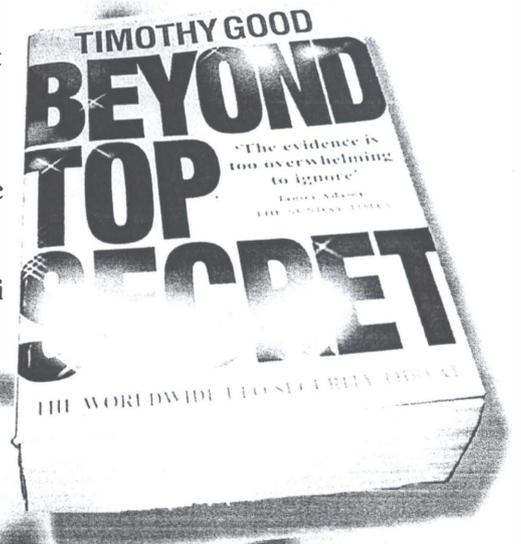
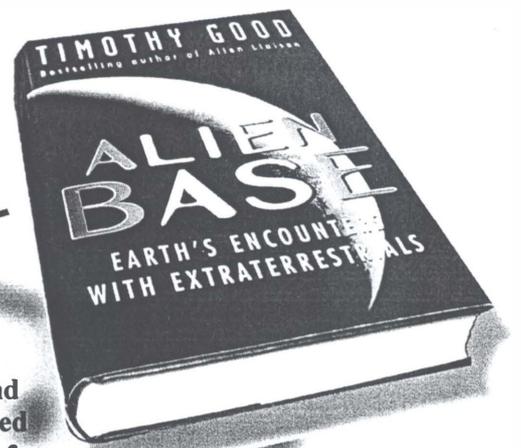
Timothy Good first became interested in UFOs in 1955, when his passion for aviation and space travel led him to read a book by Major Donald Keyhoe, which described sightings by military and civilian pilots. Now regarded as a top authority, he has researched the subject worldwide, interviewing key witnesses and amassing a wealth of evidence, including several thousands of intelligence documents.

Born in London in 1942, Timothy Good completed his formal education at The King's School, Canterbury, then gained a violin scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he won prizes for solo, chamber and orchestral playing. His professional career began in earnest in 1963 when he toured the USA and Canada with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. From 1964 to 1978 he played with the London Symphony Orchestra. He has also played with many other orchestras, including the English Chamber Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Mantovani Orchestra, and Philharmonia Orchestra, working with many great conductors and composers, including Leonard Bernstein, Benjamin Britten, Otto Klemperer, Leopold Stokowski, Igor Stravinsky and Sir William Walton.

Since 1978 Timothy Good has been involved in freelance session work for television dramas, commercials, feature films, and recordings with pop musicians. Those he has recorded for include Phil Collins, George Harrison, Elton John, Paul McCartney, Rod Stewart, Simply Red, Barbra Streisand, and U2. Recent films include *The Fifth Element*, *The Man in the Iron Mask*, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, and *Wings of the Dove*.

Timothy Good is known to millions worldwide through his numerous television appearances, and has acted as associate producer for several documentaries on the UFO subject. He has given lectures worldwide at universities, schools, and to many organizations, including the House of Lords All-Party UFO Study Group, IBM, the Institute of Medical Laboratory Sciences, the Royal Canadian Military Institute, the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Naval Air Reserve Branch, and the Oxford and Cambridge Union Societies. In 1998 he was invited to discuss his subject at the Defense Airborne Reconnaissance Office in the Pentagon.

Timothy Good's first book, *Above Top Secret* (Sidgwick & Jackson 1987) went to the top of the best-seller lists. The fully revised and updated edition, *Beyond Top Secret* (Sidgwick & Jackson 1996), spent five weeks on The Sunday Times best-seller list. *Alien Liaison* (Century 1991) stayed in The Sunday Times best-seller lists for over thirteen weeks. These books have forewords by Admiral of the Fleet The Lord Hill-Norton, former Chief of the Defence Staff. The latest book, *Alien Base* (Century 1998) went to No. 4 on The Guardian best-seller list, and is translated in numerous countries, including China. Timothy Good has edited several other books on the subject, including the best-selling *Alien Update* (Arrow 1993).

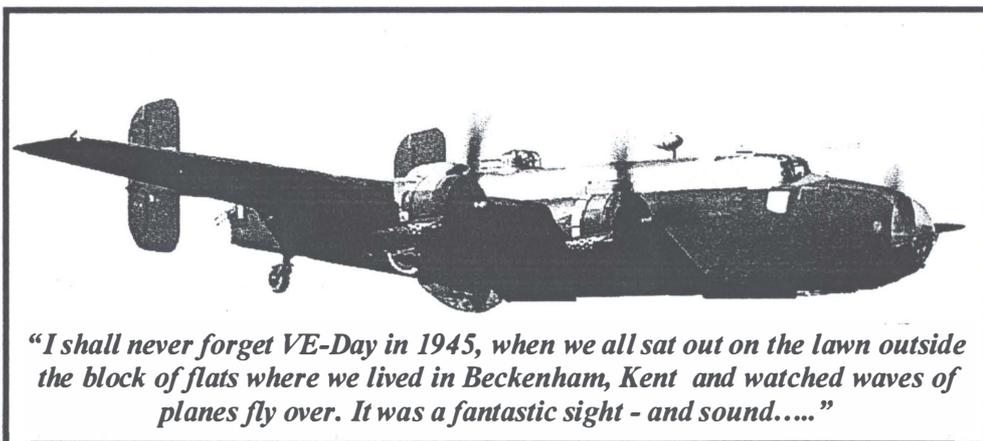


Timothy Good is a rarity in UFOlogy, a true gentleman with a passion that is powerful and a faith in his subject that seems absolute. You may not share or agree with his views but no diatribes will follow and he will simply accept that you have a different point of view. As with anyone who is confident of the validity of his evidence, he will defend his ideas and deeply held beliefs with a persuasive strength and you cannot doubt his commitment to the subject. In spite of this he will concede that alternative explanations may be responsible for some unidentified aerial phenomena.

I was very interested to learn a great deal more about Tim during my recent interview with him, particularly about his other achievements and extensive activities. I asked Tim to tell me about his background and early life. His candour took me by surprise.....



I was born, by Caesarian section, at 04.20 on 7 August 1942, in the City of London if that's of any interest to astrologers and/or abduction researchers. My father was English, my mother half-Scottish. In 1944, because of the bombing (including V-1 flying bombs) my mother, brother and I were evacuated to Wiltshire, where my father was serving in the humble rank of corporal at RAE Yatesbury, working on radar - one of his colleagues there was Arthur C. Clarke. After the war finished, I shall never forget VE-Day in 1945, when we all sat out on the lawn outside the block of flats where we lived in Beckenham, Kent (10 miles south-east of London) and watched waves of planes fly over. It was a fantastic sight - and sound.



"I shall never forget VE-Day in 1945, when we all sat out on the lawn outside the block of flats where we lived in Beckenham, Kent and watched waves of planes fly over. It was a fantastic sight - and sound....."

Does your interest in UFOs go back to your childhood, and have you always had an interest in mysterious and anomalous phenomena?



According to my mother, I was "very quick in watching and spotting planes, birds and flies" at ten months old. I became interested in the unidentified variety in 1955, when I was around twelve. An American relative - Edmund C. Berkeley, who edited the first magazine on computers, called *Computers & Automation*, I think - sent me one of Major Donald Keyhoe's books, *The Flying Saucers Are Real*. Knowing of my passion for all things to do with aircraft and space travel, he thought I should learn about flying

saucers. I immediately became hooked, of course, particularly when I learned that so many pilots had seen these things. I don't recall having an interest in anomalous phenomena prior to that time. By 1952 I was devouring the *Eagle* comic (Dan Dare.etc.) as well as aviation magazines such as *Flight* and *The Aeroplane*. In my student years I became deeply involved in spiritualism, an interest inspired by my mother, who had psychic abilities. I attended many public demonstrations of clairvoyance as well as private direct voice séances, transfigurations, and even a few materialization séances.

Which direction do you feel UFOlogy is taking, and do you feel there is a decline in interest? Also with the powerful imagery everywhere relating to the UFO subject and alien encounters, do you accept that this imagery may have influenced the beliefs of people claiming extraordinary experiences into redefining them as alien encounters?



Well, it's taking various directions in different countries. In the USA, for example, the abduction thing has reached farcical levels, in my view. Nearly everyone seems to have been abducted, and the stories are getting wilder by the week. Most of it is fantasy, based on the voluminous stories available in best-selling books, or on TV documentaries, and so on. I'm in agreement with much of what Kevin McClure writes, and recommend his Abduction Watch newsletter. That's not to say that I don't believe in abductions, which is where Kevin and I may beg to differ. I am convinced that many people throughout the world have indeed been abducted - I don't know how many, but it's probably a fraction of what is claimed. I'm more interested in those cases where the abductee has total recollection, which admittedly is rare, or partial recollection, which of course is far more common. In the latter case, I always encourage those claiming abduction to try and recall their experiences gradually and naturally.

Hypnotic regression can be a useful tool in recovering memories, provided that it is done by a qualified hypnotherapist - ideally one with training in psychiatric medicine - but more often than not, it is done by amateurs - "backstreet abductionists" - who have little or no idea of the dangers. For instance, someone claiming to have been abducted may be prone to delusions, and regression only exacerbates those delusions.

In the Australian state of Victoria, hypnotic regression is forbidden by law, unless practised by State-registered psychiatrists, according to Kelly Cahill, whose memories of her abduction outside Melbourne in August 1993 were recalled - albeit alarmingly - without recourse to regression. Unfortunately, she still has no precise recollection of everything that happened to her - and we still don't really know what precisely happens during *any* abduction - but at least other witnesses have come forward to support her encounter; witnesses who have come up with facts about that encounter that they couldn't possibly have known about unless they'd actually been there.

On top of that, there seems to be a stack of scientific evidence at the site of the encounter to support the view that something extraordinary, and physical, occurred. From the outset, John Auchtell's methodology in handling this case was exemplary. I recommend Kelly Cahill's book, *Encounter* (HarperCollins), though I should point out that more evidence has come to light subsequent

to publication.

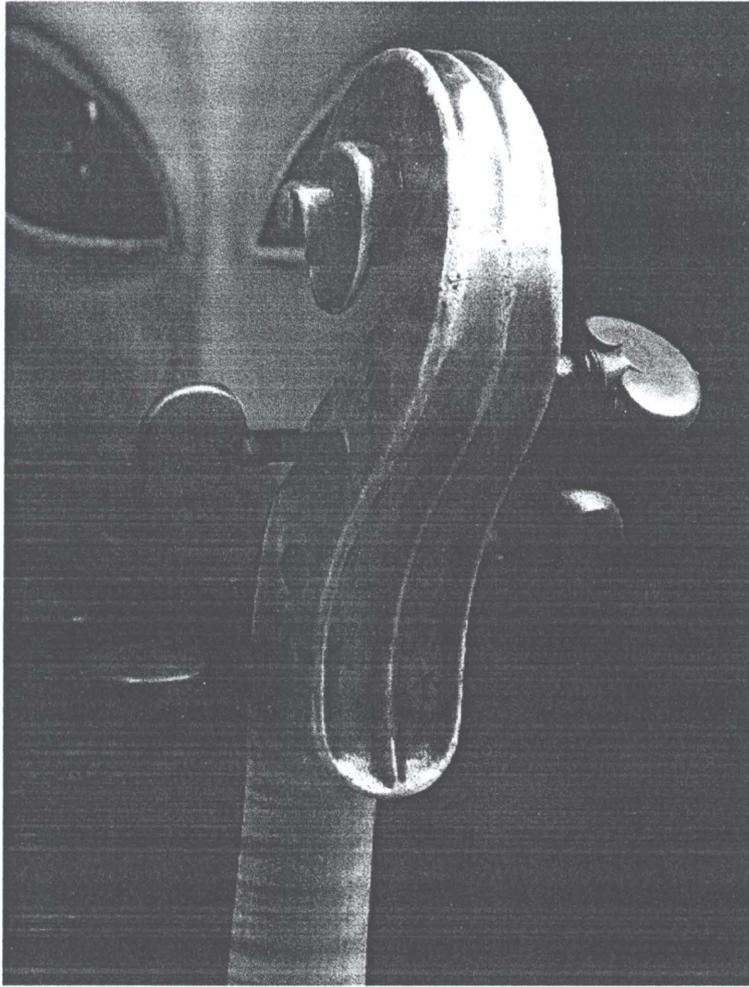
Yes, there is a current decline in interest, but it's temporary. Interest in our subject has always been cyclic, typically dependent on dramatic and well-publicized sightings and blockbuster films (especially those by Spielberg, of course), reflected in increased or decreased sales of books, magazine subscriptions, and so on. In recent years, the surge of interest, I feel, was due largely to the phenomenal and international popularity of the *X Files*, which brought us a whole new generation of enthusiasts, eager to read and watch everything they could about UFOs. When the *X Files* ratings slumped, sales of UFO books (yes, including mine) and magazines slumped commensurately. The *X Files* has also spawned a new generation of researchers, many of whom, unfortunately, have little background knowledge of the subject and in some cases, have written some incredibly sloppy and sensationalist books that would never have been published were it not for the buoyant market at that time. People who browse through these in bookshops are simply turned off the whole subject. Rest assured, though, interest will be on the upswing in due course.

But while we bemoan the current trend, let us not forget that tremendous interest in our subject has been shown, and is still being shown, by TV producers. Those of my generation will recall that, in previous decades in the U.K., we were lucky to get one documentary on the subject every five years. There's been a plethora of documentaries in the last few years (some of which have been good), and I expect that trend to continue. Only this week I was interviewed on Meridian TV to give my opinion about a video film showing what were believed to be UFOs taken in Aylesham, Kent, on August 1st. The UFOs were a bunch of balloons, in my opinion (which went down like a lead balloon), but this was the lead story on the 6 o'clock news and Meridian invited viewers to call in with opinions and/or corroborative sightings, which they summarized at the end of the news. This is the Silly Season, I know, but the story was treated sensibly. This isn't just happening in the U.K. My research takes me all over the world, and I see evidence of increasing interest in many countries. For example, *Alien Base* is due to be published in China this year.

Your books are sold worldwide and have been international best sellers. What do you do when you are not writing or researching?



Obviously, music has been a passion for as long as I can remember. My father, Ronald, was a distinguished violinist who, with his sister Margaret, a fine pianist, gave some of the first live broadcast recitals for the BBC, back in the late 1920s. And I have two cousins who are professional musicians. Auntie Margaret is now in her nineties. Her late husband, William Pleeth, who died earlier this year, was a wonderful cellist and teacher (he taught Jacqueline du Pre). Their son, Tony, is one of Britain's finest cellists, and we frequently play together on recording sessions. Another cousin on my father's side of the family is Raymond Lewis, a professional pianist and organist. My brother Robin, born



in 1938, is very musical, but unfortunately he has hydrocephalus so is physically and mentally disabled. Nonetheless, he has perfect pitch, which is rare even among musicians, and a phenomenal ability to calculate mathematically in his head. He lives happily at a Scope home for the disabled in Camborne, Cornwall.

My father began to teach me the violin when I was five years old, then later I had other teachers. While still at my last school, The Kings' School, Canterbury - the oldest school on Earth, founded in 597 AD - I played for a year during the holidays with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. I have been a professional violinist since leaving the Royal Academy of Music in 1963, working (playing) with, for example, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philharmonia, the English Chamber Orchestra, but mostly with the London Symphony Orchestra, to which I belonged for 14 years. I also played with the Mantovani Orchestra. Since 1978 I've played as a session musician on

Obviously, music has been a passion
for as long as I can remember...

films, TV commercials, and for pop records though I don't do much these days: my generation of session musicians is being replaced by younger players. Sad really, because it's always a joy to play with my colleagues - and have a serious laugh. The last pop song I played on was *Blame It On The Weatherman* with the Irish group B*Witched, and the last film, *Message in a Bottle*. I can't live without music, so listen to a lot of it - both classical and pop - 22

on my superb hi-fi system (Quad amp and pre-amp; Sony CD and cassette deck; Thorens professional turntable, and Spondor speakers). I have to say that, apart from the scratches, quite a lot of my old vinyl discs sound better than some CDs. For one thing, digital technology - at least, as transferred to compact disc - can't cope with subtle fluctuations of dynamics. But digitally remastered CDs of pre-war recordings, in particular, are amazingly good.



