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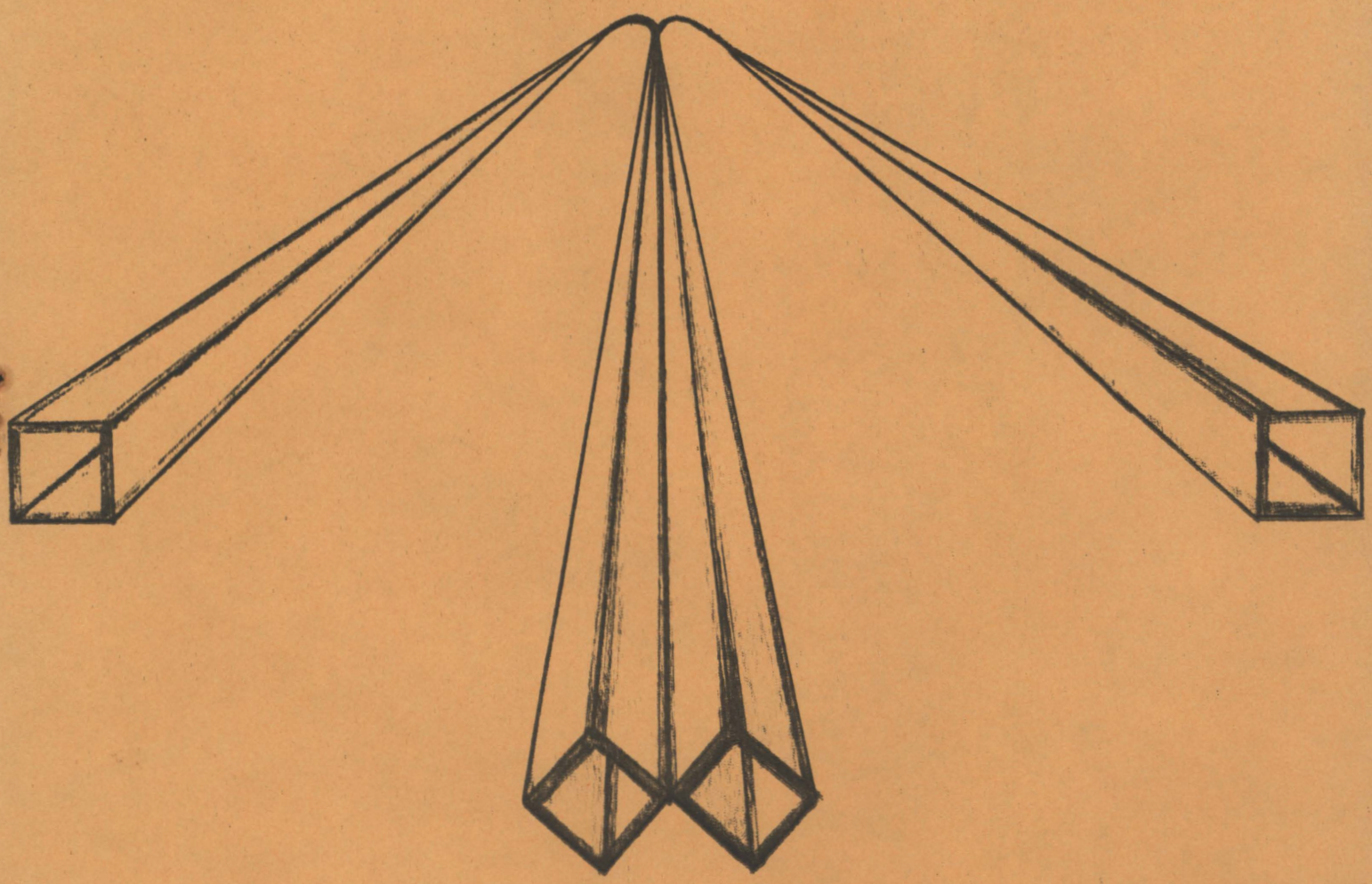

VIKING UPDATE

THE AMERICAN SCENE : HYNEK RULES O.K.?

MAGAZINE ROUND-UP

NEWS, VIEWS AND REPORTS

IRISH UFO NEWS VOL 1 NO. 3

JAN. 1977

The Irish UFO News is a twice yearly publication for ufologists and persons interested in UFO phenomena in both parts of Ireland. It is published by the Irish UFO Research Centre, an informal group of active ufologists, but it is not an organisational journal and it's pages are open to anyone who wishes to contribute. The editorial panel is not responsible for opinions or beliefs expressed by individual contributors. Copys may be obtained on subscription for one year at a rate of 60 pence, or 50 pence for members of BUFORA, spectrum and NUFON groups. (Cheques and postal orders should be uncrossed and payable to John Hind.

EDITORIAL PANEL

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IN THIS ISSUE

IUFORC PUBLICATIONS

A fully detailed 22 page report on the Belfast Contactee case is now available (Ref. SI. 03.), price 60pence. The report is also available on loan.
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THE EDITORIAL PANEL WOULD LIKE TO APOLOGISE FOR THE LATE APPEARANCE OF THIS ISSUE (Not as late as our cover would indicate: that is a misprint!) AND TO ASSURE SUBSCRIBERS THAT EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO GET BACK ON SCHEDULE BY NEXT ISSUE.

EDITORIAL: It May Be True, But Is It Useful?

Since in this issue ETH - the Extraterrestrial Hypothesis - will face further derision from myself as well as other contributers, maybe I should make my own opinions on the ETH and other theories clear.

It is instructive to notice the difference in attitude between many scientists, who probably know little about the phenomenon, and amateur ufologists, who may know quite a lot. Many scientists if cornered privatly, will admit to being puzzled by what they have heard about the phenomenon, to the extent of tentativly considering the extraterrestrial solution. However they will be quite unwilling to repeat this in public. Many amateur ufologists, on the other hand, will take the opposite stance. In public they will loudly proclaim the vertues of the extraterrestrial theory while, if cornered in private, they will express serious doubts about it's validity.

This, I think, shows that ufologists are out of empathy with scientific methods. Any scientist will tell you that the test of a good theory is not 'is it true?' but 'is it useful?' and I would contend that the extraterrestrial theory is no longer useful. Over the past ten or fifteen years the theory, in our present conception has not been capable of adequatly explaining the characteristics of the phenomenon to the extent that, at present, the extraterrestrial theory is as much of a 'forced fit' as were the various theories that UFOs could be explained in terms of missinterpretation. Do I support some other theory then? Frankly, having looked at most of them, I find little to commend any of them. I have, of course, some ideas of my own, some of which are almost incredible enough to be true. However I see little value in idle speculation except as an art form, as in science fiction.

I would not like to be taken wrongly, it is certainly possible that UFOs are extraterrestrial spacecraft, it is also possible that they are time travillers from the past, or from the future, or that they come from other dimensions, or they are a collective halucination, or a psychic projection or a mathematically impossible plasma..... All these theories are possible, but since we do not yet posess the means of distingushing between them, none of them are useful.

John Hind.

A Tale of the Englishman and the Irishman. JENNY RANDLES.

Jenny Randles is secretary of NUFON, the Northern UFO Network and Editor of their magazine 'Northern UFO News'. She is Research Co-ordinator for BUFORA and recently resigned from it's council for reasons, some of which she explains in this article. She was co-editor of BUFORA's Investigators Handbook and organiser of their recent R & I Conference. She is a regular contributor to 'BUFORA Journal' and 'Flying Saucer Review', and is currently engaged in the preparation of a Northern England Catalogue of UFO Reports. - JAH.

Over here in England, as I expect you know, comedians tend to use Irishmen as one of their favourite topics for a funny story. I suspect that the same thing is true with regard to the English in many foreign countries; with a good deal more justification. When I look at our ufological affairs I see no cause for complaint. Anyhow, as a means of possibly clearing up a few misconceptions, this is what it is really like over here.

England has a multiplicity of ufo groups- too many infact. They exist, in most instances, to give their members something to do. Very few indeed are positive contributors, in other than a very general sence. This is fair enough. Often such groups fold up after a few months as their members move on to something else which takes their current fancy. Keeping track of whos who and whats what can be a problem. An estimate of the number of active groups is about thirty, split about evenly through North and south and tending to congregate, quite naturally, in populated areas such as Greater Manchester and Merseyside, which sport two each, at least.

least. North of Lancashire there do not appear to be any!

It was with the aim of trying to make sense of this hodge-podge that the NUFON idea was born. The Northern UFO Network was to be the first of a series of regional Networks, to loosely associate all ufological factions within that region. In fact , after three years of successful operation it still remains the only one. It's functions are varied. Partly, it acts as a central clearing house for data; storing all group's reports (to preserve them should the group go defunct, on the basis that the Network will not because so many groups are involved there will always be some to maintain the continuity). The data is of course made available for research and published widely (through NUFON's own newsletter and various international sources such as FSR). In addition NUFON acts as a meeting ground for ideas and allows groups to intercommunicate more readily. The idea is simple but it works. In the South ufo groups continue their separate existance and things can be very confused. They compete over cases and do the same thing several times over much to the dissatisfaction of the witnesses.