My first professional engagement was as an actor. In the early 1950s I studied at the Arts Educational School in London, where in addition to the usual curriculum I studied drama, mime, ballet and tap-dancing. The pinnacle of my acting career was a road safety film. The other child-actor was Christopher Beeny, who years later made his name in *Upstairs, Downstairs* on TV. I was paid four pounds ten shillings. I've never seen the film and sometimes wonder if anyone else has either.



I've been mad about planes all my life. The great thing about aircraft - unlike the unidentified variety - is that I can see them any time, photograph them, touch them, and fly in them regularly, both as a passenger and, thanks to several good friends, as a pilot in the right-hand seat. I doubt if I'll ever become qualified. I'd rather fly than drive; in fact, I've never had a car. I feel safer in the air than on the ground, though I have witnessed some horrific accidents at air shows, the first at Farnborough in 1952, when John Derry and Tony Richards were killed when their DH 110 broke up in mid-air, killing 28 spectators and injuring many more. I also make model aircraft, of the static type.



I used to paint and draw quite a lot, but photography has long taken over - I've been mad about it since boyhood. I own four Nikon cameras, my preferred make, and have a number of other cameras, including an old Super-8 movie camera which I no longer use since video (I use Hi-8) is so much more practical. I also have a collection of old still and movie cameras. I've done a bit of professional work on different subjects and had some pictures published in various magazines, including *Aerospace International*, and some record sleeves, for RCA and CBS. I do my own black & white and colour transparency developing.



I didn't realise the extent of your interests and I agree, a world without music is unimaginable. Do you feel that in some way a belief in UFOs and extraterrestrial

visitors has taken the place of orthodox religions?



Yes, I do. But then, how did religions start in the first place? Christianity, for example, is based on the story of a man whose birth allegedly was accompanied by an unusual star hovering above his stable; a man who claimed he came from another world, who exhibited phenomenal abilities such as healing, telepathy, teleportation; who supposedly survived bodily death then was taken into the sky accompanied by two angels; who later appeared to Paul in a blinding light in the sky. Need I say more? I'm not saying these things are necessarily true - I wasn't there - but the connection is inescapable, and there are some extraordinary parallels with many of the contact stories in this century. Of the latter, one of the most convincing for me is that of "Joelle", a friend of mine who had meetings with extraterrestrials in the 1960s, as described in my book *Alien Base*. Her contacts informed her that Jesus (and some other great spiritual teachers) were not of this world; that he was a "hybrid".

With the high focus on environmental issues, cloning and new medical technology which abounds at the moment, do you feel that people may feel a great anxiety about a futuristic world scenario such as the one Aldous Huxley wrote about in *Brave New World*? Maybe this could be the reason that people look towards an extraterrestrial intelligence as a form of intervention into human affairs?



Yes, evidently, though I think people are more inclined to look to extraterrestrials for our salvation if something more drastic happens, such as a nuclear war, a nuclear disaster or terrorists accessing nuclear & biological weapons. These remain a distinct possibility, though many prefer to put it to the back of their minds.

Do you feel that in a residual of cases there is a strong possibility that a percentage of people are indeed being abducted against their will by an alien presence and, if so, what was the defining moment for you in concluding that we are being visited by an extraterrestrial intelligence?



I think I have answered the first part of this in your second question. As far as the defining moment is concerned, that came in February 1967, in the middle of New York, when I am convinced I encountered a man from another world, as described in *Alien Base*.

Since you advocate that aliens are here, why is there a search for extraterrestrial intelligence, and do you view this as part of the cover-up?



Even if some of them are here already - which is indeed my position - there will always be a need to search the heavens for signs of extraterrestrial intelligence or communications. The vast majority of those involved in the various, mostly privately-funded programs (e.g. Project Phoenix conducted by the SETI Institute and SERENDIP conducted by the University of Berkeley) are not aware of the highly restricted Special Access Programs that deal with the extraterrestrial situation here on Earth, so there is no cover-up, really. But the fact that very little money is being spent on the SETI programs by the US Government, for example, *might* be an

indication that they know they're here already.

In January this year, together with Graham Sheppard, my principal associate, I conducted an interview with Dr Jose Alonso at the National Astronomy and Ionosphere Centre, Arecibo Radio Observatory, in Puerto Rico, which is operated by Cornell University for the US Government. He explained that the Centre conducts about 200 to 300 research projects per year, most of which deal with atmospheric research. SETI gets about 5% of a year's research allocation, and the current effort is focused on stars of a similar type to our own. Without revealing my involvement, I casually mentioned that hundreds of people in Puerto Rico claim to have had encounters with beings who seem to be extraterrestrial, and that many felt that Arecibo was part of a cover-up. "No classified studies go on here," he assured me. "This is a civilian institution. A lot of people think we deal with alien phenomena, that this is a US Government cover-up. Listen, the US Government can't even prevent, say, a Chinese scientist from stealing secrets! As to aliens, it's a question of belief; people like to believe we're not alone. For me as a scientist, we have a way of doing things. Statistically, there has to be something out there. If they exist, it's just a matter of time - and technology. There are between 200 to 400 billion stars in our galaxy. As far as the SETI programme is concerned, I think it far more likely that we're going to be intercepting their communications with each other, rather than any radio signals to us - they're not going to send us some message! And would we understand those communications? It could take us years to understand them."

What is your view on the fact that there is no definitive scientific evidence to suggest that extraterrestrial spacecraft or aliens are visiting this planet - this includes alleged implants, which have never been proven to be alien in origin?



No scientific evidence? Nonsense! There's plenty of evidence - if not proof. We have numerous cases involving landing traces, photographs, films, videos, radar cases, samples of materials, animal mutilations, and various scientific measurements that have been taken over the decades. Surely this is evident from all the scientific papers and books that have been written? Regarding books by scientists, one of the most important is *Unconventional Flying Objects: A Scientific Analysis* by Paul Hill, the late NASA scientist (Hampton Roads Publishing Co.). What is lacking is not evidence but definitive proof - though I am certain it is in the hands of the few. As far as implants are concerned, there is certainly some evidence, though I'm not convinced by the findings of Dr Roger Leir, for example. Actually, Dr John Altshuler, the haematologist and pathologist who was the first to autopsy a mutilated animal, was also first, I believe, to remove alleged alien implants from abductees. He told me that years ago, in one case, he was unable to identify a 5mm-long object despite conducting a variety of tests, and in the other case he could find no evidence other than that it had been a fibre. So I agree with you: so far, implants have not proven to be of alien origin.

What are your opinions on secret military aviation technology, and do you accept that secret man-made technology might be responsible for some UFO sightings?



At any given time, there are likely to be secret military aircraft which can be mistaken as genuine UFOs. But this is rare. You don't test secret aircraft in places where

they're likely to be seen. In the UK, for example, they're usually flown off the west coast of Scotland. I accept, however, that some devices - particularly unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) - might be flown at night in areas of the country where they will occasionally be seen. Ideally, you need an area the size of the Nevada test range—which is about as large as Switzerland - to test-fly craft in secrecy. The F-117A Night Hawk stealth jet was flown there for many years (mostly at night) before it was seen by outsiders. As to the contention that all UFO sightings can be explained by terrestrial aircraft, that's bull. For starters, it's been going on far too long. In May last year I was invited to the Pentagon to discuss my subject at the Defence Airborne Reconnaissance Office (DARO). During the half-hour meeting, Major General Kenneth Israel, the then director, and his staff, showed me a number of clips of UAVs - the DarkStar and Global Hawk. General Israel pointed out that, at certain angles, the DarkStar might be mistaken for a flying saucer. "As a matter of fact," I said, "some people claim that many UFO reports can be explained as sightings of DarkStar." He laughed. "It only flew twice, and the second time it crashed!" (It's since been flying again.) So much for that theory. Incidentally, I strongly recommend *Robot Warriors* by Hugh McDaid and David Oliver, with an introduction by General Israel (Orion/Media), available in the UK at discounted prices. It's simply the best book on UAVs. Quite a few who write about UAVs really need to know more about them, such as the fact that quite a number of ordinary, and sometimes large, normally piloted aircraft have been converted for unmanned missions over the years.

Do you believe that the US Government at some future time will reveal the secrets of Groom Lake and other top-secret facilities?



Well, some secrets, though not directly related to our subject, have already been revealed (see, for example, *Skunk Works* by Ben Rich and Leo Janos, published by Little, Brown and Co.) As to currently classified special access programmes, I suppose most of these will be revealed when deemed appropriate. This might be a very long time - and perhaps with good reason, in my view. We should remind ourselves that we don't know precisely what is being covered up. Were we to find out, we might support the cover-up!



With regard to the many theories about UFOs and explanations for them, how do you see the very feasible theories of electromagnetic pollution as researched by Albert Budden and also Paul Devereux's project and research into earthlights? Do you also feel that yet to be understood natural phenomena may also have a strong bearing on the UFO issue, as well as altered states of consciousness prior to sleeping and waking? In fact, may these altered states be responsible for at least some of the abduction claims?



tectonic movements during a tremor occur from 25 to 50 kilometres below the surface. It is possible, however, I was further informed, that radon gas emissions from fractures in the ground caused by earthquakes might be interpreted as plasma. And I think it likely that there are other natural phenomena which may account for these things, which we will learn about in time. There's still a lot we don't know about our own planet, let alone others.



I don't find either of these hypotheses very feasible at all. In the case of "electromagnetic pollution", I wouldn't begin to take the theory seriously unless it had originated with a qualified expert and had been peer-reviewed by qualified experts in both EM and brain research. Certainly, very strong magnetic fields can cause a variety of physical and mental problems, but to suggest, as Budden does, that these are responsible for "alien abductions, out-of-body experiences . . . the appearance of entities of various types [including] guardian angels or the Virgin Mary" (*Strange Daze, No. 17*) seems potty. To start with, Budden writes that "the individual must have been living in an EM hot spot for at least several months. . . or close to or at a specific distance from a radio/TV transmitter". Then he goes on, "However, it must be

stressed, hot spots on their own mean nothing as they are everywhere". Are they really? Secondly, reports of encounters with entities - including aliens in physical craft GOBES, and so on, go back centuries, prior to EM pollution. As for "earthlights", these are real and can be seen in certain locations at certain times. Some of them appear to be intelligently controlled. But the hypothesis that they are produced specifically by tectonic stresses, for example, seems improbable. During a visit to the University of Mayaguez Seismic Institute in Puerto Rico in January, I asked if tectonic plate stresses during earth tremors could cause "earthlights" or "plasma". This was not possible in the atmosphere, I was told, because the

"As far as the defining moment is concerned, that came in February 1967, in the middle of New York, when I am convinced I encountered a man from another world"

Now, regarding altered states of consciousness, yes, I agree, these can certainly give rise to hallucinations, such as feeling that one is being abducted. For example, I have experienced sleep paralysis on numerous occasions, though less so in recent years. Typically I wake up in the small hours, fully conscious, my body becoming progressively paralysed, solar plexus and/or the bed apparently vibrating, and a sense of malevolence. Only through a supreme effort of will am I able to "dislodge" whatever it is. Sleep paralysis can indeed give rise to hallucinations, as Dr. Susan Blackmore maintains, but I have never seen or heard anything unusual on these occasions, though I know others who have. Abduction proponents maintain this is the initial stage of a typical abduction scenario. They may be right, but I have no intentions of finding out! In any case, it's very real, and on some occasions the onset of paralysis has occurred when I am fully awake, as my girlfriend can verify. My own feeling is that this experience is more likely "ultraterrestrial" than extraterrestrial in origin - perhaps demonic, like succubi - though, as I've argued before, the two hypotheses need not necessarily be mutually exclusive. As my departed friend Ralph Noyes wrote in *The UFO Report 1991*, discussing parallels between sleep paralysis in its various forms and the alien abduction scenario: "Allowing for a general

sloppiness of approach on the part of many Ufologists, coupled with a strong wish by some of them to cram the data into preconceived notions and to use such dubious techniques as hypnotic regression...there are far too many differences between the two experiences to enable us to assimilate the one to the other [though] these differences must not blind us to some very striking similarities."

The UFO subject is running in very muddied waters and many things are being dumped into the UFO pot, such as near-death and out-of-body experiences, ghosts, visions and close encounters, etc. In fact, as many of us are aware, this is



a multi-faceted phenomenon. What do you feel constitutes a real UFO sighting and which case do you truly believe remains totally and utterly unexplained?



Yes, this is certainly a multi-faceted subject, and many more facets have yet to be discovered! Therefore, it requires multi-disciplinary research. Regrettably, too many researchers pontificate on aspects of the subject that they know little or nothing about, which is one reason why the scientific community - by and large - doesn't take us seriously. Dumping everything into the same pot is a typical refuge of those who think they've found the answer to the whole mystery. My advice to those rushing into print is to consult experts qualified in the various disciplines being covered - and get a second opinion if you can.

As to what constitutes a real UFO sighting, this would take too long to answer. And I don't have in mind a single case which remains "totally and utterly unexplained" since there are so many good ones. For me, thousands of cases remain totally unexplained.

Do you feel that there is a possibility that the grey aliens of today will become the folklore of tomorrow, as we constantly interpret extraordinary human experiences into the mythology of today? Is it possible that these compelling human issues will never be fully understood until we can grasp even a small part of the immense and unexplored potential of the human consciousness, which surely must be just as fascinating? Maybe there are indeed other worlds, but as Jacques Vallee points out, are they within this one?



The grey aliens of today are already folklore! As previously mentioned, I believe the majority of abduction stories are fantasies, based on overexposure to books, films, documentaries and other cultural influences. The fact that you ask this question shows to what extent the image of grey aliens as the aliens has taken over. I've tried to show, in *Alien Base*, that there appear to be many different species that have come here over the years. Yes, I agree - particularly insofar as abductions are concerned - that these issues will never be fully understood until we know more about human consciousness. As to whether 'they' come from 'within' our planet, rather than from other planets, I assume you mean 'within' in a metaphysical rather than a physical sense—though both hypotheses are valid. And what's wrong with the extraterrestrial hypothesis, for heaven's sake? Many scientists who have studied the subject find it the most convincing hypothesis of all. I respect Vallee, but I find his rejection of the ETH puzzling. It seems to me that he dismisses it because the reports of close encounters (of whatever kind) don't conform to his preconceived notions of what "real" aliens would do here. But this is a complex issue. Though I'm perceived by many ufologists as an exclusively "nuts-and-bolts" man, that's not the case. In my opinion, there are interpenetrating dimensions of existence where other beings, such as those who have passed on from this world, exist. It is probable that some alien abductions relate to demonic activity originating in those other dimensions. But not all. As George Adamski (a very knowledgeable occultist, incidentally) used to say, "Why would a spook need a spaceship?" Other abductions and contacts involve physical beings from other, physical planets, coming here in physical spacecraft. Some, owing to their degree of advancement, both technically and mentally, are able to manipulate time and space, for example - which are dimensions - and the manifestations resulting from these abilities

have led a number of researchers to conclude, erroneously, that all "alien spacecraft" are ultra- as opposed to extra-terrestrial in origin. Interestingly, some Yogi masters here on Earth are said to have the ability to duplicate some of these abilities, as described, for example, in *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda - essential reading for those interested in these matters. And this brings me to another point. Some spacecraft and their occupants might originate on Earth, in physical form. For instance, in *Alien Base* I cite the mysterious colony of highly advanced beings who resided in Mount Shasta, California, said to be the remnants of the mythological 'Lemurian' civilization, who evidently also had advanced aerial craft. So, to summarize, I believe that these beings have extraterrestrial, ultraterrestrial, and probably terrestrial origins.