In addition there are two entities which are called 'national' groups. One is BUFORA- which grew out of the London UFO Research Association in the early 1960's and has never really achieved credibility as a national organisation. They have a dwindling number of regional members, hold meetings in London only, and on the one recent occasion when they did stage a symposium for regional members to air their views, none of their committee bothered to turn up to answer them. Small wonder they are not viewed with much more than the music-hall joke image which equates with Manchester's mythical rain and the aforementioned Irish sociology. (though unlike these there is a basis in fact).

The other entity is Contact UK. They are just as large as BUFORA, and have members throughout Britain, but do very limited amounts of investigation (BUFORA does at least try to do this) and do not hold meetings. They are principally a research body centered arround Oxford, doing excellent work in data collection, but (self admittedly) not really existing as a national organisation.

If this were not enough, a new body, the British UFO Documentation Centre, has recently sprung up. Supposedly it is an independent research body for scientists, but it has caused nothing but ill-feeling(and not really through it's own fault). Somehow, ufologists appear not to want any chance of scientists interfering in their 'precious' subject.

There is a bright hope in this. We do have FSR (Flying Saucer Review), internationally renowned as the leading force in world ufological publications. Until now we have not had any kind of ufo structure amongst the amateurs to the standards they set but moves are afoot to change this. Watch out for these in the next few months. Things could change overnight.*

I have not mentioned Scotland or Wales because so far as is known they sport no ufo group between them.= It must be the English temperament which goes in for this proliferation of superficiality.

So you can be proud in Ireland that you do have the Irish UFO Research Centre- a co-ordinating body for a whole country which not only is credible and respectable, but does meaningful work and publishes a very healthy journal in the Irish UFO News. Keep up the effort and Ireland will become one of the forerunners of European ufology.

Of course, I have deliberately painted a black picture of England. It is not all that bad- but I have only spoken the truth, so if nothing else, it is complicated. I often wonder why there is so much squabbling and mistrust amongst ufologists. Is the phenomenon trying to upset us, I ponder? I doubt it. It is probably just the highly emotive content of the field. I wish someone could prove ufos are <u>not</u> extraterrestrial spacecraft (which I, and most ufologists who think carefully, do not for one minute believe they are). Maybe that would put 75% of all those involved in the subject off it all together. With the remaining 25% we would have a simpler system and, just maybe, we could find out what ufos really are.

Notes (JAH).

* Since Jenny wrote this article the meaning of this reference has become clear

With a number of other people, she has set up 'U.K. Investigator's Agency'. See Miles Johnston's report later in the issue.
=This is not strictly true: I know of at least one active Scottish group, the Edinburgh University UFO Society.

NEWS AND VIEWS*NEWS AND VIEWS*NEWS AND VIEWS*NEWS AND VIEWS*NEWS AND VIEWS*NEWS AND VI

Report On BUFORA's 1976 R. and I. Conference.

BUFORA heldit's second research and investigations conference on the sixth and seventh of November. The conference was well attended with about one hundred registered conferees, that number was almost doubled on the Saturday evening, when the conference was opened to the public.

The papers where well presented and of a high, and largely objective standard. The conference opened with a presentation by Peter Rogerson of his work on the preparation of an international catalogue of type one reports. Mr Rogerson is well known for his pioneering and scholarly work in this area and his 'IntCat' has already formed the basis of interesting research work into the high strangeness end of the UFO phenomenon. IntCat is currently being computer-indexed in the USA and this will greatly enhance it's usefulness. The Saturday afternoon was given over to group discussion meetings on various aspects, followed by Bernard Delair of Contact UK, discussing Contact's work on the time/frequency correlation of UFO reports over the past 1000 years (taking most from historical records). Their failier to use more powerful statistical correlation techniques has made their results rather empirical, however they are quite impressive and they seem to justify Delair's identification of ten year and six year regular periodicity cycles. It is interesting to note that Delair and Saunders, in America both agree to within three monthes on the date of the next UFO activity maxima; early this year. Neither Saunders nor Delair claim any kind of geographical correlation so they cannot predict where the wave will occur.

The high spot of the weekend was that evening, first with a pre-recorded paper by Dr. J.Allen Hynek and then presentation of the main paper, on occupant research, by Mr. Ted Bloecher, a famous American researcher. Dr. Hynek talked informally about his activities in UFO research in the late fifties and about his Center for UFO Studies. Ted Bloecher gave a very detailed account of his compilation, investigation and re-investigation of American occupant cases for his catalogue which is shortly to be published by the Center for UFO Studies. My one main complaint about the organisation of the conference is that they chose to open Mr. Bloecher's presentation to the public, occupant reports are a very contraversial subject even among ufologists and by opening this to the public we laid ourselves open to charges of cheep sensationalism and crackpottery from uninformed members of the public and journalists. Some of the former, mostly young and female were unable to restrain their mirth at some of Mr.Bloecher's drawings of reported humanoid entities, and most of the latter spent most of the evening noisely drinking themselves silly at a bar that someone had unwisely opened at the back of the hall. It was only Mr. Bloecher's calm, down to earth and convincing presentation that prevented the situation degenerating into complete farce. Nevertheless Mr. Bloecher's paper was undoubtably the highlight of the weekend, and while I doubt if it improved BUFORA's public image it certainly got members thinking and talking and discussion of this and other topics streached into the early hours of the morning and resulted in a late start to the next days programme.

When things finally did get moving, proceedings started with Tony Pace presenting the results of BUFORA's vehicle interference project. BUFORA has studied hundreds of cases were vehicle interference is reported in conjunction with a UFO sighting. They have come up with the interesting fact that in only one case out of these hundreds has a diesel engine been effected, and in that case the engine was connected as an electric generator. In one case, in France a diesel tractor and a petrol one were moving close to each other in a field when a UFO was sighted: the petrol tractor was stoped while the diesel was uneffected. This is strong evidence that the effect is electrical in nature. This was followed by Bob Digby talking about the work of BUFORA's photographic analysis and investigations department. Bob showed several

motion pictures of UFOs as well as some stills, and the photografic section claim that in future they will be able to expose vertually any hoax picture presented to them in the future. The next speaker was Tim O'Brien, well known to his critics as a 'nuts-and-bolts, no nonsence, exterrestrial' man, a supporter of the 'benevolent alien, and government cover-up' scenario. His critics were not disappointed. The next speaker, Roy Dutton atempted to form wide ranging correlations of particular ufo types to parametric data; he has been partially successful,with too small a sample and without the necessary statistical methods. Unfortunatly my schudule prevented me from hearing the last two lectures, both of which looked highly interesting.

It is interesting to note that the speakers devided neatly into two catagories; The traditionalists spearheaded by Msrs. O'Brien, Dutton, Webber etc. and the 'Avant Garde' led by Peter Rogerson. It says something about English ufology that the traditionalists tend to come from the south, and the modernists from the north.

BUFORA's annual conferences are very valuable, they provide us with an oportunity to meet people who were previously only names on letters or voices on phones and they provide a uniqely stimulating environment for the formulating of ideas.

I hope that next years BUFORA conference will be as big an improvement on this years as this years was on last.

JAH.

The American Scene : Hynek Rules OK ?

Some of the uninformed have always thought of UFOs as an American phenomenon, and while there is no doubt that America has made the most noise about it over the years, it cannot be said that it is particularly exceptional as far as sightings are concerned, in terms of quality, quantity or strangeness. What is exceptional about the American UFO phenomenon is it's effect on the American public. The 1974 Gallup poll had 54% of them believing that UFOs were real, and an astounding 94% were awair of the phenomenon. The awaireness score is one of the highest in the history of the poll. Perhaps as a reflection of this public interest the United States also has the highest degree of civilian organisation to study (etc.) the UFO problem. The oldest, and still the biggest, UFO organisations in the US are APRO- The Ariel Phenomenon Research Organisation-, and NICAP- The National Investigation Committee on Ariel Phenomena.

Both these organisations seem to have suffered the fate of similar organisations in other parts of the world, only more so: since they depend on small donations or subscriptions from a large section of the public for their funds, they are forced to spend almost all of their resources keeping alive this interest, and research is the last thing there is cash left over for. Both organisations are committed (whether or not they admitt it) to the extraterrestrial theory and NICAP in particular spend a lot of their time trying to convince members of the US government that UFOs are extraterrestrial.

Against this backdrop it does not seem surprising that these organisations have achieved little in over twenty years of existance and many of the more serious investigators have become disenchanted with the older organisations. At present, the best work seems to be being done by individuals who specialise in a particular aspect and who dedicated enough to travel extensivly to collect new reports and to re-investigate old. The results of these researches are presented at conventions the most important being the MUFON (Mutual UFO Network) convention. Publication is often achieved either as detailed proceedings of these conventions or as privatly published catalogues.