Do you think that MI6/Special Branch monitor the activity of specific ufologists, and if so, what evidence is there to suggest this happening?



There may well have been occasions when specific ufologists have been targeted for surveillance in the UK, but I have no firm evidence relating to those specific organizations. In the USA, there is definitely evidence of monitoring by the FBI, CIA, and USAF Office of Special Investigations.

Some UFO researchers believe that the conspiracy theories of government cover-ups are of a very terrestrial nature. Why do you believe that there is a government cover-up of extraterrestrial visitation?



Sorry, but this question would take too long to answer. May I refer readers to my books, where I've gone into all that in great detail.

Tim, I believe you are writing a new book at the moment. Can you give our readers a sneak preview of this and maybe tell us a little about how you conduct research for your books?



My new book, which I hope to complete in the next few months, is scheduled for publication by Century in May 2000. Sorry, I can't tell you more than that at the moment, except that it has cost me about £35,000 to research so far. Most of the money I earn from royalties is ploughed back into research. In addition to travel and accommodation expenses, I sometimes have to pay people large fees for their stories, I have to pay for translations and expert opinions and, in some countries, for on-site interpreters. I hold an NUJ press card, registered with New Scotland Yard, and this has helped me out in sometimes tricky situations over the years.

In the concluding chapter of his book *Forbidden Science*, Jacques Vallee makes the profound statement that "the only thing that counts in this life is to question the mystery of it, with all the means at our disposal, with every moment of awareness, with every breath". What are your personal thoughts and motivations during your years of



involvement with this compelling subject matter, and ultimately what do you consider to be essentially at the core of your search for other worlds?



Well, I'm not searching for other worlds, I'm driven to search for the truth about what is happening here on this world. Though resigned to the probability that I won't achieve my ambition, I'll give it my best shot while I'm here. UFOs, per se, don't interest me as much as alleged, actual encounters with extraterrestrials - this is at the core of my search. What I find particularly frustrating in this respect is that, firstly, we have only the witness's report to go on. Witnesses can be unreliable or dishonest, so it takes time - sometimes a lot of time spent in his or her environment - to evaluate them. Secondly, one has to evaluate the information provided to the witnesses by the aliens, and this can be even harder, since disinformation often features in these accounts.

Without objectivity, we cannot hope to find out what's going on. Far too many witnesses and researchers fill in missing gaps with assumptions and preconceptions when recounting or reporting their stories, and factual errors don't help either. No-one is completely objective, not even scientists. We are human, after all. The problem is exacerbated for those researching the abduction phenomenon, since, in my opinion, abductees tend to confabulate under hypnotic regression. Then, of course, we've got to deal with supposed "screen memories" implanted by the aliens! Clearly, they don't really want us to know what's going on, though I believe that on occasions they can be forthcoming as I have shown in *Alien Base*. We tend to project our hopes, fears and fantasies on to aliens. Let's give them the benefit of the doubt from time to time.

As a writer, I'm obsessed with getting things right. Nothing upsets me more than getting my facts wrong or discovering that stories I've published (such as most of those given me by Bob Oechsler, for example), turn out to be almost certainly bogus. Semantics is another priority, and I also fret over syntax - in English, there are so many ways of constructing a sentence. I try to set out the facts with as much clarity and objectivity as I can muster. The insertion of even a comma in the wrong place can lead to misunderstanding. I still get things wrong - it's unavoidable. I'm constantly astonished how anyone can blindly believe - sometimes to the extent of going to war to defend that belief - what is written, or what they perceive to be written, in religious books. These books are written by *humans*, for God's sake, sometimes so long after the events have occurred - or are said to have occurred - and have been translated so many times, that the "facts" must be totally garbled. It's hard enough to establish the facts about an event that occurred last week, let alone thousands of years ago!

I feel that you are a very private person, Tim. Has this always been the case, or is it more because you are acutely aware of the problems that can arise, when working within this field of study?



Yes, to both questions. On television or radio, for instance, I'm usually very guarded about what I say, mostly because of the ridicule this subject

engenders. So I sometimes go out of my way to try and appear sane, which is why - on TV and at lectures, anyway - I always wear a sharp suit and tie.

Do you anticipate that world governments may make an announcement in our lifetime, which will be a confirmation of what you personally already feel is happening? If so, do you think that we are reaching towards some profound understanding in our lifetime of the meaning of life itself?



I honestly don't know, but I think it inevitable that some sort of announcement will be made in future. Just when, and by whom, is anybody's guess. But can I remind readers about the statement made by President Reagan during a very important speech to the 42nd General Assembly of the United Nations on 21 September 1987:

"I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world. And yet, I ask, is not an alien force already among us?"

It's no use saying he didn't mean what he said, or that he didn't know what he was saying. Even President Gorbachev confirmed that Reagan had discussed the possibility of an alien threat with him. Reagan knew what he was doing, and he was trying to tell us something. Don't forget that he saw a UFO when he was Governor of California, and that during a private showing of *E.T.* at the White House, he told Steven Spielberg (as confirmed by his press office):

"If only people knew how true all this was."

And it's no use dismissing Reagan as merely an actor turned politician. First, he spent a great deal more time in politics than he did in acting. Second, politicians are all actors anyway. So, up to a point, the "big announcement" has been made, 12 years ago. And what happened? With the exception of some ufologists, no-one took the slightest bit of notice. Whatever happens after any such announcement in future, *I still think that Earth is under more threat from humans than it is from aliens...*

On behalf of Strange Daze, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to Tim Good for this fascinating and candid interview.



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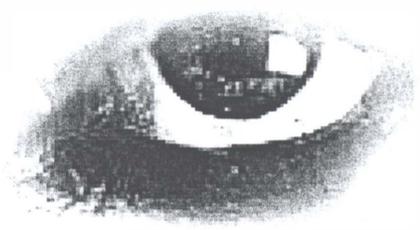
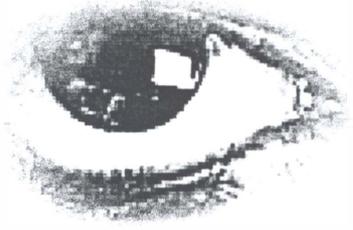
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JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE TO GO BACK ON THE MOUNTAIN



The
Big
Grey Man
of
Ben Macdhui

&
other Mountain Panics
part II

Andy Roberts

'There on the flawless, smooth white of the snow, a whole succession of tracks in "line-astern" were appearing miraculously before my eyes. No sign of life anywhere, no movement even, other than the drifting clouds overhead and those tracks springing suddenly into being as they came inexorably towards me.

I stood stock-still, filled with reasonless panic.

The tracks were being made within 50 yards of me -20-10-then, smack! I swung round brushing the water from my eyes, and saw the tracks continuing across the lake. In that moment I knew that the Wendygo, Abominable Snowman, Bodach Mor, or what have you, was forever explained so far as I was concerned.' [53].....

continued from issue 17

Rennie went on to give his explanation of the cause both of those tracks and the ones he had seen many years later in Speyside.

'Some freakish current of warm air, coming in contact with the low temperature, had set up condensation which was projected earthwards in the form of water blobs. When these landed in the snow they left tracks like those of some fabulous animal.' [54] Given that Rennie saw these tracks being made and felt water falling from the air it is reasonable to assume that both the Canadian tracks and the tracks seen near the Cairngorms were the result of a rare meteorological condition. This 'explanation' may be applicable to the origin of other 'mystery' tracks such as the 'Devil's Hoof prints'. On the other hand a rare and invisible water-throwing creature may be at large.

It has also been suggested that because witnesses to the BGM have heard 'footsteps' as part of the experience these footsteps must have caused by something with a foot! In other words another contention for the physical existence of a Big Grey Man. Affleck Gray in his book on the BGM devotes a whole chapter to this matter [55]. BGM witnesses and others on Ben Macdhui have experienced phenomena, which has been interpreted as being footsteps. These have been heard in winter conditions with snow underfoot and also in high summer, when the terrain is of bare rock with little or no vegetation.

A review of both the mountaineering and paranormal literature suggests that the sound of 'footsteps' being heard with no evidence for their origin, are a relatively common phenomena. Dependent on the context they are often attributed to the unknown, usually in the form of 'ghosts', or to natural phenomena such as unusual echoes. However in all these cases, as well as those concerning the BGM they have also been heard when the witnesses have been stationary and when no one else seems to have been in the area. Gray can find no fitting and comprehensive explanation for the footsteps. In the context of the BGM though nothing has ever been seen to make the sound of footsteps, no footprints have ever been discovered which could be connected with the sounds. Walter Reid, in the Aberdeen Press & Journal the week after Collie's account was made public, is reported as having '... often experienced the "crunch-crunch" noise in the snow which Professor Collie described. He had got it when he was on the mountain-top alone and when there was perfect silence, but he attributed it to a weird echo effect.' [56].

It is possible that some form of meteorological phenomenon similar to that which J.A. Rennie witnessed in Canada could be responsible. Echoes or other people in the same general area may also account for some of the footsteps heard, but it is impossible to isolate any consistent phenomena, natural or paranormal, which causes them. As evidence for the physical existence of the BGM though the 'footsteps' do not stand up to scrutiny, even though they remain largely unexplained.

During the writing of this piece I asked Loren Coleman, one of the world's leading cryptozoologists for his opinion on the BGM. Coleman believes that whilst much of the evidence attributed to the BGM is natural or psychological in origin a percentage is paranormal and physical in origin: 'I think that a cryptozoological specimen may be related to SOME of the reports...especially of the ones where tall hairy creatures are seen and large footprints are left in the snow.' Coleman goes on to say 'I tend to think that ancient European tales of Big Grey Men and Grendels are evidence of a memory of humans who coexisted with "True Giants" - real hominoids that may be Gigantopithecus. Some relict populations of these species may have survived in wilderness areas of Europe into the middle of this century.' [57] This may be the case elsewhere in Europe but almost certainly not

with the BGM. There are no footprints and the evidence for visual sightings is, as we have seen, slim to say the least.

In dealing with accounts of the Big Grey Man of Ben Macdhui all we really have are the accounts given by the people who have had the experience. No physical evidence exists. The experiences appear to be random in location and time. They do not happen to everyone who visits Ben Macdhui, even those people who go to the exact spots where previous witnesses have had the experience. Nor do they appear to happen to the same people twice. The experiences appear to be non-physical in origin, spontaneous and transitory in nature. They seem to be as likely to happen to people who know nothing about the BGM legend as they do to hardened and knowledgeable mountaineers who scoff at the supernatural.

It would be easy to suggest, in the cold light of day, that the BGM legend appears to be little more than a few unusual experiences moulded by the media into a localised folktale. But a number of people have had unusual experiences on and in the vicinity of Ben Macdhui. They have been experiences, which have caused rational and hard-headed mountaineers to risk their lives in fleeing highly across dangerous ground. Something, physical or non-physical, must have caused those experiences. And that's where the whole subject begins to get very slippery indeed!

Going back to the BGM accounts, a close, analytical, reading reveals one underlying, constant motif. All the witnesses in the 'good' accounts report some form of extreme, uncontrollable panic reaction, leading them to flee in blind terror, often for miles. Fair enough, you might say, anyone would panic if they saw the BGM. But some of the 'panics' take place prior to any 'sighting', and in the majority of cases the whole experience is solely a panic, the trimmings of BGM legend being tacked on later by writer or witness because of the geographical context of the experience.

So is there a genuine mystery after all? Well, if this core phenomenon were isolated to the Cairngorms and the BGM legend we could probably discount it as an artefact of the storytelling process. But accounts of being gripped by an uncontrollable panic, one which results in fleeing to the point of exhaustion, or narrowly avoiding death by falling over cliffs intrigued me. In digging deep in both the paranormal and mountaineering literature I discovered that this core experience is relatively widespread in wild or mountainous areas, but has been either ignored or subsumed into the broader, and more 'exciting', area of 'ghost' stories. This is a mistake because, whether paranormal or psychological in origin, there appears to be a very real phenomenon at work.

With the specific evidence for a BGM being so sparse, but the core phenomenon being so consistent and evidenced elsewhere, it would be a mistake to continue to see the BGM phenomenon in either isolation or terms of being caused by an encounter with a physical entity. The evidence I have gathered suggests that the BGM experience and others can be re-framed as mountain panics onto which local folklore is grafted. Bear with me while I take an excursion to the mountains of madness and speculate on what lives there.

May 1954. Intending to make use of the excellent weather on his day off, water company surveyor Clive Elliot

decided to walk the hills from Kilmuir to Staffin, on the Isle of Skye. Everything was fine until he reached a stream in Glen Sneosdale. He jumped across and *'...immediately, as if I'd stepped into another world, my mind just went to pieces. I cannot describe the feeling, one of total, absolute, blind terror. I didn't look round to see what was happening, I just went up the hill and I remember pulling myself against the grass and boosting myself as hard as I could. I've never felt anything like that in my life before and please god I never do again'*. [58] The feeling stopped after a few hundred yards and Elliot's day continued with no further problems. Clive Elliot's account is self-explanatory, a one-off experience totally out of character, which has puzzled him intensely over the

years. The italics are mine, stressing the terror and wonder Elliot put into the words when I interviewed him twenty-two years later. Had Elliot's experience taken place within the Ben Macdui area his account would surely have been part of the overall legend. The fact that he did not reveal his experience to anyone until 1996 and did not attempt to connect with any legendary creature suggests that we have got the data as 'raw' as possible.

Perhaps there is something about northern Skye because the following two accounts both originate from within a few miles of Clive Elliot's experience.

On a visit to Skye in June 1971 veteran hill walker Brian Miller headed south from the Staffin-Uig road. After passing the top of Bìoda Buidhe he began to feel distinctly uneasy, intimidated and depressed. As though something - some thing perhaps - were watching him. He continued, becoming increasingly convinced that 'something malignant was watching and waiting for a chance to spring'. After another half mile he descended into a small hollow and, *'...really felt fear, for all the world as if something was hiding behind the last rise and would spring if I took my eyes off the route I had taken.'* Miller turned and retreated to his car in panic. [59]

Miller returned to Skye the following year and on one outing walked over the tops toward Baca Ruadh. 'Before I'd gone more than three hundred yards I was assailed again by a feeling of unease.' Miller told me. He pressed on but once again, *'...the old feeling of being watched by something malignant became overpowering'*. The feeling of panic intensified and he again abandoned the walk. [60]

Intrigued by these out of character panic attacks Miller did some research and discovered Swire's book on the legends of Skye. In its pages he found the area round the Quaraing (about two miles from his first experience) described as having 'an atmosphere which can never be captured. Perhaps it can best be summed up by saying that it is as if 'the terror that walketh in darkness' here walks by day.' Swire also recounts being told by two men that the *'...Baca Ruadh...'*, which, they visited at different times, gives just this same feeling of terror and potent, living evil. All other Skye hills are friendly, but not the Baca Ruach.' [61]

Both Elliot's and Miller's experiences took place in

northern Skye, within a few miles of each other. Both experiences were reported to me independently and the witnesses do not know each other.

Another correspondent, Mr J. Craig, told me of an incident, which took place on Bennachie near Aberdeen. He and his two friends were resting below the summit when, *'... we all stopped talking and a most horrid feeling of unease and then absolute terror swept over us. As one person the three of us fled down through heather, boulders, with no thought except 'get away, get away.'* They didn't stop running until they reached the foot of the mountain. [62] There was no forewarning of this 'terror' happening and, oddly, neither Craig nor his companions mentioned the experience to each other for years afterwards. Bennachie has a

legend connected to a giant who protects the mountain, known as Jock o' Bennachie. Craig is convinced he and his friends experienced the power of Jock o' Bennachie.

Long distance walker Chris Townsend, in his book *Walking the Munros and Tops*, recalls an experience by the Allt Innis a'Mhuill in Glen Strathfarrar when he *'... suddenly had a strong feeling of a presence nearby, of something or someone waiting and watching...'* Townsend sensed a 'hint of hostility' in this presence and, *'for a second or two I felt frightened.'* [63]

Was Townsend's experience just the results of isolation and a hard day on the hill? Or was it something primeval and brooding, indigenous to the landscape?

I contacted Townsend, who commented: *'I never thought my brief experience would be noticed. I haven't really anything to add to the description but your email did set me thinking. I don't think isolation or a hard day were anything to do with it. I've walked thousands of miles alone in much remoter places than the Highlands and I often have long days. Much of that walking has been in Western North America where I would have put such a feeling down to there being a bear nearby - and felt*

much more frightened! Whether it was supernatural terror or not, I don't know. Overall I tend towards the sceptical but I can't think of what could have made me feel like that.' [64]

Sensations of 'presence' and extreme panic are clearly not restricted to the confines of Ben Macdui or even the broader area of the Cairngorms. They can occur in any mountainous or wild area. They do not fall into any easy category, which makes their reporting difficult. After all, who wants to announce that they have been terrified to the point of flight by something they cannot see, hear or feel? Therefore these experiences are often ignored or go unreported until they are noticed as passing remarks in the literature or when they are specifically hunted out by researchers. When these experiences are reported they often become subsumed into local folklore, attached to ghost stories, haunting and so on. The form that the experience is given by witness or commentator, i.e. giant, ghost, faerie, elemental or whatever supersedes the core phenomenon and becomes the motif for the experience. This makes for an interesting story but, I think, lays a false trail.

Ghost hunter and author Thurston Hopkins received a letter recounting an undated experience not dissimilar to many of the BGM and other panics discussed so far. The writer told of an

experience, which took place whilst visiting the hills above Rhossilly Bay in South Wales. As he climbed higher he became aware of feeling uneasy, a sensation that increased until he '.... sat still and waited-then looked from side to side. I was being WATCHED. Slowly, painfully, in an agony of horror I turned my head to see I knew not what....' He continued his climb, all the time aware of the sensation of being observed. 'Then horror, violent sickening seized me. A huge menacing form enveloped rather than touched me. I prayed and shrieked aloud, and began to run - run madly down the steep to the sea.' The following day he made enquiries locally to be told 'Many a one has been frightened badly up there. It's got an evil name. Some say the old Stone Men used to live up there...' [65]

Another account dating from 1965 and also from south Wales recounts how a local man was walking on the slopes of Foel Feddau, when: 'Suddenly, as though a curtain had fallen, all about him changed completely and he felt the raw edge of fear. He felt that he was in the presence of the unknown...He became aware that evil, invisible eyes were upon him.'.... And he '...rushed away from that accursed spot' [66]

During research for a book dealing with landscape mysteries one informant told of a mountain experience from the early 1960s, which tops even that of the 'best' account from Ben Macdhui. The informant was a boy at the time, out on the 2000 foot Bleaklow plateau in the Derbyshire Peak District, with a friend to investigate one of the many WWII aircraft wrecks which litter the area. After visiting the crash site he heard his friend shout and....

'I looked and saw, all in one instant, grouse exploding out of the heather towards us, sheep and hares stampeding towards us and behind them, rolling at a rapid rate towards us from the direction of Hern Clough, a low bank of cloud or fog...but what was truly terrifying was that in the leading edge of the cloud bank - in it and striding purposefully towards us, was a huge shadow-figure, a man-like silhouette, but far bigger than a man - as high as the cloudbank, as high as a house. And the terror that hit me and was driving the birds and the animals and my friend was utterly overwhelming - like a physical blow - and I have never felt the like since!' Needless to say both lads fled '.... in mindless terror... and all the sheep and wildlife that could run or fly went careering down with us in utter panic.' [67]

A giant figure looming from mist? Uncontrollable panic? Why, it's the Big Grey Man of Ben Macdhui on holiday! The two boys had never heard of the Big Grey Man and his friend attributed this terrifying incident to 'Th'owd Lad', a Pennine appellation for the devil. Had this incident happened within a twenty-mile radius of Ben Macdhui it would be the jewel in the legend's crown.

But what was it? It would be hard to explain this incident in purely psychological terms as it has two witnesses and, most significantly, reports of wildlife also responding in panic to the stimulus. Unfortunately the other witness has not been traced so I have been unable to follow that line of enquiry. Even if we ignore reports of strange clouds, fleeing wildlife and giant figures we are still left with an experience of extreme panic leading the witnesses to flee in terror. The informant concluded the experience.

'We fled. We plunged over the crags above Gathering Hill - and every time I go back and look at those crags, I wonder why we didn't break our necks. We fled in mindless terror down that mountainside towards the Shelf Brook and Doctors Gate - and all the sheep and wildlife that could run or fly went careering down with us in utter panic. And then, about half way down, we seemed to run out into the sunlight - and it was all over! All the panic gone. The sheep stopped, put their heads down, and started to

graze. Everything returned at once to normal. But back up there, on Higher Shelf Stones, wisps of mist were still coiling round...' [68]

The informant had his own views about what was the cause of this particular mountain panic and of attempts to 'explain'.

'Don't ask me to rationalise. Or rationalise it away - which is what it amounts to. I've come to the conclusion that sort of thing amounts to no more than a cop-out, a late twentieth century defensive mechanism - it's safe if it can be explained. As if 'explaining away' were like defusing a bomb. I do think that every now and then, some of us - maybe all of us - stumble into an encounter with elements deeper and older than we are, and they are not, by their nature, benevolent, though they may be. This certainly wasn't. [69]

Experienced mountaineer Bill Steele wrote to me detailing an experience, which took place on Mt. Giluwe on Papua New Guinea. Several kilometres above the tree line Steele and his German climbing partner, casting about for a suitable campsite, stopped at the mouth of a cave for lunch. Over to Steele: 'as we finished we discussed whether to make a base camp there and push on to the peak with a light pack. At this time I suddenly felt an intense feeling of my impending death, there was a sense of being watched by something evil that seemed to be drawing near and about to pounce. Although there was nothing to be seen apart from the pleasant shelter and it was a bright dry day I knew I must get away immediately from that place. When I called to Dieter to grab our stuff and run he thought I must have somehow lost all reason, as he felt nothing unusual at all. I then panicked and said he could do what he liked but I was off! I threw the pack over my shoulder and ran as fast as I could down the track and only slowed down when I reached the tree line several kilometres away.' Steele also commented that he felt safer the further away he got from the cave mouth, echoing other accounts where witnesses have felt the feeling increase or decrease as they moved across the landscape. [70]

There are many, many more similar accounts from across the world. All include isolated areas and mountain panics. Some, like those on Ben Macdhui and Bennachie, have become attached to and synonymous with entities said to cause the panic. Some appear to be in clusters, like those of Northern Skye, but remain as yet 'unnamed'. Others stand alone, as one-off, random experiences in space and time. All the witnesses were profoundly terrified by their encounters with this unknown terror. There is genuine mystery here. But once identified, even a

I suddenly felt an intense feeling of my impending death, there was a sense of being watched by something evil that seemed to be drawing near and about to pounce.

possibly new genre of anomalous experience becomes just another 'interesting' story for the Fortean equivalent of stamp collectors unless some attempt is made to untangle possible cause or to put the phenomena in context.

As several of the experiences have taken place in the same general area it is tempting to suggest that the origin for the experiences are intimately connected to, and possibly caused by, the area. Earth Mysterians, nature mystics and fringe scientists have long suggested there are 'energies' locked into the landscape. Energies which can be tapped into intentionally or accidentally and which are responsible for a wide variety of strange phenomena, from fairies to ghosts, to UFOs. It is also claimed that these energies can cause illness, stress, unease and a range of psychological and physiological symptoms. This idea is echoed in the Chinese concept of feng shui where landscapes or dwellings would be physically altered to aid the flow of an energy called ch'i, which in turn affected people's well being. So could it be unspecified 'energies' of this nature, which are causing mountain panics? Archaeologist and dowser Tom Lethbridge thought so and referred to these incidents as 'ghouls'. As a teenager he and his mother had experienced 'a horrible feeling of gloom and depression' in some woods, which lead them to hurry away. Later a suicide was found almost at the spot. When married both Lethbridge and his wife experienced a similar ghoul independently at Ladram Bay in Devon. This seems to be one of the spots where the experience is replicable as they felt it again, together. His wife walked into it again at the top of a cliff and 'Moreover she had an odd feeling, as if someone - or something - was urging her to jump over.' Shades of the fleeing panics detailed so far. Lethbridge attributed this phenomenon to a 'place-field' caused by underground water producing changes in the earth's magnetic field and thus affecting the brain of anyone who happened to be in the right place at the right time. [71]

'Repeater' spots like the Cairngorms, North Skye, Ladram Bay and so on may, if investigated further, yield positive evidence of 'energies' which lead to panics and possibly suicides. The Christian church has certainly held this view and accident black spots and regular suicide locations have been exorcised to rid them of the perceived demonic influence. Many of these locations are said to create effects, which temporarily unbalance the human mind. As an example of how they include the type of 'panic' I am discussing here, an earth mysteries journal printed the following letter from Michael Cook in which he describes a car journey home along familiar, well-travelled roads.

'As I was driving around a not particularly sharp bend, and not too quickly, I suddenly felt seized by panic; I felt I was being dragged off the road and would not negotiate the bend. It took a considerable effort of willpower to keep to the road. In a short while the panic disappeared and my confidence returned.' [72] Cook had driven over that same stretch of road many times before and after his experience with nothing-untoward happening. On the surface this seems to be exactly the same

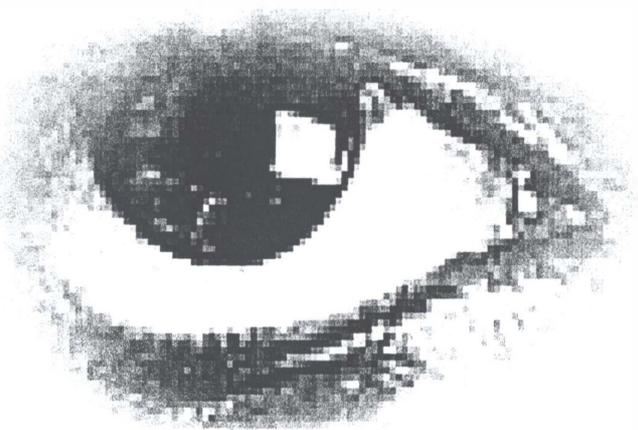
type of phenomena experienced by BGM witnesses and others who have encountered a random and meaningless 'panic'.

In his classic study of the fear, which gripped West Virginia during 1966, John Keel describes his encounter with a panic zone. Whilst out driving alone after midnight in the 'TNT area' Keel had, as he puts it, '.... one curious experience. As I passed a certain point on one of the isolated roads I was suddenly engulfed in fear. I stepped on the gas and after I went a few yards my fear vanished as quickly as it came.' He noted the exact spot and drove through it twice more, with exactly the same effect. Keel stopped his car and 'walked back to the 'zone of fear' slowly, alert for any rustle of bushes, measuring my own breathing and emotions. I was perfectly calm until I took one step too many and was back in the zone. I almost panicked and ran, but I forced myself to look around and proceed slowly.' Keel determined the 'zone' was about fifteen feet across, and walked back through it to reach his car. He concluded he was 'probably walking through a beam of ultrasonic waves.' Returning to the spot in the morning he found the 'zone' had gone, and there was nothing in the area to account for it. [74]

Researchers Albert Budden and Paul Devereux have both written extensively about 'energies', which can have the type of effect we are discussing here. Devereux suggests consciousness-affecting energy can originate via natural radioactivity and electro-magnetic fields. His books list numerous examples of anomalous experiences he believes have occurred after an encounter with these energies [75]. Budden contends that modern electro-magnetic pollution as well as natural electro-magnetism can have a radical and often deleterious effect on people [76]. None of this is completely proven but between them Lethbridge, Devereux, Budden and others are building a persuasive case for the earth's natural energies playing a part as being at least the stimulus for 'paranormal' experiences.

Critics will have none of this. Even the kindest would say they are replacing old folk tales with a new-age techno folklore, claiming that allegations of these 'energies' are rooted in unverifiable narrative and on science, which is at best tenuous, at worst specious. But there is no doubt that the forces of natural radiation, electro-magnetism, exist and reasonable to speculate, they can have an effect on consciousness. With or without the acceptance of 'fringe' energies there are other ways of looking at the causation and interpretation of 'panics'.

Being among mountains and other wild places is frequently an awe-inspiring experience where the difference between the natural and supernatural is often only a matter of perception. Perhaps senses stretched by exertion, heightened by beauty and isolation creates psychological phenomena which causes panic of the type outlined in this article. Or perhaps the psychologists are wrong and there is



another reason. In his book 'Gulfs of Blue Air' Jim Crumley lists ten 'More Reasons For Hills'. Number six is because, 'They accommodate the gods of the ancients'. A clue? [77]

In the western world at the end of the 20th century it is our predilection as a society to interpret any unknown experience as psychological or paranormal in nature, as if that designation explains it. Frequently we use one unknown to 'explain' another and explanations change with the times. The nature-based cosmologies of our ancestors in these Isles would have no problem with the experiences I have recounted here. They believed every facet of the landscape had a presence, and was a personification of a god or spirit, the genius loci. Anomalous or visionary experiences would have been interpreted as belonging to that particular rock, valley, cliff etc and symbolised in a form relevant to local mythology or folklore. Whether the experience was repeated or not the idea of the genius loci inhabiting that particular spot would become embedded in and handed down through the local tradition. My dictionary defines genius loci as the spirit dwelling in a particular spot or the characteristic atmosphere of a place. Does that sound familiar? So in a way the BGM and giant of Bennachie and so could be described as genius loci, still being experienced, irrespective of any pre-existing traditions concerning them.

So perhaps these mountain panics are the direct experience of a location's genius loci. But that's as un-provable a concept as the 'earth energies' theory or as pointless as a reductionist psychological viewpoint. Visionary experiences, mountain panics, earth 'energies' can also be seen as metaphors for spontaneous psychic or psychological experiences, which in turn are metaphors themselves for any experience in which human consciousness comes up against the forces of nature. Not nature as described by the aesthetics of landscape appreciation via art or literature. Or nature as in the form of a scientific understanding via the various relevant 'ology's. All those are just temporary ways of describing. I mean what Cairngorm poet Nan Shepherd refers to as the 'experience of nature in the raw, a primitive thing, and utterly, utterly baffling'. [77]

To even begin to understand that we must go back to the description of experiences given by witnesses to all these phenomena and the core of that description seems to be one of 'panic'.

The word 'panic' which the witnesses to these strange experiences often use derives, of course, from the Greek god Pan. According to one book on mythology, 'The feeling of solitude and lonesomeness which weighs upon travellers in wild mountain places.... was ascribed to the presence of Pan...And thus anxiety and alarm, arising from no visible or intelligible cause, came to be called 'panic fear', that is, such fear as is produced by the agitating presence of Pan.' [78] A typical description, which pretty much describes all the

BGM accounts and other mountain panics listed here. Another writer has it that, 'Pan is unlimited in movement or scope of action - in the original Greek he is literally 'everywhere'...The apparent form, again, is symbolic, rather than representational of any physical entity. The elemental archetype is more often sensed than seen.' [79] All descriptions of encounters with Pan speak of the same criteria and phenomena; lonely, often mountainous or wilderness areas, the core phenomenon being randomly triggered and frequently experienced or later described in terms of a physical entity, which isn't really 'there'.