It was onto this scene that Dr. Hynek's Center for UFO Studies emerged in 1974. The centre was intended to offer services to scientists interested in the phenomenon and is organised as a low budget scientific institution. However it does not seem to have a centralised headquaters with a perminent scientific staff, research being carried out by individual members. Their letter head carries an impressive list of qualified participants, and if these people are devoting large portions of their time to the UFO problem we should see some results before long. While the centre has done some investigation work on it's own, and runs a toll free telephone line, over which the police FBI etc. can report sightings reported to them, it has seen the need from the start for liason with amateur organisations to enable it to have reasonable

investigative potential. It is in this area where Hynek appears to have run into difficulties. Over the past few years he has been openly critical of some of the established organisations, who seem to have been reacting by a campaign of 'throwing mud in the hope that it will stick'. One writer, in MUFON'S magazine wrote: "As I understand it, Dr.Hynek, the Center for UFO Studies is mearly a room in your attic". At the same time the course that he is steering towards popularisation of the phenomenon with frequent TV appearences and his assocaition with the forthcoming film 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind' cannot make it easer for him to get through to his scientific colleagues. At present it is very difficult for scientists in America to take a sober interest in UFOs due to this intensive public interest, and due to the committment of the media to the extraterrestrial theory. One is left with the impression that the last thing that Hynek ought to be doing is fueling the public's emotional interest in the subject. It is interesting in this context to note that Close Encounters of the third Kind (To be released later this year) is being produced by the same team that produced 'Jaws'. Perhaps I should'nt pre-judge, the film could be objective, but the entire history of the American film industry argues on my side. There is a very real danger that 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind' could do for the UFO phenomenon what 'Jaws' did for sharks.

However, I think that Hynek's Center can come through these difficulties, and even at present, it has become a focal point for the more progressive and effective ufologists, those who do not fear that improved methods will reveal inadequacies in cherished beliefs or positions.

JAH.

REVIEW*REVIEW*REVIEW*REVIEW*REVIEW*REVIEW*REVIEW*REVIEW*REVIEW*REVIEW*REVIEW*REVIEW*

BUFORA's 'UFO INVESTIGATION' [1]

BUFORA's long awaited investigator's handbook, called 'UFO Investigation' has now been published and I recieved an advance copy hot off the press at the BUFORA conference. It is a veritible gold mine of useful information and investigating proceedures. It is highly recomended for all involved in active UFO investigation and takes the investigator through proceedures for investigating all cases from simple LITS, with a detailed section on missinterpretations, to the high strangeness landings with occupants or with physical traces. There are particularly useful sections on photography and on landing site proceedures. Other useful information includes addresses of BUFORA personnel and of official bodies, and lists of background reading. I do have some minor criticisms however: Firstly sociological and psycological aspects are almost totally ignored ; secondly, I strongly disagree with the technique, advocated in the handbook, of using identikit-type UFO shapes charts. There is simply no evidence that the phenomenon possesses that degree of internal consistancy. Criticisms aside, BUFORA is to be greatly complimented on this very valuable reference work, well worth it's £2.50 price tag.

MAGAZINES.

Skyskan's 'Alert' [2].

The few issues of this magazine published published by the Dublin based organisation, Skyskan, that we recieved early this year were comercially produced, containing advertisements, and intended to be sold on the streets. Both consisted largely of long,rambling,'pot boiler' type articals by the society's chairman; though smaller articals by other members of the society showed that they do not share Mr. O 'Donaghues nieve,evangelistic attitude to the phenomenon.

MUFOB. [3]

MUFOB is an independantly produced quarterly journal dealing mainly with the sociological and metaphysical aspects of ufology. Being an independantly produced journal,it manages to keep refreshingly clear of organisational politics and is not afraid to be contraversial. The Editors ruthlessly exclude the unjustified speculation and psudo-science that adds so much to the noise obscuring the signal in much of the UFO literature. This magazine is recomended to all thinking ufologists, and as a special bonus you get, with each issue, a part of the serialisation of Peter Rogerson's International Catalogue of type One Reports.

BUFORA Journal.[4]

This year the BUFORA Journal was severely cut back to enable funds to be channeled into more productive areas, such as the production of the investigator's handbook, new report forms and publication of papers from last years conference. Unfortunatly we are told that this is only a temporary measure and next year we will be back to the ridiculous situation of a'research' organisation spending almost half it's funds producing a magazine; the only actual function of which is to retain the interest of non-involved members. BUFORA should realise that the main function of a regular BUFORA publication should be the dessemination of detailed and documented research and investigation reports and that the BUFORA Journal is inherently unsuitable for this task.

NUFON's Northern UFO News and Northern Ufology.[5]

These two stenciled publications from the Northern UFO Network provide an interesting insight to the UFO scene in N. England. The 'News' is monthly and contains organisational news and sighting report summaries. Northern Ufology is periodical and leaves room for more detailed investigation reports and for theoretical articles. In both cases reproduction is rather poor, but as I have pointed out before, quality of content is much more important.

WUFOS's 'Skylink'[6]

The Wirral UFO Society's magasine 'Skylink' has been having problems with material to publish lately,and recient issues have been getting very thin.However most of the content is of a high quality and the magasine provides WUFOS members with good value for money,aswell as giving them a vehicle for the publication of investigation reports.

NOTES:-
1.Available from Jenny Randles at the NUFON address below.
2.Skyskan has now been disbanded and their magasine is unavailable.
3.MUFOB,11 Beverley Road,New Malden,SURREY,KT3-4AW.
4.BUFORA,6 Cairn Avenue,LONDON,W5-5HX (Available to members only).
5.NUFON,23 Sunningdale Drive,IRELAM,M30-- England.
6.WUFOS,760 New Chester Road,Bromborough,Wirral,L62-7HO.

FEATURES*FEATURES*FEATURES*FEATURES*FEATURES*FEATURES*FEATURES*FEATURES*FEATURES* ...

Viking Update. Miles Johnston.

At the time of writing (Late Dec'76)both Viking landers and orbiters are presently undergoing a 45 day 'sleep' period.All 4 spacecraft were placed on a red-uced operational status at the end of November,during the duration of the solar conjunction.This was because Mars is furthest away from us,and consequently the sun is between us and Mars.This means that radio transmission is greatly hampered.

However just before rundown,on the 25th of November,Einstein's Classical Theory of Relativity was tested.Radio energy should be bent a certain degree by gravity.The amount of bending was calculated theoretically.Then by taking specific measurements from the transmissions made by the orbiters and the landers,exact measurements were taken on the amount of delay and bending.These data fitted perfectly with the theory.

After all the excitement about whether there is or isn't life has died down,scientists are still uncertain .The conflicting and uncertain results obtained in the primary mission were dissappointing to most.This was simply because the conditions the experiments were prepared for are not exactly what had been expected.It is this and the fact that everything has gone so well,i.e. no major damage on landing(the seismometer on the first lander still is inoperative due to cover ejection system malfunction) , that mission director Calvin Broome has given the go ahead for reactivation of the spacecraft by the end of December.The mission extension is for 18 months,and this should give ample enough time for any confirmation on the life experiments.

Other goals in the extended mission are:-
1.Lowering of the second orbitor's periapsis,to give clearer definition photographs.

2. aneuvering of orbiter 1 for more data on Phobos (see later)
3. Excavation of a one foot deep trench. (see later)
4. Additional biology, organic and inorganic chemical analysis.
5. Attempt to uncage the seismometer of lander one.
6. Continuation of the global observations of water vapour

John and myself were fortunate enough to attend a unique 6,000mile phone in lecture with Dr. Soffen, the head of the scientist team at Pasedena. He managed to answer a score of questions, and explain them with the aid of prearranged colour slides and photographs, for no less than 45 minutes.

The picture so far:-

Atmospheric Data:-

The constituents of the pink atmosphere, 95% CO_2, 4.5% N_2, 1.5% Ar, 1% CO, and traces of kripton and neon. H_2O vapour was variable. Averages for surface pressure ranged from around 7 millibars nearly 8.5 millibars. This large variation of preesure was recorded in the first 53 sols, and a minimum of 6.5 millibars was recorded on sol 85. This was thought to have been due to depostion of CO_2 on the poles. This fact alone will help us determine the amount of CO_2 in the polar cap. However the poles are composed of water ice. The red atmosphere is due to light scatter by the large amount of particles in the atmosphere.

However pictures have revealed that large areas of the surface have been flooded by water. There is no licquid water now, but at the time, about 1 billion years ago, the .1 atmosphere pressure was sufficient to allow licquid water. Now that the water has evaporated, and deposited at the poles, it would have been thought that there have been vast soil errosion. Not so, although there are dust storms, it has been found that the soil has been held together by dipole moment interaction of the chargedc soil particles. This is due to the delta +ve and delta -ve dipoles in the water molecule. The charges from the oxgen and hydrogen atoms have been transposed to the surrounding soil particles. This has effected the soil experiments. More data on this is hoped from the five feet long, one foot deep, trench which both landers will be making. Both arms are reported healthy after the various snags of the first operational period. They have approximately 85 to 80% of their design life left.

PHOBOS:-

In February or March Orbiter 1 will be adjusted to give a close fly-by of Phobos at approximately 50Km. This will give data on the mass and density of the mysterious moon. The last pictures taken by Orbiter 2 in October, revealed a very strangely battered surface. They imply that this tiny moon (Principle diametres: 27, 21 and 19 Km.) was part of a much larger body that broke up. This is because of the fact that two thirds of the surface is peppered with relatively large craters, accompanied by long striations accross the surface, caused by crater ejecta falling back. They are all parallel and inclined at 30° to the equator. These are typical of the much larger masses of Mercury and the moon. The problem is that Phobos does not have sufficient gravity to warrent any ejecta falling back onto it's surface.

Serious problems are posed by long scratch type striations which cross the surface irrespective of the large craters and other features, only the small craters seem to interupt them. Two speculations on this are:

1) They were caused when phobos passed through a shower of small bodies.
2) They are caused by layers or strata of the rock which composes Phobos.

These questions, and that of the origin of both Phobos and Diemos, may be answered after the really close pictures come in.

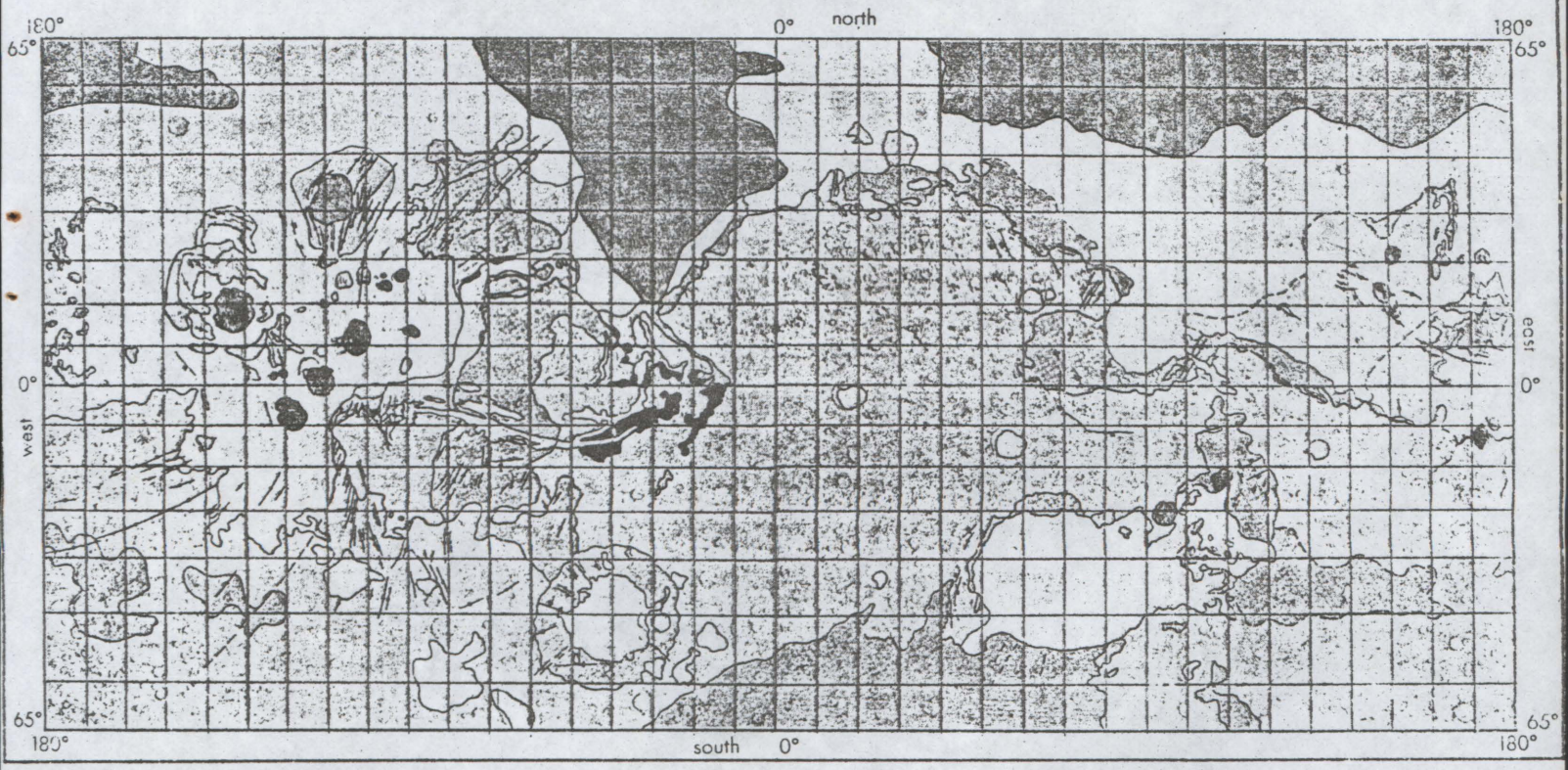
Biology.

The pyrolytic release experiment (detection of a release of CO_2) caused some excitement by giving a positive, and strongly positive result, however hopes that this was due to a biological process faded when the lander's mass spectrometer detected no organic compounds. The pyrolytic experiment will be repeated with greater variation in the conditions and this data compared with that obtained previously. On Lander 2 the experiment will be repeated at planet surface tempreture. If the results are the same, the initial results are probably due to chemical action. Some of the other experiments which also gave conflicting results will be repeated under new conditions.

The Surface: Geology.

There are no continents or oceans on Mars, just vast plains, heavily cratered in

GENERALIZED GEOLOGICAL MAP OF MARS BETWEEN 65° N AND 65° S



- channel deposits
- canyon deposits
- chaotic deposits
- knobby deposits
- grooved terrain material, coarse
- grooved terrain material, fine
- volcanic deposits
- sparsely cratered plains
- moderately cratered plains
- heavily cratered plains
- mottled cratered plain
- mountainous deposits
- cratered deposits mantled
- cratered deposits undivided
- faults, bar and ball on downthrown side
- graben, where faults mapped separately ball on downthrown block. where graben is narrow, shown by single line and ball
- rounded escarpment, caret points downhill
- low ridge resembling those on lunar maria
- lineament

the South, unlike the relativly free northern hemisphere. But other than this there is very little similarity with the Moon or Mercury. Mars is geologically alive. There are many volcanoes and rift valleys, eroded by the fierce Martian winds and the once-present liquid water. (The discovery of what are almost certainly dry river valleys was one of the first breakthroughs in the Viking mission.)

The largest of the volcanoes, probably the largest in the solar system. Nix Olympia - named after the classical home of the gods. No wonder: its shield is 500Km in diameter and over 23Km high.

Seasons.

Seasonal variations observed through telescopes were one reason why it was thaught life might exist on Mars. It was thaught that dark areas which moved, seasonally accross the planet were due to seasonal vegitation. This has proved unfounded: the areas are due to very severe and widespread duststorms. Windbourne dust erosion accounts for much of the harshness of the Martian features. Water eroded features are less abundant, but none the less still quite remarkable. There are large channels, like those in the Sahara desert, were flash floods have occured. There is much evidence that, at one time Mars's climate was much more favorable for life and that it may now be going through something like an ice-age.

Conclusion.

We have not discovered life on Mars; in stead we have found a planet which, in many respects is totally alien. So alien in fact that many of the experiments have had to be vastly modified. The soil largely consists of super-oxidised ferric material, created by organic-destroying ultra-violet radiation.

We have a planet which has a geological landscape totally unknown to us and we have no real clues as to how it got that way: a desolute bolder strewn desert.

In the polar ice-cap we have detected ice partical clouds and strata of ice and rock formations. This indicates that the climate has changed dramatically many times in the past. The processes involved are so alien that we cannot even positivly say whether it has ever rained on Mars.