So have all the witnesses to 'panics' met Pan, and isn't that just another bonkers explanation anyway? The clue to it is to get away from notions of entities, nature spirits, energies and so on as being in any sense objectively real, and to look at 'panics' and the Pan experience as yet another metaphor for the interpretation of 'raw nature' when it overrides our normal waking consciousness.

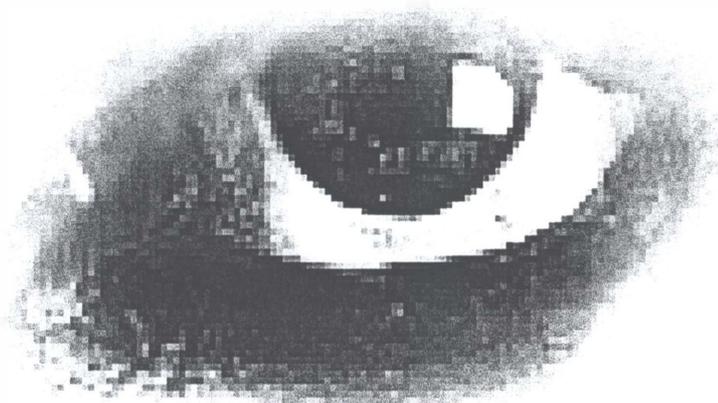
Perhaps the clearest synthesis of the panic experience and one with the most relevance here is that given by Jungian analyst James Hillman who wrote:

'Panic, especially at night when the citadel darkens and the heroic ego sleeps, is a direct participation mystique in nature, a fundamental, even ontological experience of the world as alive and in dread. Objects become subjects; they move with life while one is oneself paralysed with fear. When existence is experienced through instinctual levels of fear, aggression, hunger or sexuality, images take on a compelling life of their own. The imaginal is never more vivid than when we are connected with it instinctually. The world alive is of course animism; that this living world is divine and imagined by different gods with attributes and characteristics is polytheistic pantheism. That fear, dread, horror are natural is wisdom. In Whitehead's term nature alive means Pan, and panic flings open a door into this reality.' [80]

An apt description of exactly what happens. In wild or mountainous country the solitude, exertion and oft overpowering awe of the surroundings together with realisation (consciously or otherwise) of being a fragile entity in an awesome and ultimately unknowable landscape could be said to overpower the 'heroic', or rational, ego. The 'objects', i.e. the environment and its contents become subjects - mist becomes BGM, areas of landscape become threatening, noises assume and infer preternatural origin, and then existence in all its forms is encountered directly.

Human consciousness is not prepared for this and panic results, the witness fleeing until the spell is broken, often by contact with other human beings or a familiar sound or location.

What's triggers this? Well as we've seen it could be any or all of the 'energy' theories put forward for Devereux et al. Or just the age-old call of the wild. Recall how Tewnion's shooting of the BGM was, according to him, just a panic response to mist, or how Wendy Wood believed her terror could have started with a deer bark? Or how the Bleaklow informant



could only see wisps of mist when the panic had subsided, the 'giant' long since receded into the imaginal realm. Whilst they must remain a possibility for the trigger we need not even invoke mysterious energies as the cause of these panics as the following episode, from the Cairngorms near Ben Macdui, illustrates:

'I was coming home round about 1.00am along the Revoan road when my nerve suddenly gave way. It was a fine winter's night, fairly clear, and I was belting along it when it suddenly hit me. Exactly what triggered it off? I don't know - maybe the call of a vixen or a wild cat, the hoot of an owl or the bark of a roebuck. Anyhow, I trembled. I ran whiles and walked fast, looking over my shoulder till I got home in the small hours. soaked with perspiration...A doctor told me it could happen to any fit man and he could not account for it.' [81]

That experience occurred to a naturalist and forester with long experience in remote areas of the Cairngorms. Like many of the other witnesses he was a hardened hill man, knowledgeable about yet sceptical of local ghost lore and the like. In other areas of Fortean study, say UFOlogy or ghost hunting, these witnesses would have their experience as observers and scepticism used to support the objective reality of their experience. But that's the myth of the credible witness. We're all fallible and susceptible and like the doctor said, 'it could happen to any fit man.'and apparently does.

Fans of the more occult explanations for mountain panics and their ilk may like to consider Marshall's remedy for this form of psychic experience. Upon returning home he, '...stripped to the buff, had a good rub down, swallowed a stiff dram and lashings of tea, and slept like a log till 7.am.' Who needs exorcists, psychologists or shamen!

Irrespective of whether these experiences are caused by the mind suddenly glimpsing the immensity of nature in the raw, or whether they are caused by as yet unknown forces in nature, they amount to the same thing - the direct experience of the overpowering force of nature and existence, to be fled from, to be personified as the BGM, a giant, the devil, genius loci or whatever.

As a final example of the random nature of these panics and of how they can affect others consider author John Buchan's (writing as Lord Tweedsmuir) unscheduled meeting with Pan.

'We do not hear so much today of the goat-foot god....But the experience which was the basis of the myth does not go unrecorded. In wild places or in wild weather, men are still awed by a sense of the immensity and pitilessness of Nature. There is a Natura maligna as well as the Wordsworthian Natura benigna.....Sometimes, too, there come moments when one feels a kind of personal malevolence, the sense of a hostile will which almost takes bodily form, and which sets the nerves fluttering in despite of the reason. In such moments one sees- or at any rate feels-what the ancients meant by Pan.' [82]

Buchan goes on to relate an experience from 1911 in the Bavarian Highlands. Returning from the summit of the Alpispitze he noticed his guide had:

'.....fallen silent and, glancing at him, was amazed to see that his face was dead white, that sweat stood in beads on his forehead, and that his eyes were staring ahead as if he

were in an agony of fear - as if terror were all around him so that he dared not look one way rather than another. Suddenly he began to run, and I ran too, some power not myself constraining me. Terror had seized me also, but I did not know what I dreaded. It was like the epidemic of giggling which overcomes children who have no wish to laugh. We ran-we ran like demented bacchanals, tearing down the glades, leaping rocks, bursting through thickets, colliding with trees, sometimes colliding with each other, and all the time we never uttered a sound. At last we fetched up beside the much frequented highway, where we lay for a time utterly exhausted. For the rest of the road home we did not speak; we did not even dare look at each other. '[83]

Buchan concluded, 'What was the cause? I suppose it was panic. Sebastian had seen the goat-foot god or something of the kind... and he had made me feel his terror.' [84] Buchan's guide had experienced 'Pan' and therefore panic, which had been transmitted to him as a form of contagion. This experience is very like Craig's experience on Bennachie, even down to the fact of the percipients not discussing the event afterwards. Buchan in passing makes a very important point, that 'Pan' can be experienced as a terror or as it's opposite, a benign force. And again a trawl through the mountaineering literature reveals a plethora of experiences where people have experienced Wordsworthian raptures as an exact opposite to the malevolence personified by the BGM and the other nameless terrors I have described.

We've come a long way. From the possibility that odd experiences on a Scottish mountain may have been caused by an indigenous relict hominid, to a plethora of core experiences which I have termed 'mountain panics'. I make no claims for absolute truth here and indeed I am mindful that categorising these experiences, suggesting that one unknowable may have the same cause as another, similar one, is fraught with problems.

All I can say for sure about this research is that the core experience appears very similar in all cases, and that there is no one single occurrence which triggers it. I am also wary about needlessly creating another Fortean pigeonhole that of mountain panic, for unexplained phenomena. But based on the evidence I have reviewed both new and old, I think this is a very real psychological or psychic phenomenon and one, which may lie at the core of many so called 'paranormal' experiences. Its triggers may be many but they all stem from the human instrument's perception of and relationship with the reality we live in. As one commentator wrote to Affleck Gray '...the most mysterious thing to be found among mountains was the human brain'. [85]

In the end we can but speculate. It's entertaining and informative. But only the witnesses who have experienced these panics, witnessed the Fear Liath Mor and its brethren know for sure what it's like and what the experience means for them. There is a vast gulf between those who know and those of us who speculate. Huge Corrie's letter to Affleck Gray summed up both the experience and the difference well:

'Sometimes in dark days, in wild places, Skye in dense mist and rain, in desert, mountains and jungle, I have thought that I got a hint or two. From our fancied and narrow security, I know, having looked out upon the wilderness in turmoil where there could be no help and no witness of our undoing, where the gleams were fleeting, as though the daylight itself were riven and collapsing, that I saw the filmy shapes of those things, which darken and affright the minds of primitives. While the sky is changeful and menacing, and there are storms at sea, when our fellows are absent, when shades take their hour of ease and voices whisper in wood and stone, and mischance and death are veiled, but here we

shall have gods and ghosts. The sharp sighted collectors of old-train lumber, and similar curios may still keep busy, and tie-up their dry bundles of mythology and superstitions; but I myself - and any Scottish hillman could make plenty more.' [86]

If any reader wishes to offer comment, query or further information on this matter I welcome correspondence. I can be contacted at:

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HAPPY TRAILS



THE SOFT MARCH

DAVID SILVER

In the April-May 1995 issue of the *Fortean Times*, veteran ufologist and scourge of the woolly-minded, Peter Brookesmith, offered a trenchant criticism of UFOlogy as being closer to legal testimony than scientific investigation. 'The stark raving fact is that the existing 'evidence' for UFOs is scientifically useless.

A UFO 'case' - that is the synthesis of experience, investigation, and interpretation that we take as a UFO event - is far from being pure data by the time it gets logged as another radar-visual, or whatever: it has been through several subjective filters. It's as if, instead of judging the efficiency of coal miners by measuring tonnes of coal mined per hour worked we were to produce statistics from statements from miners like "I worked very hard this afternoon".

All we have are reports of UFOs and aliens - and of dragons and angels, too. There is no unambiguous material evidence, and the anecdotal evidence is just that. In legal terms it often amounts to hearsay.' 1 **Brookesmith considers that ufology's essential failing as a prospective science is that it cannot test its hypotheses.** Scientists may be called in as expert witnesses to give informed opinion as to whether artefacts are of an extraterrestrial origin or not, but in general ufological theories explaining the objects or visions are, with the exception of the Earthlights hypothesis, which is being investigated scientifically, unverifiable. We

cannot travel to distant stars and establish whether alien civilisations are visiting us in spaceships, just as we cannot travel forward in time to see whether or not the "ufonauts" are visitors from our far future. Brookesmith concludes if UFOlogy is not amenable to the scientific method, then it is:

'No more of a debate - an assessment of evidence more closely related to the forensic process than it is to science.' 2

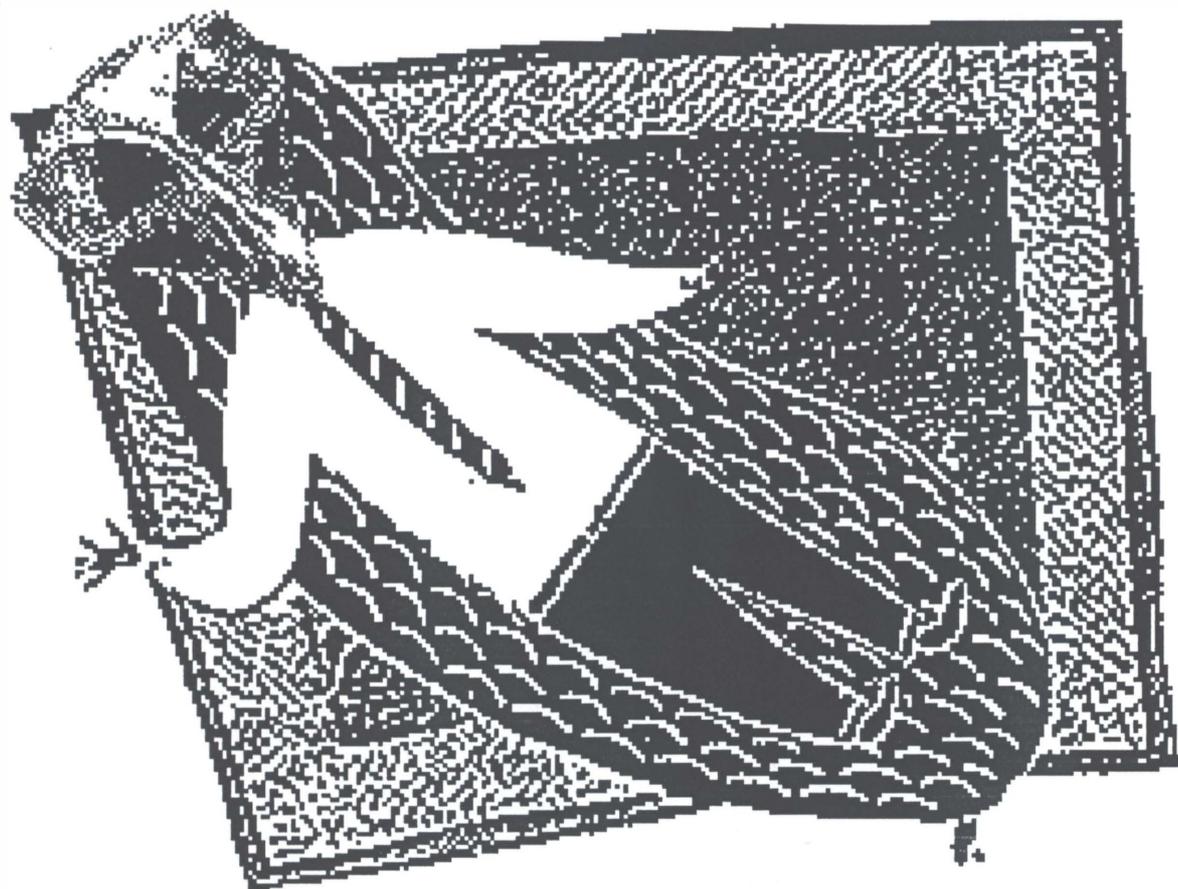
From this he proceeds to the statement that:

'If ufologists were to admit the uncertain, forensic nature of their investigation and the "debatability" of their evidence, they might win more allies among scientists.' 3

Although Brookesmith's opinions are unwelcome in many quarters of the subject, not least because of the polemical vigour with which he advances them, many other ufologists have said much the same thing. Bruce Lanier Wright, again writing in the *Fortean Times* about the Sturrock Report, which offered UFOlogy a glimmer of hope of scientific respectability, also considered that:

'(yet time and again, the panel was forced against the same brick wall. Saucer friends and foes can agree that little UFO evidence has been collected with any scientific rigour, and most of the reports in the study are anecdotal, ephemeral experiences that cannot be subjected to scientific enquiry after the fact.' 4

If this seems something of a climb down from the understandable desire of most ufologists to have their subject taken seriously as a scientific discipline, it is not.



As the arch-sceptical John Harney noted while also discussing the Sturrock report,

'(m)any of the larger UFO organisations already have physical scientists, some of them very experienced and highly qualified, among their members.' 5

In fact, there is a tendency for professional space scientists when discussing cutting edge questions such as the Social dimension of human expansion into space and Extraterrestrial Intelligence to turn to more humanistic disciplines such as the social sciences and history. One such scientist writing on ETI in the January 1999 issue of the Journal of the British Interplanetary Society, explicitly called for the greater participation of the social sciences in the debate about extraterrestrial intelligence and civilisations:

'It should be recognised that the social sciences ... are called upon to address more actively the crucial societal questions raised by SETI and CETI. On terrain, where the natural sciences feel uncomfortable, contributions from these sciences can only enrich the ongoing debate.'

6

In fact, in UFOlogy there would be a distinct advantage to adopting a more humanistic approach. Analysing the findings of the Sturrock Report, John Harney was struck by how,

'(T)he panel members, as physical scientists, obviously

tended to take much of the evidence at face value, whereas experienced ufologists are aware that many UFO incidents just did not happen in the manner described by witnesses and investigators.'