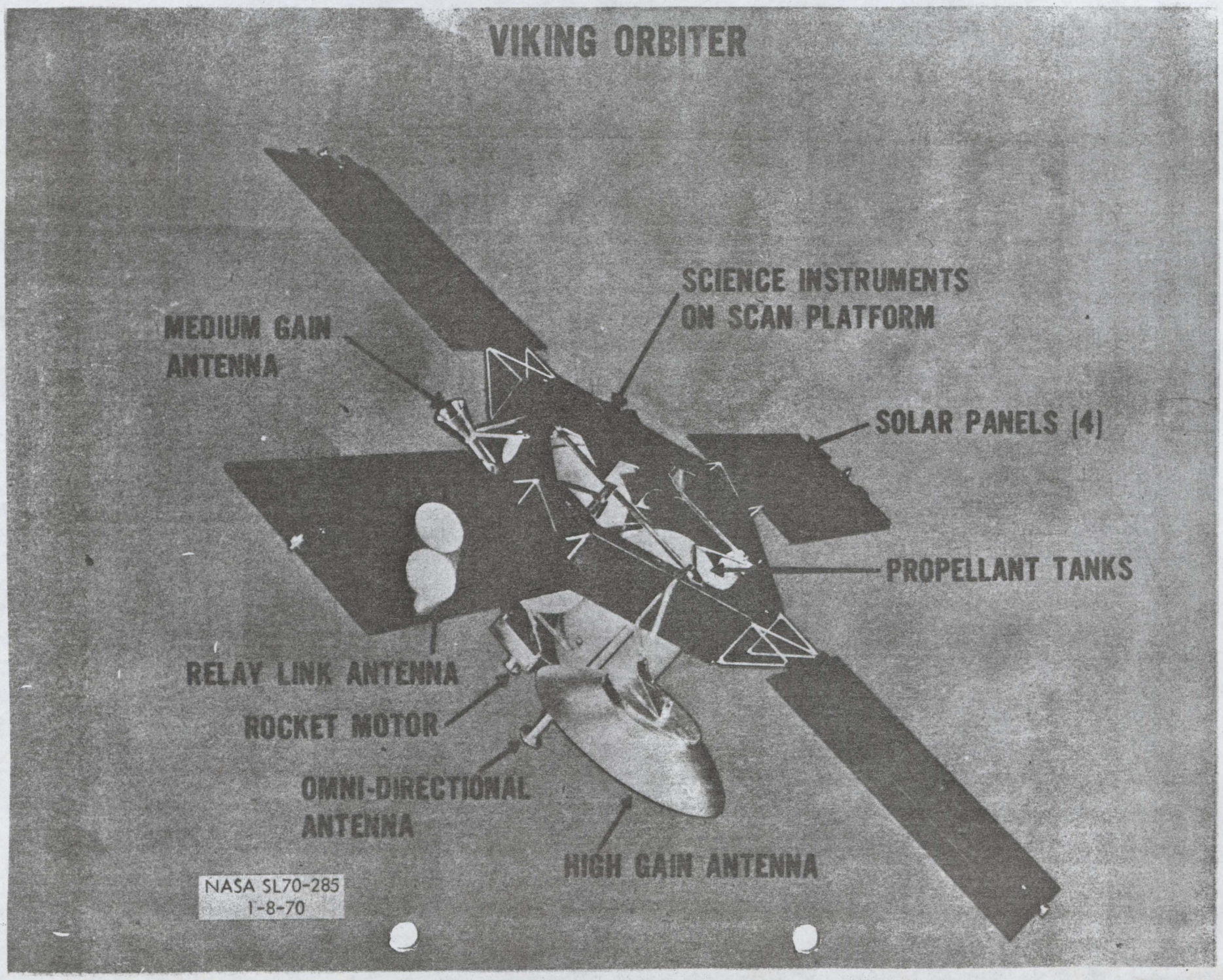
Even if Mars does not contain life, it certainly is not dead.

New Directions in Ufology: Socioufology. John Hind.

Continuing our series on new directions in ufology, in this article I will look at a very recient and still rather nebulus field that promises to open up a whole new aspect. While the proponents of instrumented ufology must pre-suppose the fundimental explananitary hypothesis that UFO's represent, to put it in the words of a past chairman of BUFORA, "genuine extraterrestrial hardware", the socioufologists' field has equal validity no matter what the ultimate explanation turns out to be.

You won't find the word 'socioufology in any dictionary, the chief reason being that I have just invented it; so I will excercise the word inventer's perogative and define my invention: Socioufology is the study of the effects of the UFO phenomenon on human populations, and vice versa. We could trace socioufology back to the early days of the US Airforce's clumsy attempts to show that the UFO phenomenon was mearly a kind of social fantasy effect, an approach that failed largely because the myth could be traced back to individual, personal experiences rather than conforming to the sort of vague awareness continuum that confronts, for example, students of metaphysics. The beginnings of a more scholarly socioufology were laid, predictably, by Jacques Vallee, that vangaurd of ufological thaught in his third book, 'Passport to Magonia'. Vallee's Magonia came as a shock to many ufologists, for as Vallee put it in his introduction, the book was intended to 'build a bridge' between folklore, in particular the fairy-faith in Celtic countries, and modern UFO occupant reports. Vallee was not trying to say that fairies were visiting aliens, nor was he trying to say that UFOs are built and piloted by fairies. What he was trying to do was to point out the great similarities between historical cultural myth structures and the modern UFO problem; in short, to show that it might be instructive to study the total UFO phenomenon as a modern extension of folklore.

It is necessary to side track a bit here, because I realise that this approach will be abhorant to many ufologists who will point out that it contains no hope of providing a mechanistic explanation for individual sighting reports, and is consequently


VIKING ORBITER
SCIENCE INSTRUMENTS ON SCAN PLATFORM
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SOLAR PANELS (4)
PROPELLANT TANKS
RELAY LINK ANTENNA
ROCKET MOTOR
OMNI-DIRECTIONAL ANTENNA
HIGH GAIN ANTENNA
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un-scientific. This comment is entirely fair and I do believe that all processes and phenomena have an ultimate, mechanistic, reductionist explanation. However some phenomena will always manafest themselves that cannot be explained in terms of current theoretical models. Indeed, there are some phenomena which it is theoretically impossible to understand with the certainty of a full mechanistic explanation. For this reason it is necessary to work along lines which may not be strictly scientific in cases were present science is inadequate, if we wish to gain an understanding of the subject and as an indirect route to a more rigerous solution. While I believe that the'scientific' explanation is ultimatly the fundimental one, this does not mean that other solutions may not be just as valid.

One of the points that Vallee brings out in 'Magonia' is that UFO reports seem, to a certain extent, to be a function of the society that reports them. For example in the early 1900's they were technological Heath Robinson type airships containing slightly eccentric human inventors who wished to file patents on their inventions. At the end of the Second World War we have the'Ghost Rockets' in Scandanavia, only in the 1950's do we get the modern UFOs which seem, superficialy,to be explicable in terms of extra-terrestrial visitors. To take Vallee's argument a stage further , it seems that, at the moment, annother metamorphosis is underway and with decreasing human interest in technology modern UFO reports tend to speek of experiences that are less physical.[1] The behaviour of the UFOs in the air appear to contradict our understanding of the physical universe. They take off at impossible accelerations completely noiselessly; pass through the sound barrier with no sonic boom; execute impossible turns; explode and re-form; dissappear into thin air; appear visually but not on radar, or not on film. The maddening thing is that they are not even consistant in their impossibility: sometimes they do appear on film, or on radar; leave physical traces; make ear-shattering noises. The worst thing of all is that they are almost never seen to move for any great distance in a horizontal plane. In other words they don't seem to find it necessary to travel between the positions at which they are sighted.

If the behaviour of the'spaceships' seems bizzar,what about the behaviour of the occupants themselves? : They come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes; sometimes they wear breathing gear, but sometimes they don't; they exchange water for pancakes; they pilfer farm animals; sometimes they talk to witnesses, sometimes they telepath, sometimes they cant communicate at all and when they do communicate it invariably seems to be to say something mundane or illogical or both. Anyone who thinks that he can explain all of this in terms of simplistic theories of 'Genuine Extraterrestrial Hardware' simply has not thought it out clearly. This does not mean that UFOs are not extraterrestrial, nor does it mean that they are. The inadiquacy of the simple extraterrestrial theories is that they try to explain the motives and reasoning of 'alien' intellegences in terms of the interpreters intellegence or worse still in terms of natural laws.

Any theory that includes the involvement of a super-intellegent or an alien entity system has an inherent uncertainty that is intrinsic in the basic logic of the situation.[2] Aime Michel puts this very well in 'The Humanoids' : "Although we all willingly admit that ufological activity reveales a level of thaught that is superhuman it seems therefore that the majority of us persist in not seeing the inevitible implication of such super-humanity: namely that it will always include a part which is incomprehensible, and will always display what to us are apparently contridictions." When we reconise that the 'intellegence' may not only be superhuman, but also alien, the possibility of being able to fully understand it in simplistic terms receeds still further. Should we give up then? I think not: it is this very problem that leads many people to think that ufology could provide a very fundimental breakthrough in our systems for understanding our place in the universe.

However we look at it, we can say with almost complete certainty that UFOs manifest or represent some form of intellegence, though in a number of ways it is possible that this intellegence is human.

These problems, which are essentially of a sociological nature, suggest that ufologists could gain much from looking at the sociological aspects of the phenomenon. However, he must beware the answers that he gets from sociologists who study the problem. Statements such as: 'The UFO phenomenon is a modern myth: an antidote to an increasingly unmanagable technological society' are all very well and may be quite true within their own context but they are not - as they are often thought to be, even

in the highest circles - fundimental solutions. They deal with the phenomenon as a continuum and are not capable of explaining the mechanism of individual sightings.

The UFO problem seems to be too complex to be dealt with in terms of the simple theoretical models, especially as it seems to have a component which is capable of adapting to our own way of thinking about it, as a function of time. Instead we should discard theoretical models and working hypothesis. We should also investigate the varience of the phenomenon as a function of the society or social context in which it was reported to enable us to decide whether this effect is attributable to noise introduced between perception and the writing of the report or whether it is an intrinsic property of the phenomenon. The latter would not, however, be incompatable with a theory that included the involvement of an extra-human intellegence.

NOTES.

1) Compare modern cases in: Vallee and Hynek: 'The Edge of Reality'; R&J Blum: 'Beyond Earth:Man's Contact with UFOs' and in FSR post 1971 with cases in older books c.f. Keyhoe: 'Flying Saucers Fron Outer Space'; J&C Lorentzen: 'UFOs Over The Americas' and early editions of FSR etc.

2) I do not know wether the problem of the intellegence of cultures 'looking in' from the outside has ever been looked at by an anthropologist. We can see that it will be a function, not only of the average intellegence of the individuals, but of the efficiency of communications between individuals and of the technological advancement of the society as well. (A man with a computer may seem more intellegent than a man of comparable individual intellegence without one.)

SIGHTING INVESTIGATIONS*SIGHTING INVESTIGATIONS*SIGHTING INVESTIGATIONS*SIGHTING INVESTIGATI

Sighting Summaries

There are quite a number of sightings to report in this issue, and one sighting, and one sequence of isghtings have been singled out for detailed treatment. We start by giving summaries of some of the 'other' sightings and statistics on reports not worth summarising.

You will notice that an extra classification has appeared in the statistics section, that of 'LITS'. In previous issues the statistics section was used only for positivly, or high probability identified man-made or natural phenomena, all the unidentifieds being summarised. However it has become necessary to introduce a filter to remove some very un-interesting light-in-the-sky reports which we have neither the personpower nor the time to press to a final identification but for which we feel sure such an identification exists. To some pureists this may seem like 'US Airforce tactics', but we defend ourselves by pointing out that firstly these reports are on file for anyone who finds a use for them and secondly that we have rigerously defined the classification LITS to remove the likelyhood of ambiguity: a LITS report is one that offers no information bits with regard to the claimed object with the exception of an estimated or measured magnetude, a colour (single and invarient) and a position and/or flight path consistant with a trajectorial or linear motion.

Statistics.

LITS: 2.
Hoax: 1. (Actualy a misinterpretation of a fictional article in a school magazine by a correspondant of ours.)
Satilite 1.

Other Sightings.

REPORT NO. N.30
DATE: Unknown, Jan. 1965 or66. WITNESS: Nr. TE Crawford (Age 15or16 at time of sighting.)

LOCATION: Lurgan, N.I.
WITNESSES ACCOUNT:

It was a cold winter's night in Jan. about 9.00P.M., I first noticed the object comming from the south. They were two lights,just like stars but both were in parillel with each other and moveing very fast towards the north in quite an abrupt zig-zag fashion making no sound. Icould still see them through the clouds for a few seconds before they were hidden. they seemed quite high up.

Further Details.

The objects were visible for between 6 and 10 seconds and passed directly overhead from an elevation of about 45° through 90° to 45° giving a total subtended arc of about 90°. The brightness was about that of a bright star. The zig-zaging was very abrupt, the angle of the direction changes being acute at about 20°. At the direction changes the objects appeared to stop for a fraction of a second. The objects were about 3-4 full moon diameters appart and the witness thinks thinks that he could see stars between them.

CONCLUSION:

The behaviour of these objects is by no means unique, we have two other reports of objects behaving in a similar manner (N 8 and N 9). However no possible explanation comes to mind. The case is not accorded a very high strangeness since only one factor (the trajectory) is out of the ordinary.

PROBABILITY: 3 STRANGENESS: 3.

N.31.

TIME AND DATE: Midnight, 15/4/1975.

WITNESS: Seamus O'Boyle, age 18, Civil Servent. LOCATION: Andersonstown, Belfast.

WITNESSES ACCOUNT:

"I was using my telescope to look at Gamma Virgo, when something in the sky caught my eye. In the S.W. I saw three boomerang shaped objects flying in'V' formation, going in a N.W. direction. They were very fuzzy and seemed to be gold in colour. There were no lights on them, and yet I could still see their colour. They were completely silent, and the two end ones seemed to catch up and drop back from the first one, yet they kept their uniform formation. They moved very quickly for only about a second before they passed over my house."

FURTHER DETAILS:

The witness observed the objects with the naked eye, and was indoors at the time of the sighting. The objects were somewhat larger in 'wing span' than the full moon. The witness is an amateur astronomer.

CONCLUSION:

It seems possible, particularly in view of the extreemly short duration of the sighting, that low flying birds were responsible. At this time of year there would be many lights about that could have lit up the birds. The idea of great speed could be due to a mental impression that the objects were large and high up.

PROBABILITY: 4 STRANGENESS:2.

N.32.

TIME AND DATE: 20.05 28/11/75.

WITNESS: Mr. J. McFadden, age 19, a medical photographer, and Miss Margaret Gibson.

LOCATION: N. Belfast.

WITNESSES ACCOUNT:

We saw an object from Earlscourt St. Belfast on Friday November 28 1975. It was sighted at 20.05 and travelled in a path between 15-20° above the horizon from SW to SE, the duration was 10 seconds. The object was brighter than Jupiter (it's stellar magnetude must have been about -2.0) and it had a yellowish orange colour. It had no other flashing lights and no sound was heard, meaning that it was not a helicopter or an aeroplane. The object had been seen by us both several weeks earlier, proving it could not have been a weather balloon. On phoning Mr. Howard Miles, Director of the satilite section of the British Astronomical Association, he said that no satilites were visible at 20.05 and that no satilite in orbit was as bright as magnetude -2.0.

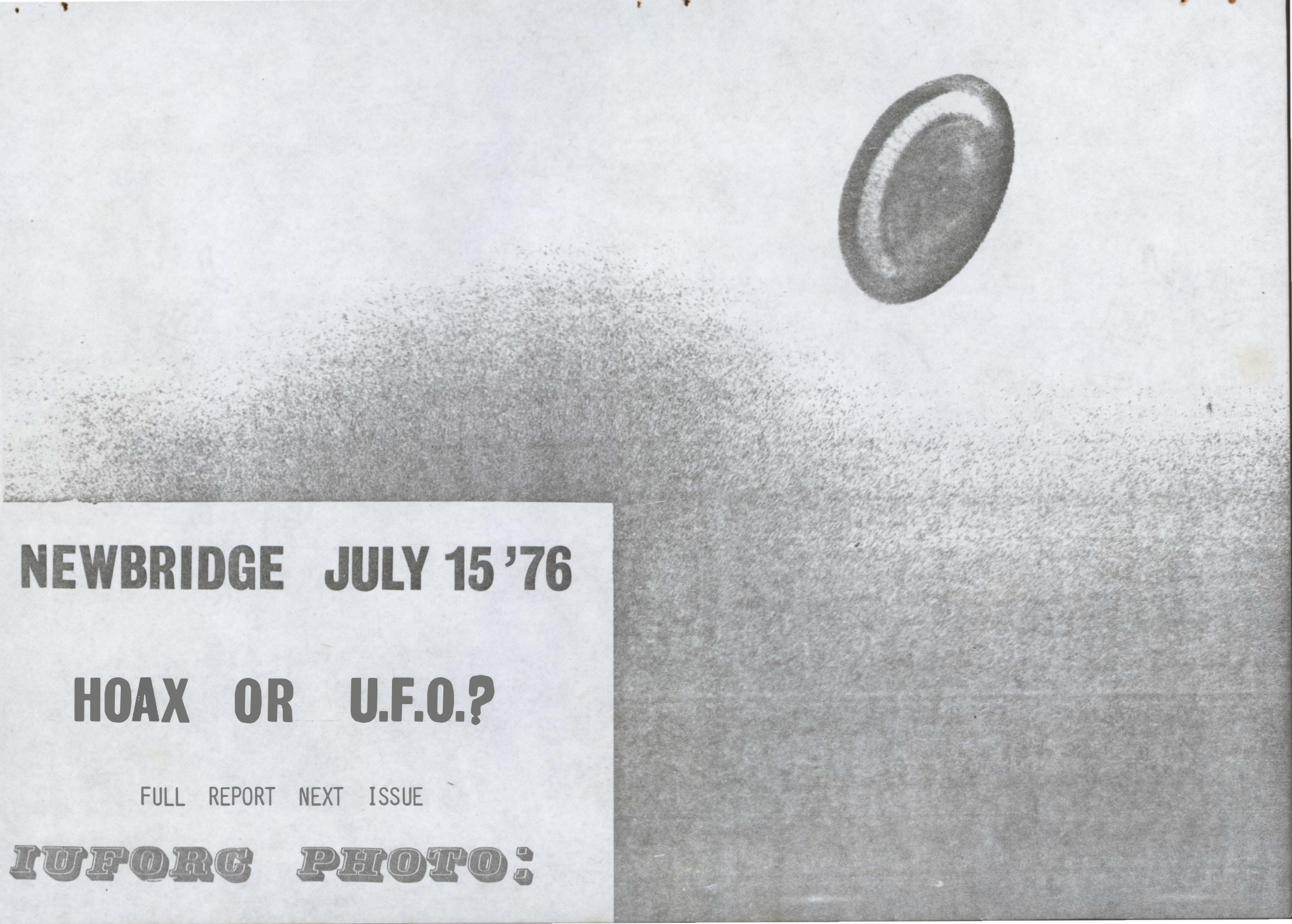
CONCLUSION:

The repeater aspect is strongly suggestive of a satilite, however Mr Miles is an emmenent authority on such objects and we must take his word for it that it was not.