7

It's the same argument used to advocate the inclusion of professional stage magicians in groups investigating the paranormal. Quite often they are able to see deceit while a physical scientist not so exposed to the less salubrious side of human nature would be taken in. This is not to adopt the debunkers argument that all UFOs are fakes. This is demonstrably not so. But sometimes the percipients' beliefs can lead them to misinterpret quite conventional objects as something terrifyingly alien, as Dave Newton noted in his last editorial for this magazine. There he describes how he was presented with a case of mystery lights, which, on viewing the camcorder footage, turned out to be belonging to a light aircraft.

'but reading the report form, you would have thought that the invasion force from Alpha Centauri had arrived. Thank heavens we had the videotape, or this one would never have been satisfied to anyone's satisfaction. In short, witness reports can be wildly inaccurate.' 8

As a corrective to this, and possible contamination of reports by the witness' and investigator's beliefs, he suggests that those investigating such reports read and learn from Allan Hendry's *The UFO Handbook* (Sphere, 1980), which covers the way possibly biased reports are to be handled and investigated. It cannot be stressed too much that,

'(T)he effects on witnesses of the ETH should always be considered when reading or investigating UFO reports. It strongly distorts many reports of unusual phenomena, or normal objects seen in unusual conditions ... In rejecting the ETH as a blanket explanation for all puzzling UFO reports it is important not to substitute another blanket explanation such as mirages or ball lightning.' 9

There are a number of different explanations for what people see and perceive as alien spacecraft according to the specific circumstances of each individual incident. Some reports may well be of ball lightning or Earthlights; others are undoubtedly secret military aircraft, while others are misidentifications of entirely normal objects and still others may be hallucinations caused by hypersensitivity to electromagnetism and poorly understood mental states.

There is no single explanation to cover all the different cases ufologists encounter, and it is wrong to suggest that there is. Such an attitude can lead to a gross distortion of the facts to fit one's particular theories as well as damaging the possibility of ever truly solving the mystery the subject poses. As the former editor of this magazine, Dave Newton, said,

'We all need to recognise that "UFOlogy" is not a single subject, but many. And we need to recognise that the people we need to solve the "UFO mystery" are the experts in these different fields. But, until we break down UFOlogy into its component subjects and work with experts in those fields, UFOlogy will never attain the

credibility it needs and deserves, and we won't get the answers to the UFO mysteries (N.B. - plural). 10

This search for objective truth behind possibly mistaken, or misleading statements, is what Brookesmith means when he talks about the 'forensic' nature of ufological investigation. It's also one of the places where ufologists could profitably learn from the social sciences.

Despite the modern opprobrium which has grown up around the subject, which sees all social scientists and social workers as antisocial subversive 'pseuds' hiding behind a wall of obfuscation and spurious doctrines, anyone who has worked within those areas will appreciate the considerable moral scrutiny under which

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they operate. While abuse and incompetence tragically do occur, the profession is subject to rigid ethical control. Most academic studies, including history, are subject to ethical review and this includes the social sciences. The goal in social research is to collect objectively valid, though here some politically engaged feminist researchers would insert trustworthy, data, by which is meant that the information collected would be the same regardless of the individual researcher gathering it. The intense anxiety of some, particularly abduction, researchers to protect their witnesses from examination by others bespeaks a precarious situation in which UFO investigators are tacitly aware that this is not the case, and therefore, by implication, casts extreme doubt on the objectivity of their investigations. Worse, the witnesses and informants to whom the

researchers turn for reports may actually be harmed by the investigations and covered by insurance schemes against possible mistakes. There are similar schemes for those in social work and other areas, which involve contact with the public. For example, teachers are naturally under intense scrutiny to prevent paedophiles joining the profession and abusing the children in their charge. Workers in the voluntary sector where their charitable work puts them in contact with the potentially vulnerable are also subject to these controls. The staff at one day care centre in south Bristol, run by a charity concerned with caring for the elderly, partly funded by the social services department of the local council, had to attend courses and sign documents, clearly laying

down their moral obligations and policy towards children and vulnerable adults. Considering the way the lives of children and disturbed adults have already been upset by the worst kind of ham-fisted investigation (by certain members of the ufological community) it is absolutely imperative that such policies be placed at the top of the agenda of every UFO society, well above such commercial concerns as maximising its market share.

Of course, human contact is never straightforward, and there are a million and one things, which can never be predicted or planned for when dealing with other people. Social researchers recognise this, and the difficulty in drawing up a single set of standards that will be applicable to every eventuality. Nevertheless, the Council of the American Anthropological Association drew up such a code in 1971, the Principles of Professional Responsibility, the precepts of which are just as applicable to conscientious UFO investigators.

The first of these principles is to consider informants first:

'In research, an anthropologist's paramount responsibility is to those he studies. When there is a conflict of interest, these individuals must come first. The anthropologist must do everything within his power to protect their physical, social and psychological welfare and to honour their dignity and privacy.' 11

The anthropologist James P. Spradley amplifies this statement to make it clear what is involved.

'All ethnography must include inquiries to discover the interests and concerns of informants. And when choices are made, these interests must be considered first.' 12

Several researchers have noted that before the onset of the modern abduction hysteria, researchers were content to plod steadily on during an investigation, taking months or years if necessary before finding an answer. Furthermore, most UFO percipients actually wanted a rational explanation to a bewildering and disturbing event. This was denied them when the abduction hysteria finally dawned and regression hypnosis falsely promoted as the 'royal road' to their subconscious minds and the truth. If this first principle had been considered then, and acted upon by researchers, possibly much of the harm done over the past decade could have been avoided.

The second of the Association's principles is to safeguard informant's rights, interests, and sensitivities.

'Where research involves the acquisition of material and information transferred on the assumption of trust between persons, it is axiomatic that the rights, interests, and sensitivities of those studies must be safeguarded.' 13

Spradley states that research should always be viewed from the point of view of the informant, and gives as his example his own research with a Kwakiutl Native American. When it seemed that a book was going to come out of his research into this man's life, he decided to safeguard his interests by making him a full partner and cosignatory to the contract with Yale University Press. He also read his notes and proofs of his book to the man and his wife to allow them to make any alterations and deletions as they thought appropriate. He also stresses the informant's right to speak off the record.

The Association also makes it absolutely clear that 'Informants have the right to remain anonymous.

'This right should be respected both where it has been promised explicitly and where no clear understanding to the contrary has been reached ... Despite every effort being made to preserve anonymity it should be made clear to informants that such anonymity may be compromised unintentionally.' 14

Spradley here makes plain that the use of pseudonyms and changing the names of people and places is only a preliminary safeguard. He also warns that there is always the possibility of ethnographic research being subpoenaed for use in court cases, where relevant. He therefore stresses that

'a serious consideration of this ethical principle might, in some cases, lead to the selection of an alternative research project.' 15

It is also axiomatic that informants should not be exploited.

'There should be no exploitation of individual informants for personal gain. Fair return should be given them for all services.' 16

Of course, what constitutes fair return may vary from one informant to another, with some informants being content merely to have an interested audience, others seeking active assistance in understanding their experience. Needless to say, Spradley is right when he

says that:

'(p)ersonal gain becomes exploitative when the informant gains nothing or actually suffers harm from the research.' 17

In this view, the exacerbation of a disturbed witness' mental condition by a researcher's questions or investigation, even if trusted and with their consent, would seem to constitute exploitation.

The Association also stresses that researcher's notes and papers should be open for inspection by informants.

Naturally, the possibility of the informants reading their reports influences the way social scientists actually write their interviews. This, and the other general principles, in practice make the process of ethnographic research more of a collaborative enterprise, with researcher and informant co-operating, than a simple interrogation. This, naturally, leads UFOlogy towards the kind of witness-led investigation advocated by John Spencer, especially as the Association also recommends communicating your research goals to the informants and changing them in accordance to the informants' interests. In the case of ufological study, this essentially consists of knowing when to stop on a particular track. *It also means that if an informant really doesn't want to part with information, any attempt to compel them to do so is grossly unethical.*

These, however, are only the main points of the Association's ethical code. There are others and social science students are strongly advised to read them all. In the case of children there are also a number of laws stipulating protection of their identities as well as their interests. Some of

you may remember the storm Kevin McClure caused when he felt these rules had not been observed by Quest's UFO Magazine in its coverage of the Jason Andrews case. Part of professional journalists' training involves knowledge of these rules. Needless to say, whatever the personal views of the researcher, they must not ask leading questions which will impose their belief system on the opinions of the informant. It is also obvious that if a case can be cleared up with a rational explanation, then it should go without saying that the informant should be told this. If not and the researcher can't, then it's probably best to acknowledge that you cannot explain it. It's the course of action recommended by Hendry. When dealing with the genuinely unknown, intellectual honesty is undoubtedly the best policy.

Knowledge of these principles doesn't necessarily make one an expert at conducting ethnographic interviews, but it should go some way to improving the manner in which some, at least, UFO investigations are done. I'd advise anyone seriously considering interviewing the public over UFO cases to seek as much professional guidance in matters such as conducting interviews and examining evidence as possible. A little knowledge can be a dangerous thing. This is just a starting point to give some idea of the complexity of issues involved. Of course, these principles will be already familiar to some members of the ufological community, even to those who, while spreading the abduction myth and its attendant horrors, sincerely believed that they were acting out of the best motives and for the good of the witness. Nevertheless, **unfortunately, there seems to be a sizeable proportion of the ufological community, which has no understanding of the constraints under which ethical research is done as the venal and litigious behaviour of some ufologists demonstrates.** In order to minimise this kind of behaviour it's absolutely necessary that anyone actually talking to the public should be made aware of their ethical responsibilities and the dangers in which their position can put them.

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I would also suggest that, where the investigation involves medical or scientific technique (such as the examination of recovered artefacts) the investigator fully avails himself of the expert, unbiased opinion of genuine, professional scientists and medical practitioners, such as those Brookesmith and McClure have contacted, in their researches into the phenomenon.

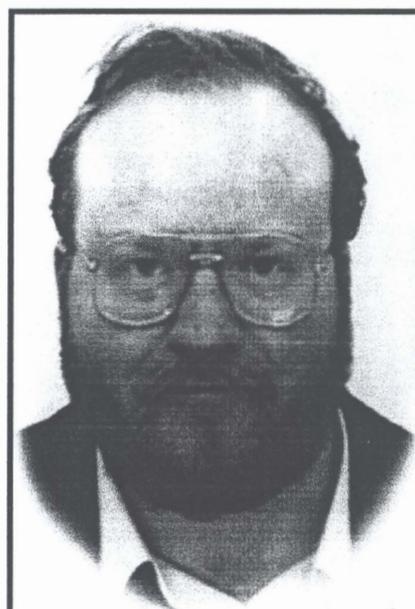
It is also, of course, axiomatic, that intrusive and harmful pseudo-medical procedures like regression hypnosis should on no account be used.

Some physical scientists are prepared to pay attention to UFOlogy, provided that the subject does realise its weaknesses and adopt the investigative processes most suited to it. This means a rejection of the blanket explanations, which have been taken up by researchers, and the adoption of an objective, rational approach based more towards the legal and social disciplines than the hard sciences. Only by subjecting itself to a rigorous process of ethical and methodological review comparable to the appropriate professional standards can UFOlogy raise itself above the sorry, ignorant, squabbling state in which it now finds itself.

Notes

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11. Council of the American Anthropological Association, *Principles of Responsibility*, 1971, paragraph 1.
12. Spradley, J.P., *The Ethnographic Interview*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979, p. 35.
13. Council of the American Anthropological Association, *Principles of Responsibility*, 1971, paragraph 1a.
14. Council of the American Anthropological Association, *Principles of Responsibility*, 1971, paragraph 1c.
15. Spradley, J.P., *The Ethnographic Interview*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979, p. 38.
16. Council of the American Anthropological Association, *Principles of Responsibility*, 1971, paragraph 1d.
17. Spradley, J.P., *The Ethnographic Interview*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979, p. 38.

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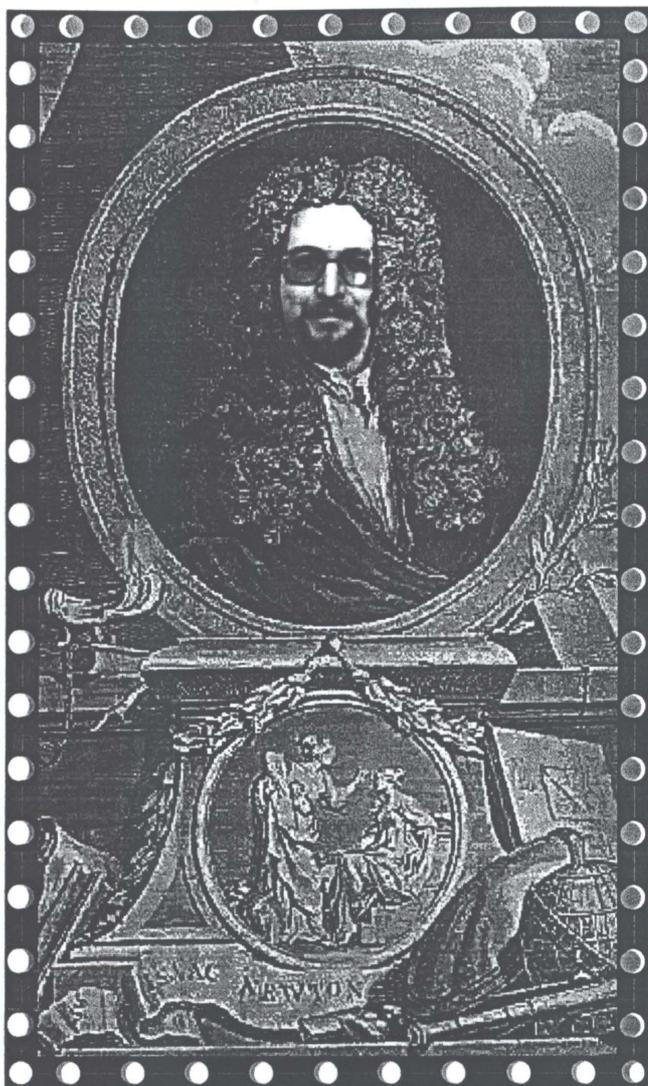


DAVE SIVIER

Dave Sivier is a history graduate with religious studies as a minor subject. He is a former civil servant with an interest in astronomy and space. His articles on space, UFOlogy and the paranormal have been published in a number of magazines including the sceptical journal, *Magonia*.

He currently works in museums in Bristol on a voluntary basis. As a natural sceptic he does not expect aliens to land on the White House lawn, Mir to crash on Paris, nor the Antichrist to emerge from the East. However he does live in fear that the Y2K bug will cause havoc by making us all return to conventional filing systems!

Coping with PMT (pre-millennial tension)



SCIENCE FROM NEWTON

.....the other one.

*When'er a comet doth appear,
Come mishap, want, sorrow and fear;
And never hath a comet's sheen
Without great evil yet been seen.
These dire ill-fortunes do ensue
When a comet appears to view -
- Wolfgang Hilderbrand*

With the approach of the coming Year 2K (I won't say Millennium at this point - more on this later) and the Total Solar Eclipse, now seems a good time to look at the predictions of doom and gloom and the more likely possibilities of the end of the world.

43 One of the more wacky ideas I've heard is that

during this August's eclipse, the Sun will lurch forwards and collide with the earth, thus fulfilling the prophecy that the Earth will end in fire and vindicating Nostrodamus et al. Sorry to disappoint, but this particularly idiotic prediction is *seriously* unlikely to occur. The nearest we may get to this is when the Sun comes to the end of its natural life and runs out of fuel - hydrogen - in its core. This will happen in roughly 4 or 5 billion years time. The Sun will then swell up briefly (brief, that is, in astronomical terms, but several million years as far as we're concerned) into a type of star known as a red giant, and will swallow up the inner planets Mercury and Venus. Although the surface of the Sun will then be much bigger and cooler, the fact that it will be so much nearer to us means that the earth *will* end in fire - the atmosphere and oceans will boil away and whatever forms of life are on planet Earth in the distant future will then will be fried to a crisp. This is the ultimate fate of Earth, if it lasts that long, and why we *must* travel into space if we want to survive as a species. Beyond that, there is the thorny problem of the ultimate fate of the Universe, the so called heat death, but for the time being perhaps we should concentrate on the immediate future - i.e. the next 4 billion years.