PROBABILITY: 4 STRANGENESS: 3.

Reports catalogued: N.33 in SI report no.4.
N.34 to N.41 in SI report no. 5.

An interesting photographic case is under investigation from Naas: It yielded ten very clear frames. One profesional photographer whom we asked to look at it, said that he would stake his reputation that they were genuine; the negitaves have been sent to BUFORA for analysis, and we will await their report before commiting ourselves. We will have a full report on this interesting case in the next issue



NEWBRIDGE JULY 15 '76

HOAX OR U.F.O.?

FULL REPORT NEXT ISSUE

IUFORC PHOTO:

S.I. Report No.4 Case No. N.33.

A Close Encounter Near Ballymena.

TIME AND DATE: 21.30-22.00 BST August 11 1976.
WITNESSES: A Mother, identified as Mrs.E., and family of three, comprising an 18 year old daughter, Evelyn and two eight year old sons.
LOCATION : About 7 miles out of Ballymena, on the T.7.
PROBABILITY: 5 STRANGENESS: 6
INTRODUCTION:

We have reproduced the investigator's interview report in full. The only thing that we would like to add at this point is to comment on the witnesses rather emotional reaction to the sighting. The following is a reproduction of a letter writen about three weeks after the incident.

"I have decided to write to you because I have been so upset about the thing we saw in the sky on 11 August at 9.30. It seemed to want to come to my car. I was comming from Portrush with my twin boys and eighteen year old daughter. It was dark and It was very well lit up. I have never seen such a light, and so bright, I was frightened in case it was comming to burn us up. My little boys started to cry. It seemed to want to come to my car. I turned the wireless off in case it was drawing it to us. But it must have been something from annother planet because no-one could want such a white light. It was so strong and bright, so strong it seems to be some sort of object that works by light alone."

INVESTIGATORS REPORT:

1. Information was obtained in an interview (duration about 3 hours) at the witnesses home. Mrs E. and her 18 year old daughter, Evelyn, both of whom, with Mrs E's two young sons, were witness to the object, were present. Also present was Mrs E's husband, a haulage contractor. Additional information was obtained by driving over the strech of road where the sighting took place.

2. The Witnesses.

The family is a very normal one living in a peaceful council estate on the outskirts of Ballymena, a small town about fourty miles North of Belfast. Mrs.E is a housewife and part time social helper. Both main witnesses found it difficult to remember and to describe the details and were frequently in dissagreement. However,for these and other reasons, I feal that they are describing a sighting which had a genuine effect on them, as best they can, bearing in mind the time-lag between sighting and interview. However, because of the time-lag, and of the in-experteese of the witnesses, I think that we must leave a wide margin fo error, particularly as to discriptive detail. The two boys were very young, and the one that I talked to was unable to be of much help.

3. Details of Sighting.

The four witnesses were traviling southward from Portrush to Ballymena on the T-7 at 21.30 on August 11 1976 and were about 7 miles out of Ballymena. Shortly after hearing the 9.30pm time signal on the radio, a very bright object descended rapidly into their field of view, settleing at an elevation of about 20° and visible out of the top left hand corner of the windscreen. It appeared to shadow the car for about three miles remaining to the left (East) of it and somewhat in front. By this time all the witnesses were very frightened, and the two boys were crying. Mrs. E. had slowed the car to about 15kph. Eventually she brought the car to rest on the hard shoulder about three miles out of Ballymena. All this time the object had been moving with them- 'Bobing like a bubble'. After they stoped the car the object appeared to rize virticaly upward into (or behind) a cloud and it could still be seen shinning through the cloud. At this point Evelyn reached for a pair of binoculars and trained them on the cloud. She says that she could distinguish a very bright ray effect, but no outline of the actual object. After less than one minute in the cloud the object descended again very rapidly and disappeared. There is disagreement as to how it did this: Mrs.E says it receeded very rapidly into the distance, and Evelyn says that one minute it was there and the next it was gone. Neither was very sure of this, both agree that it happened very rapidly. They did not notice whether cars passed them during the sighting, though this would be expected since it is a fairly major road. Also, there are many small farm houses in the area.

After the witnesses had recovered they turned the car arround, drove back about five miles and retraced their steps in the hope of seeing the object again. They could not explain the logic of this action, which I found strange in view of their fright. They did not arrive home until about 23.30 and this is vouched for by Mr.E.

I followed this up carefully in view of the time discrepency (Hill-type amnesic period no doubt in mind), but the witnesses did not seem to find this odd.

5. The Object.

Descriptions of the object generally agree that it was large, very radient white and brighter than the moon, but not dazzeling. (It must be remembered that at all times the object was observed through tinted car windows.) There is agreement that it was almost a disc, but horizontally slightly elongated, a bit like an egg. As to size there was great variation of description. Both agree that it was very much bigger than the apparant size of the full moon. (Mrs.E. was shown an almost full moon in much the same conditions of light-twilight and cloud, and in much the same position as the object was, during the reconstruction of the sighting. She stated that it was much smaller than, and in no way similar to the object.). Other descriptions of the size included: "Looked about the size of a car if it was in the sky" "Looked about the same size as that roof"(About 12m at 25m). While these descriptions are almost meaningless, they do give an idea of how big an impression the object made on the witnesses.

5. Effects on, and beliefs of, the witnesses.

All witnesses admitt to being very scared during the sighting, and again we get the distinct impression that the witnesses thaught that the object was awaire of them. There was a camera with a telephoto lens in the boot of the car but Mrs.E. says that she was too 'paralysed with fear to go and get it. During the interview she continually asked questions such as 'Do you think it was comming for us', 'do you think it did not want me to take a photo of it'. The anthropomorphic treatment here may not imply that she thinks it was under intellegent control because she expressed the opinion that 'No-one could have lived in there, it was so bright it must have been very hot'. However at one point she did express a clear belief in E-T life in connection with annother case that we were investigating. She also seems to be sympathetic towards the supernatural, believing that some families may be more sensitive and able to see things that others cant. Evelyn has had a possible ghost experience.

6. Astromomical Note.

The moon would have been nearly full at the time of the sighting. This investigator considers it unlikely, but not beyond the bounds of possibility, that the moon could account for this sighting.

CONCLUSION.

While there are several possible explanations for this interesting sighting, all involving considerable ammounts of imaginative effort on the part of the witnesses, this case will remain useful as it illustrates the reactions of fear and non-comprehension of witnesses faced with something that they are convinced is of a super-normal nature.

S.I. Report No.5 — The Naas Area Sightings.

By John Hind and Tom Higgins. — Cases No. N-34 to 41.

Introduction.

Over the past year it has become obvious that an above average number of 'top end LITS' (LITS with above average strangeness) have been reported from the vicinity of Naas, a small industrial town about thirty miles SW of Dublin. While it could be argued that this might be due to the fact that we have an active investigator in the area, this argument could be turned arround since Tom Higgins first became interested in UFO's after a sighting from his home, in Naas.

The story involves several observations by the authors, and because of this we feel that some discussion of the problems of observations by people who will inevitably be superficially classed as 'UFO Buffs'. We both know how we would react if someone who we knew to be intensly interested in UFOs, reported, whilst on an investigation of a sighting, seeing an object closely similar in description and in behaviour to the one that they were investigatiog! All the witnesses, at the time of the sighting had a strong emotional impression of the strangeness of the event and this impression is backed up by the reaction of an entirely independant witness of the same event. All witnesses also had a strong impression- which sounds uniquely ridiculous on paper- that the sighting was organised, or centered arroundthem. This is backed up by some superficial evidence and a precognetive aspect. However, these impressions are strictly subjective and are not justified by the 'objective strangeness' of the individual events. We have made a conscious effort to concentrate on the strictly objective aspects of all the sightings. To do this we have treated our own reports in exactly the same way as reports from others. However, in the interests of honisty we have felt it necessary to present also the less tangeable aspects of these reports, and we hope that this will not seem indulgent.

This aspect of the investigation has that aspect of madening intangibility so frequently encountered in this field in that much of it's strangeness is only expressible in terms of co-incidence. In all cases we have interpreted these aspects as just that: co-incidence.

While the central aspect of the Naas phenomenon seems to be sightings of enigmatic red 'fireballs' it is necessary to set the scene by first dealing with some of the earlier sightings from that area.