As far as the end of human civilisation is concerned, the end may be much nearer. With recent scare stories in the press about asteroid and comet near misses, and the blockbuster films *Deep Impact* and *Armageddon*, the public is now much more aware of the dangers of an impact from outer space. The belief that the dinosaurs were wiped out by an impact 65 million years ago is now ingrained in the minds of most of the informed public; but for those in the business of archaeoastronomy, palaeontology and planetary physics the reason for these mass extinctions is not so clear cut. I say extinctions because the dinosaurs weren't the only ones to be wiped out in history. Throughout the history of the earth, mass extinctions have taken place at semi-regular intervals, the largest of them being 225 million years ago between the Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras when up to 96 per cent of marine species (who typically fare better than land based animals during extinction events) were wiped out (1). When you're number's up, that's it, as they say; which appears to be true for most of the world's population every hundred million years or so. *Something* happens to annihilate most living organisms and allows evolution to start again with almost a blank slate. What that something is, though, is still unclear. Much has been made of the layer of enriched iridium found at the broken strata of the K/T boundary, 65 million years old. Iridium is an element that is rare on Earth but much more common in comets and asteroids from the outer solar system, and this has pointed to the dinosaur extinction being caused by an impact with a celestial object at that time. When Alvarez published his evidence of the high concentration of Iridium at the K/T boundary (2) it set researchers looking for possible "killer" asteroid impacts. Of the 150-odd known and dated craters, three correspond to this time period. The largest of them, at 180km in diameter, is the Chicxulub crater that is now widely regarded as the killer impact. But is an impact the whole answer? As with all aspects of research, if you look long enough, you will eventually find supporting evidence; the Chicxulub crater was eventually found and dated which fitted in nicely with the dinosaur/killer impact theory. Were other factors involved - or even was it, in fact, merely *coincidental* to the extinction? Work by Sloan et al has shown that many dinosaurs survived up to 40,000 years after the K/T impact

event, their fossils being located in sedimentary rocks up to 1.3 metres above the K/T boundary layer (3). Whatever killed the dinosaurs, it only killed some of them slowly. It has been suggested that perhaps we are in the middle of an extinction event ourselves - right now - it happens quickly in geological terms, but very slowly compared to a human lifetime. This has cast doubts on the asteroid impact/nuclear winter/food chain collapse idea in the minds of many. It was suggested by astronomers Clube and Napier in 1986 (4) that these semi-periodic extinctions of life on Earth may be related to the Sun travelling through the spiral arms of our galaxy, the Milky Way. The gravitational interactions between passing stars and objects

evidence, we should expect a new ice age to begin in the next 20,000 to 30,000 years. It should also be mentioned that the Sun is a variable star, and that temperatures on a smaller time scale seem to go hand in hand with sunspot activity. Normally the Sun has an 11 year cycle of magnetic activity, but sometimes this breaks down. Little ice ages in the 16th and late 17th centuries correspond to periods with little or no sunspot activity; while Medieval warm periods coincided with many reports of naked eye sunspots. (8) It is entirely possible that very dramatic changes in the biosphere took place in geological history as a result of our orbital motion and the fluctuating power output of the Sun.

Something happens to annihilate most living organisms and allows evolution to start again with almost a blank slate.

in the outer solar system (known as the Oort cloud) could send large numbers of new comets heading inwards towards the Sun, some of them colliding with Earth. This would also help explain the traditional folk fear of comets as harbingers of doom and disaster (see the quote at the beginning as an example). The near passage of bright comets Hyakutake and Hale-Bopp in recent years may have added to the pre-millennial tension we now have. And the well publicised collision of comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 with Jupiter has highlighted the potential for disaster that these celestial missiles may bring.

The passage of the Sun through the plane of the galaxy may bring additional dangers. As well as increased cometary activity, what would happen if the earth were to pass through a giant molecular cloud (GMC), huge objects that inhabit the spiral arms of the Milky Way? Molecular hydrogen in the cloud would react with oxygen in our own atmosphere to form water, depleting the atmosphere of oxygen. Yabushita and Allen argue convincingly (5), (6) that a drastic change in the quantity of atmospheric oxygen due to such an encounter is responsible for the K/T extinction event as well as other extinctions through geological history. This is supported by analysis of air bubbles trapped in amber formed around the time of the dinosaur extinction (7), which shows that the oxygen content dropped sharply from 30% to 20% at this time. This drop in oxygen, and the mass extinction, has also been ascribed to volcanic activity; although volcanic outgassing has difficulty explaining the iridium concentration and the shocked nature of the rock strata at the K/T boundary. On balance, it seems that mass extinctions are definitely caused by extraterrestrial influences. The composition of Earth's atmosphere has changed considerably throughout the planet's history, and it may be good to bear this in mind when considering the high profile "green" arguments concerning emissions of carbon dioxide and CFCs into the atmosphere. Ice cores from Antarctica show that there was considerably more carbon dioxide - a so-called "greenhouse gas" - in our atmosphere 100,000 years ago but global temperatures were lower than they were now. Clearly, average temperatures on the planet are not just related to how much CO₂ is in the air. Rather, the ice cores show that temperatures and ice ages have followed very closely the cycles that planet Earth undergoes relative to the Sun. First of all, the Earth's orbit changes from maximum eccentricity (the difference between the Earth's closest distance to the Sun and the furthest distance) to minimum in a period of around 96,000 years. The axial tilt of the Earth changes with a period of 42,000 years, which affects the seasons. We also have an effect known as the precession of the equinoxes, with a period of 21,000 years, because the Earth wobbles like a spinning top seen in slow motion. From this

Whether mass extinctions are caused by impacts alone, or have help from GMCs and volcanic activity, there is a lot of dangerous material floating about in space around us. We should be thankful that the Earth makes only a small target, and that the atmosphere burns up the smaller debris that comes our way. The Moon also helps to deflect incoming bodies from hitting our planet. Without any substantial atmosphere, the Moon (and Mercury) show us just what meteoritic bombardment is capable of. The surfaces of these bodies are pockmarked by craters large and small. The Earth's atmosphere, as well as burning up smaller bodies (which we see as meteors in the night sky) also disguises the craters on the surface by the process of weathering. It is only fairly recently that geologists have started to recognise the tell-tale signs of impact craters. Some craters are more obvious, such as the famous 49,000 year old Barringer meteor crater in Arizona, although this was originally thought to be volcanic in origin. There are significant numbers of double craters on the Earth and Moon (such as the Clearwater Lakes crater system in Quebec, Canada), which indicates that a large number of asteroids are in fact gravitationally bound to companions. (9)

What are these objects that sometimes impact with the Earth? Asteroids are remnant material from the formation of the solar system, and therefore represent an important source of information on conditions in the early solar system. The vast majority of asteroids orbit in the main belt between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. The immense gravitational pull of Jupiter prevented the formation of a planet any closer to the Sun than Mars, and so the material out there instead formed into a series of smaller bodies strung out into a loose doughnut shape around the Sun. Some asteroids consist largely of rocky material, which corresponds to the lighter material we find making up the Earth's crust. Some asteroids have a much higher iron content, which corresponds to the metals that sunk down to form the Earth's core. Collisions between main-belt asteroids result in fragments that can, through gravitational interactions with the planets, be thrust into highly elliptical orbits that cross the Earth's orbit. These are known as Earth Crossing Asteroids or Near Earth Asteroids. Eventually, we may cross paths and result in an impact. When a body enters the Earth's atmosphere from space, the friction with the air causes the outer layer of the object to heat up and glow. These "shooting stars" that are seen from the ground are known as meteors. As it progresses through the atmosphere, the outer layers of the meteor vaporise and burn away and the pressure difference between the front of the meteor (where it is pushing layers of air ahead of it) and the rear (where there is a vacuum, the air not having time to fill in the void left by the passage of the meteor) may cause it to 44



Comet Hale-Bopp

disintegrate or explode. The vast majority of meteors leave nothing but fine dust that drifts down through the air. The Earth gains several thousand tons of matter every year from this dust. Sometimes, if the meteor is large enough and strong enough (usually the ones made of iron rather than softer rock) some of it may be left over to reach the surface of the Earth. These are known as meteorites. Typically they come in three types: stony, stony-iron and iron meteorites.

Not all meteors originate from the asteroid belt, however. The Oort cloud was mentioned earlier as the origin of comets. The further away from the Sun you get, the colder it is; so it was at the birth of the solar system. In the far reaches of the solar system, ices and gases were able to condense with dust to form cometary nuclei, in similar fashion to the asteroid belt. But the asteroid belt was too near the Sun and too hot for the bodies there to contain volatile substances like water and methane. Consequently, the cometary nuclei found in the Oort cloud are thought to be like "dirty snowballs" - loose conglomerations of rock and dust held together by frozen water, methane ice and other frozen gases. Again, collisions between these objects and gravitational interactions with passing objects and stars (the Oort cloud is approximately one light year away from the Sun) can send these iceballs heading in towards the Sun. As they approach the Sun, the gases heat up and vaporise releasing gas and dust, giving comets the long graceful tails that we sometimes see in the night sky as with the recent comet Hale Bopp. Interactions with planets (usually Jupiter) can send these comets into highly elliptical orbits and they become periodic comets. The best known periodic comet is Comet Halley, which orbits the Sun once every 76 years, although comets are known with periods as short as 3.3 years (Comet Encke). The dust released by the comet as it orbits the sun eventually spreads out, filling the orbit with small particles. With certain comets the Earth actually passes through this trail of dusty debris where the orbits cross. This results in meteor showers being seen at certain times of the year, every year. One of the best and most regular meteor showers is the Perseid shower which peaks on August 12/13. Each of these meteors seen streaking across the night sky is a tiny rock fragment - usually no bigger than a grain of sand - burning up in the atmosphere after floating around in

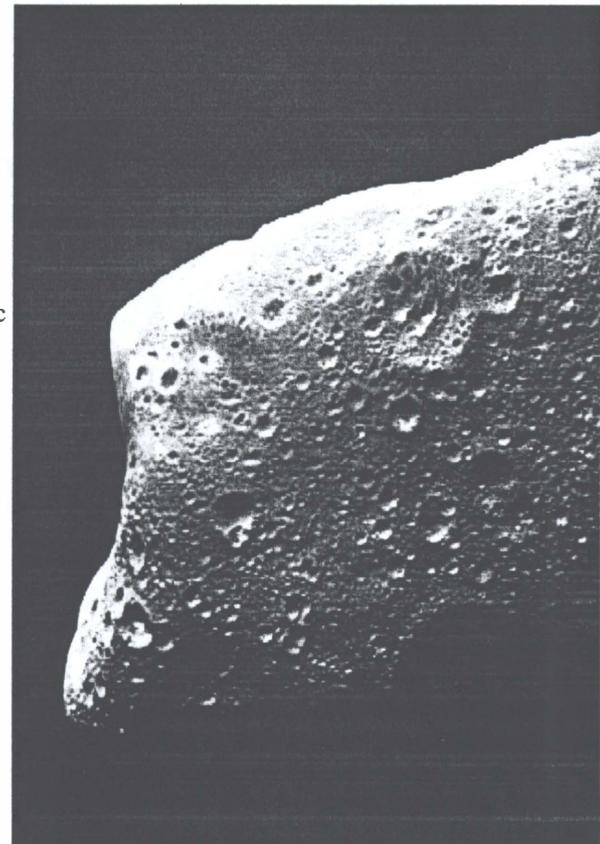
space probably for hundreds of years after being released by the periodic comet Swift-Tuttle.

Undoubtedly some of the Earth Crossing Asteroids are actually the burned out remains of old periodic comets. Certainly two periodic comets, Arend-Rigaux and Neujmin 1 now appear star like. Each time a comet passes near the Sun the heat drives more gas and dust off the surface until all that remains is the rocky core. While comets may be fragile, icy bodies in comparison with asteroids, any impact at several tens of thousands of miles per hour will be devastating, especially since fresh young cometary nuclei may be tens or hundreds of kilometres across. While iron meteorites are strong enough to survive the atmospheric entry and hit the ground - leaving a crater - small comets and stony asteroids are fragile and may explode in mid air by the mechanism outlined above. It is now thought that the Tunguska explosion of 1908 was just such a stony asteroid. (10) The lack of crater in this case has led to much speculation within UFOlogy - of a black hole hitting the Earth, of alien spaceships

blowing up, etc., that I'm sure readers of Strange Daze will be familiar with. However, the Russian explorer Leonid Kulik collected sub millimetre metallic spheres from the Tunguska site which were analysed in the 1980s and show elements in key proportions characteristic of meteorites. Mystery solved as far as I'm concerned. Nor is the Tunguska event unique; a similar event occurred over the town of Revelstoke in

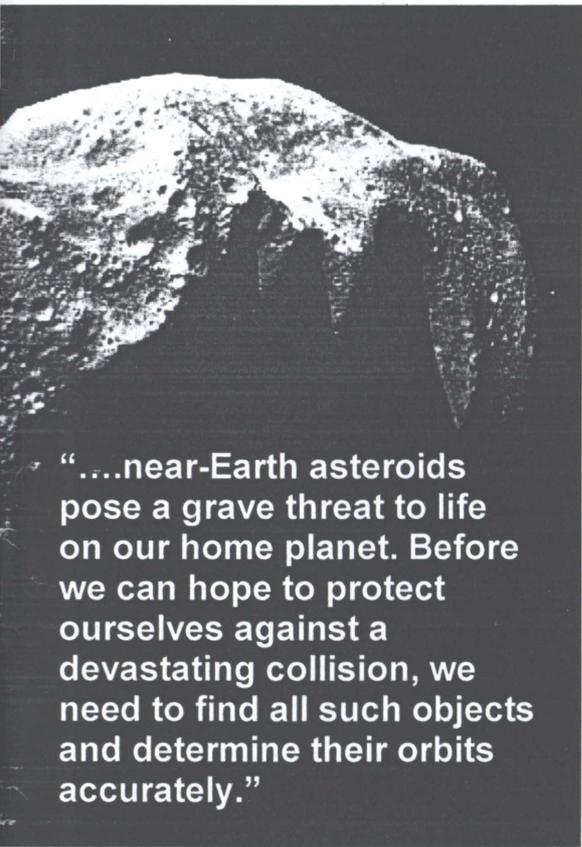
Canada in March 1965. This event was smaller - it only released about 20 kilotons of explosive energy as opposed to the 10 - 20 megatons released over Tunguska - and no damage was caused luckily on the ground. But fortunately it had been snowing and particles from the explosion were recovered, and the analysis showed that the cause was a carbonaceous chondrite, a fragile and primitive type of meteorite. Because the explosion happened at an altitude of 30km, the detonation was hardly noticed, and if it hadn't been snowing then the "Revelstoke Boom" may still have been a minor mystery today. The point is that these events may happen more frequently than we like to think. It is estimated that a Tunguska like event may happen once or twice a century, so we are fortunate that so much of our planet is uninhabited and covered in water. The giant impacts such as Chicxulub may only happen on average once every 100 million years; but all of these events have random factor. It could happen anytime, anywhere. We can only hope that we have enough warning to prepare and perhaps try to do something about it.

How many earth crossing asteroids are there? Probably a



frightening number. Back in June 1997 at the 190th biannual meeting of the American Astronomical Society, Space Development Corporation founder and chairman James W. Benson announced the Benson Prize for the Amateur Discovery of Near-Earth Asteroids. Beginning June 10, 1997, a cash prize of U. S. \$500 was awarded for each of the next 10 discoveries of near-Earth asteroids by amateur skygazers, persons not employed as professional astronomers and who use amateur-owned equipment. For this prize, near-Earth asteroids are defined as rocky minor planets (as opposed to icy comets) whose distance from the Sun at perihelion, or closest approach, is less than 1 astronomical unit (AU). One AU, the average separation of the Earth and the Sun, is 149,597,870.66 kilometres, or 92,955,807.24 miles. These days, astronomers like to be *precise*.

"The purpose of the Benson Prize," said Benson, "is to encourage backyard astronomers to seek out previously unknown near-Earth asteroids. Such objects are rich in ores and other resources that could be exploited without the environmental



degradation caused by mining operations here on Earth. Harnessing natural resources from near-Earth asteroids will spur economic activity and create new jobs. It will help open up the space frontier and lead to large numbers of people living and working in space.

"Not only that, but near-Earth asteroids pose a grave threat to life on our home planet. Before we can hope to protect ourselves against a devastating collision, we need to find all such objects and

"...near-Earth asteroids pose a grave threat to life on our home planet. Before we can hope to protect ourselves against a devastating collision, we need to find all such objects and determine their orbits accurately."

determine their orbits accurately. Otherwise, we may meet the same fate as the dinosaurs, who were apparently wiped out by an asteroid impact some 65 million years ago."

So far astronomers have found about 300 near-Earth asteroids; the total population of such objects at least 100 meters wide may exceed 135,000. (11) It only took until July 4, 1997 for the first \$500 prize to be paid out: Roy Tucker of Tucson, Arizona, discovered minor planet 1997 MW1 in late June. Since then, technology and the US Air Force have moved things up a gear. Reports of new asteroids and comets and position reports for existing bodies are logged by the Minor Planet Centre (MPC) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Up until March 1998, the MPC logged about 10,000 positions every month. But starting in March, the Lincoln Near Earth Asteroid Research (LINEAR) observatory has swamped the MPC with up to 160,000 reports a month. The state of the art telescope, which uses super-fast CCD detectors to track and log asteroids, is run by scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Lincoln Laboratory and is located on the

US Air Force's White Sands Missile Range (about a mile from the site of the first atomic bomb explosion in 1945). On the site are eight small observatory domes, one of which houses the LINEAR telescope. The others house telescopes used for Ground based Electro-Optical Deep Space Surveillance (GEODSS) which keep track of 9,500 man made objects in earth orbit - everything from astronaut gloves to spy satellites. Up to January 1999, the MPC had given designations to 19,293 new asteroids discovered by LINEAR in its first ten months of operation - an astonishing figure. Brian Skiff, an astronomer from the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona, said "In five years, LINEAR will have mapped everything in the solar system right down to the crumbs". (12) Which can only be a good thing. At last, science has wised up to the dangers of these objects and the need to find them. We've come a long way since Thomas Jefferson famously said,

"I could more easily believe that two Yankee professors would lie than that stones would fall from the heaven."

So how should we handle the situation when an asteroid is directly heading for Earth? In the film *Armageddon* the astronauts drilled through the asteroid heading towards Earth and planted a nuclear device that split the asteroid, sending the two fragments into orbits that both missed the our planet. This would be risky, to say the least. Our most powerful nuclear weapons may not be powerful enough to split up an asteroid several miles in diameter, and even if they were, it would be hard to calculate where the fragments would go. The asteroid's own gravity would pull the fragments back together unless the detonation was truly immense, and then we would be back to square one - except now the asteroid would be contaminated with highly radioactive nuclear isotopes as well. Just what we would need. The effect could also be that the Earth would be hit by a cosmic shot gun blast of all the pieces, rather than with a single cannonball. Neither option seems acceptable. Alternatively, nuclear weapons could be detonated outside of the asteroid to try to nudge it into a slightly different orbit, although this would also be unpredictable. A safer bet would be to land rocket engines on the surface of the asteroid and then fire them in a controlled way, to gently push the asteroid out of the way and into a safe orbit. This would take time to set up, but with a new generation of telescopes like LINEAR now coming into operation it seems a safe bet that we will get ample warning of any impending collision - several months, and more likely years, to prepare.

.....

But let's turn to the nearer future and the one element of Pre-Millennial Tension that seems to have really taken off: The Millennium Bug. The prospect of computers and silicon chips crashing at 00.00 hrs, 01/01/00 seems to have really caught on in the public's imagination and cost billions of dollars worldwide as organisations, businesses and individuals check their systems and upgrade their software to new "Year 2K compliant" packages. Software manufacturers will make a killing out of The Millennium Bug, so you can expect a certain amount of hype from the industry about the need for everyone to upgrade their systems or face dire problems if they don't. At least with computers and computer networks the software can be upgraded; more problems may be

encountered with simpler, older systems where a controlling silicon chip is hardwired into the machinery and cannot be replaced. So steer clear of lifts, for one.

The central mystery is that no-one *really* knows how the clocks ticking over from '99 to '00 will really effect the world. It's a unique event. There's no guarantee that computers *will* crash when they clock over to 2000, only the possibility that they could. So is it just industry hype to sell more software? My cynical nature tells me the answer is yes; but I also have nagging doubts that creep up on me at weaker moments. The *Fortean Times* covered this topic in detail in a previous issue and gave the example of Steve Watson, and American software engineer responsible for debugging a US telephone network. Having completed his job, a colleague suggested: "Don't you realise that everything stops if the power grid goes down?" Watson now lives in a secret, camouflaged bunker in Oklahoma with M16 rifles for protection, expecting the possibility of a massive power shortage and breakdown in society. (13) You may be able to debug the computer on your desk and the telephone system, but what about the old control panels in the power stations? If you can debug them, what about the old control systems that run the railways, that take fuel to the power stations? Or the control panels of the water supply companies? There are so many interconnected systems within our society that it is hard to predict if we will wake up on January first to normality or catastrophe.

We may have a dress rehearsal for the big event though, on 9th September or 9/9/99, just about when Strange Daze should be hitting the doormats.

As 9999 can be used in machine code apparently to terminate files and applications, we therefore could face a similar bug in September. This at least should give us some indication of whether to buy some cans of beer and pringles for the Millennium celebrations, or go out instead and buy 2 years worth of provisions and a shotgun. To complete this happy scenario, if you turn the 9999 upside down you get a row of 6's which some would say fulfils the Biblical prophecy in Revelations.

One of the ironies here is that this isn't even *the* Millennium. Think about it - there was **no** year zero. We went from 1BC straight to 1AD. This means that that the new millennium doesn't start until January first, 2001. The year 2000 is merely the last year of the 20th Century. So I will save up and celebrate the true start of the New Millennium in style - with a crate of Special Brew in my secret hideout underneath Antarctica with a few of my closest pals (Lord Lucan, Elvis Presley, Shergar and the crew of the Marie Celeste). The truth is out there, and we know what it is, eh, gang?

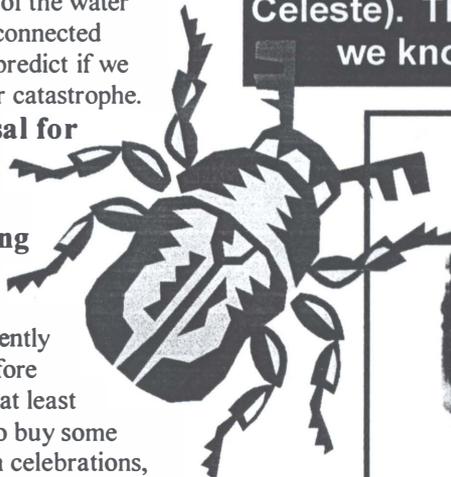
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DAVE NEWTON BSc

Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society and President of the Sunderland Astronomical Society.

The founder editor (for he's a jolly good fellow) of *Strange Daze*, he now prefers to do something grown up and produces *The North East Observer* for the local astronomical community.

When he's not doing astronomy or changing nappies, he works in Newcastle for the Overseas Branch of a government agency.

Still plays a mean guitar.

Your Letter Page. The Editor welcomes your views and comments but reserves the right to completely ignore personal attacks and invective. Ideas and theories are fair game but we're not at home to Mr. Churlish. E-mail to: heatherD77@aol.com Fax: 0191 2764437

Letters to: **THE EDITOR Unit 2A Eastcheap Heaton, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE6 5UA**

Albert Budden writes:

I seem to have been misrepresented in the last issue of SD and hope that you would allow me to disclose the bigger and more balanced picture to readers.

On reading Dave Newton's comments on our dealings with the Hutchison effect, and his comments re "Albert Budden's challenge to Magonia", in the last SD, I was somewhat miffed to see that he had put out any published comments on this matter as he had previously written (letter dated 10.8.98) to me after I had asked him to be the independent judge re the Hutchison effect, declining to become involved. I actually sent Dave the Hutchison material to simply show him something extraordinary, as I regarded him as a fellow scientist. However, although he admits that he is by no means qualified to assess it, he then did so and published his own conclusions.

Out of the three videos I sent him, containing the Hutchison material, he watched two. He appears to have disregarded one of those, (at least by making no reference to it) an important television documentary made the previous Summer by an Australian TV company (Beyond Productions) featuring myself, Hutchison and his work and (well-known American parapsychologists) Dr Dean Radin and the veteran Dr William Roll.

As anyone investigating photographic, film or video material knows, you cannot readily make any definitive judgements from only viewing it, as this type of evidence is so easy to fake. Such material can only be judged by the contexts and contacts in which it is presented, such as organisations and individuals who have been in contact with Hutchison and his work over a long period, or official sources. For example, although one of the video's I sent to Dave was of poor quality, you can see and hear what is going on, and is a testimony to the fact that Hutchison and the effects he obtained were on the national television news in Canada, USA and Japan. They were also in the Australian Beyond Productions documentary. (Which also featured ASSAP incidentally) Does Dave really think four television company's national news staff and technicians, from four different countries, could (or would) be fooled by Hutchison?

Acceptance by such contexts speaks volumes about the validity of anyone's work, as anyone who has tried to present anything new to a television company will tell you, but Dave just does not agree with this. Dave does not mention that I also sent him copies of official letters from organisations, who had close dealings with Hutchison and his laboratory in the 1980s and 1990s, glibly claiming that they looked forged. Once again, such things are easy to do, so any investigator has to do their homework and again check context and write to such organisations to check up and see if they really did witness or assess Hutchison's work etc. There were addresses on the letter copies I sent, such as the Los Alamos National Laboratory, McDonnell Douglas Aerospace, US Department of the Army, Canadian National Defence Headquarters, Canadian Defence Research Establishment for the Pacific. Dave did not (as far as I know) contact one of these official organisations in order to check up on their authenticity. Nor did he mention the copy of a letter from a U.S. electrical engineering company called Trenergy to Hutchison dated March 24 1998, which discusses how a scientist called Ken Shoulders had recently been able to reproduce the Hutchison effect.

Dave also did not mention a copy of a long and thorough report on Hutchison's work from Jack Houck of McDonnell Douglas Aerospace I sent him, which contained many photographs of Hutchison's lab' etc. and a comparison with what he regarded as PK effects. Nor did he make any reference to two lengthy and detailed articles on the Hutchison effect in a U. S. electrical engineering periodical called "The Electrical Spacecraft Journal", which for all its apparent whimsy of title, is really a well-respected periodical run by specialists in the field of electromagnetism.

Readers may now perhaps begin to see why I feel that I have been somewhat

short changed by Mr Newton by publishing his doubts about evidence that he has not even bothered to mention, credit or gather, and why I decided to withdraw my article for SD. I also sent him Hutchison's home telephone number in British Columbia, and that of the engineer who worked closely with him for several years, George Hathaway, who is probably the foremost authority apart from Hutchison that is, on the Hutchison effect. Dave contacted neither. One begins to wonder what more one could provide as good leads to verify anything, let alone the Hutchison effect. If Dave did not want to get involved an assessor, why even mention his involvement or make any judgement at all?

In the last issue of SD he states that nothing has been established "about the authenticity of the Hutchison effect." and that "we need to see more and better". In fact, the evidence is all there.

Dave Newton responds:

Albert should be reminded that he was perfectly happy for me to be the "independent" judge of the Hutchison Effect, just as long as he thought I was going to agree with him and not John Rimmer. However, having seen Albert's limited evidence for the Hutchison Effect, and been totally overwhelmed by it, Albert now decides all of a sudden that I am totally inept, have no investigative skills and that I am unqualified to assess the very evidence he asked me to. Since I have a degree in physics I would argue that I am better qualified than Albert is to judge what he claims is a groundbreaking electromagnetic/physical phenomenon. Albert would have us believe that he has plenty of stunning video and documentary evidence to prove that Hutchison has discovered the greatest thing in physics since nuclear fission; but I would be embarrassed to show this evidence to any of my friends and colleagues who remain active physicists, and I have little choice but to agree with John Rimmer (who wrote about this topic with stunning accuracy in *Magonia* 58/ January 1997: pp10-11). The one videotape that Albert mentions was of such poor quality that (a) it was unwatchable and (b) I was concerned that it might actually damage my ageing video player. Is this the best that Albert and Hutchison can come up with after so many, many years of research - a couple of poor quality videotapes, a slot in an Australian documentary, a handful of letters and two articles in the soberly titled "Electric Spacecraft Journal" On this evidence I really don't think that Hutchison will appear in the physics textbooks for the next generation. But don't take my word for it - I should hope that Albert would be only too happy to let everyone see his wonderful evidence—make your own minds up.

What we are seeing here is nothing more than Albert being a sore loser. It seems to me a great pity that because we disagree over one fringe point - the quality of the evidence presented so far for the Hutchison Effect - that I should now become the mortal enemy of Albert.

This really is the final straw - I have no intention of wasting any more time on the matter of the Hutchison Effect. Give it up Albert, with evidence like this I'm not going to be converted to your cause, no matter how many letters you write to me or Strange Daze. It's not as though the Hutchison Effect is even crucial to your "Allergies and Aliens" theory, so stop flogging a dead horse and save yourself the grief.

This correspondence is now closed— Editor.

Letters Continued on Page 50

events diary

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From: Michael Lewis ASSAP/ BUFORA

Thank you for sending my copy of "Strange Daze". This was a kind thought which I appreciate. I enjoyed reading it, especially the well-researched article by Andy Roberts on The Big Grey Man of Ben Macdhu and the thought provoking article by Philip Mantle on the Russian Roswell, although I cannot accept it at face value. Congratulations on a high quality well produced magazine, which is a credit to our subject.

Regards Michael

D.S from Cyprus writes:

Dear Gloria,

I hope you are doing OK. I have read the article on Electromagnetic Pollution. Quite honestly I was fascinated, I must say certain factors hit home for me, however what got my attention as I was reading the article was the mention of allergies. At the same time as my experiences started I developed an awful skin rash. It became very nasty, to the extent that I could not wear any make-up, or go swimming, etc. It must have been a chemical allergy, I never really got to the bottom of it, however, and in time it did start to diminish and would only appear again if I used certain products. Two years ago over here in Cyprus, I was prescribed two lots of drugs, after taking them for two days I had a severe allergic reaction and ended up in the Hospital on a drip. What a crazy time that was.

I do think Mr Budden is certainly on to something now, I am very interested in his theory and I have so many questions!!!! If there is a scientific explanation for what happened to me then I am all for that. What I can't understand though is where do the precognitive dreams come into all of this.

As for as living near an EM hotspot, would living right next to the tube station and over ground trains count??? From the age of about 3 or 4 until the age of 6, I think, we were living in such an area. Please let me know what you think as I feel I am getting closer to the truth.

DS. (Name & address supplied)

And Finally,

**Gloria and all the Editorial staff would like
to wish**

Phil Mantle

a speedy recovery.

You are a dear friend and colleague.

Get well soon PHIL !!!!!



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we are spiritual beings
having a human experience*

Teilhard de Chardin