N-34.

DATE AND TIME: Aprox. 23.30, 19 June 1976. LOCATION: Celbridge, Nr. Naas.

WITNESS: Paddy Galvin, 45, a painter.

WITNESSES ACCOUNT:

I was on my way home from Rathcoffey on my push bike when I rounded a bend and was blinded by a bright white light in an ajacent field. It looked to be about 500-600 ft high. I did not see the body of the object, just the light. It dissappeared as if someone had switched it off.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

According to the investigator, the witness was quite shaken up by the event, but judging from the available information it seems likely that what he observed was a light shinning on a low cloud, particularly in view of the short duration of the sighting.

PROBABILITY- 3 STRANGENESS- 2.

N-35.

DATE AND TIME: 20.00, 20/6/1976 LOCATION: Allenwood, Nr.Naas.

WITNESS: Name and address on file.

WITNESSES ACCOUNT:

I was standing outside my back door when a bright yellowish light travelling at high speed passed overhead from east to west.

I had no idea as to what it might have been, and I remain extreemly puzzled. I heard a loud hissing noise just before it disappeared from view, but there is a remote possibility that it might not have been connected with the object. There is no sound in the deep country which might account for it. I would say that it was

almost certainly connected with the object. Definitely, the object was not a plane or a helicopter.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The object was described as round, yellow in colour and about half the size of the full moon. It was observed from about 45° above the horizon in the East to over the horizon in the west, and was only seen for a few seconds. The most tempting explanation is a metior, as the burn up of this could produce the hissing sound. However checking with astronomical sources have revealed no specific identificalion.

PROBABILITY: 4 STRANGENESS: 2

The second series of reports, bearing a high degree of consistancy as regards the description of the objects and their behaviour, were brought to the notice of our investigator by the local Garde, who kindly gave us a photocopy of the log entries compiled by the policemen who had investigated the sightings originally. These investigations, however proved none too accurate.

N-36.

DATE AND TIME: 22.00, 1/7/1976. LOCATION: Sallins,Nr. Naas.

WITNESSES: Three adult brothers (Names and address on file.)

DETAILS OF SIGHTING:

The witnesses observed a flame red cloud shaped object from their home near Sallins, about the apparent size of a tennis ball at arms length, and very bright, about as bright as the sun. The witness says that he observed the object for about 15 minutes, though great accuracy should not be assigned this figure. The investigator did not have a high opinion of the witnesses' integrity or ability, but the low strangeness argues for a basis in fact. There are a number of possible explanations, the report is realy only included because in might tie in with the next one, being in the same locality, and only about an hour earlier on the same night.

PROBABILITY: 3 STRANGENESS: 2.

N-37

DATE AND TIME: 23.25BST 1/7/1976. LOCATION: Sallins, Nr.Naas.

WITNESSES: 50 yr. old shopkeeper and his wife.

WITNESSES ACCOUNT OF SIGHTING:

"I was out for a walk with my wife, when we saw a red light like a beacon, about 100ft high and about a mile away. As it came down to earth it sounded like a vacuum cleaner being switched off. I walked on further to my house and I watched again. The object came up, moved a short distance, landed again. The red lights switched off and white lights came on and went out after a few minutes. This was the last I saw of it."

ADDITIONAL DETAILS:

The size of the object, established from a reconstruction was about ½cm to 1cm at arms length, or somewhat larger than the full moon. The most obvious explanation, a helicopter, was checked out and proved negitive by the Garde. Later the witnesses discovered a mark in a field about 1.5 km to the west of his position, and in about the direction in which he claimed the object landed. If this is were theobject landed, the witnesses could not have observed it while on the ground, due to the lie of the land. The mark was subsequently investigated: it was a roughly elyptical entirely denuded patch in a large rich pasture. It was on a north facing incline of about 5° and the patch, which was very well defined, was 8m on the major axis and 4.5 on the minor. There were no traces of groth whatsoever within this area. However, particularly since the farm hand questioned on the mark was 'almost certain' that the mark had been there well before the sighting, we are inclined to think that any connection with the sighting is unlikely. The wife later described the object as an ' irregular, slightly elongated, blood red light which slowly drifted down.

With the exception of the later white light seen this sighting is highly similar to those reported later.

PROBABILITY 4 STRANGENESS 5.

N-38.

DATE AND TIME: About Midnight, BST 5/7/1976. LOCATION: Nr. Sallins.

WITNESSES: Mr Micheal Ryan, a Police Officer, and his sister Mary, a civil servant.

WITNESSES ACCOUNT OF SIGHTING:

"I saw a very bright red oval shaped object in the sky at about midnight. I thaught it was about 100ft in diameter and its altitude was about 200ft. I was heading North in my car, and this object was on my left (West). I had the object in sight for about 15 seconds. I did not stop the car at that particular time. When I turned left at a crossroads and looked in the direction of the object it was gone It was a fine, clear night and the stars were visible in the sky. Earlier there had been some claps of thunder, but nothing very much."

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The object was 'bright red' and larger than the full moon, it was well defined, but only observed for a short time before the movement of the car placed it behind some trees. The elevation was placed at about 30°. The transitivity of the observation makes it difficult to evaluate, however it's similarity to the last sighting makes it interesting.

PROBABILITY 6 STRANGENESS 3

The next two sightings both happened on 31 october and involve personal observations, highly similar to the above sightings, by centre investigators. We will present these in the usual manner, and then give some of the background.

N.39.

DATE AND TIME: 19.15 31 October 1976. LOCATION: Sallins Nr. Naas.

WITNESSES: John Hind, Tom Higgins, Chris Gaffney, Brendan Meddler.

WITNESS'S ACCOUNT (John Hind, shortly after sighting.):

We were outside (the witness in the 'landing'case)'s shop when Tom Higgins drew our attention to an object in the sky. I first observed it at an elevation of about 15° in a direction N.E. of my position.

It was a diffuse but intense mid-red colour, nearly perfectly circular and about half the apparent magnetude of the full moon. It was steady and I could detect no flickering or pulsating. It slowly descended, seemed to be floating down at a speed which seemed to diminish shortly before it dissapeared behind the tree line. About ½ min later my attention was again drawn to an exactly similar object. My impression but only an impression, is that this second object was performing a steep trajectory (about 60° to the horizontal), but that I first observed it at the apex of that trajectory. It came down and disappeared in a very similar manner to the first object.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

At the time of the sighting we were all in John Hind's mini car, having just arrived to interview a witness. As soon as the first object was sighted we all got out of the car and John Hind grabed the polaroid camera that we had used to photograph the alleged landing site and had time to take one shot of each object. Unfortunatly the camera was not set up very well and the shots are inconclusive. We attempted to locate the point of landing (or of launch) of the objects but were unsuccessful. All discussion of the sighting was prevented until individual report forms had been completed. These were consistant to a high degree.

STRANGENESS 2.

N-40.

DATE AND TIME: 22.10, 31/10/1976. LOCATION: Naas/Dublin Rd. about 2 miles out out of Naas.

WITNESSES: John Hind, Chris Gaffney, Brendan Meddler.

WITNES'S ACCOUNT (John Hind, shortly after sighting.)

"We were driving along the Naas/Dublin road at about 100kph when the driver (myself) and the front seet passenger spotted a very bright red object over the road, exactly central, directly in front of us. It was initialy at an elevation of about 40°. We pulled in rapidly and stopped on the hard shoulder and I remained in the car observing the object while Chris and Brendan got out and disentangled the camera. The object was moving, very slowly, in a horizontal plane accross the road and

appeared to undulate slightly as it drifted in a northerly direction. It was about the same magnetude as the full moon and blood red(almost exactly the same colour as a traffic light). It moved horizontally for a distance about 10-20 times it's own diameter and then started to descend at a very steep angle (about80°) still directly over the road, at arate of about 1° every two seconds. None of the witnesses is sure of how the object dissapeared; it was my impression that it faded out while at an elevation of about 5°, though the others think it dissapeared behind a small hump in the road. Meanwile Chris had taken two photos of the object. After the sighting we noticed that annother car was pulled in on the hard shoulder about 100m ahead of us. When we reached the car, on foot, it's one occupant, a man, was visibly shaken. Although it was at least a minute since the object had dissapeared his hands were still in the driving position on the wheel and his gaze was fixed on the point were the object had dissapeared. The car engine was still running. We had to address him several times before he responded and he was clearly too excited or disturbed to give a coherent description, though he made it quite clear that the reason for his stopping was the same as ours. We got him to write his name and address on a piece of paper, it was only later, when we examined this in the light that we found it to be quite indecipherable." (We have been unable to trace this man).

Further Details:

The photos in this case were of a much better quality, showing a clear red spot, but with other, spurious images. The reason for this is interesting, though only anecdotal, and we would be unwilling to ascribe it to anything but co-incidence. Before we left Naas, Chris Gaffney announced that he had a distint 'premonition' that we would see 'the object' again. Particularly as Chris is not given to predictions, of a pshycic nature everyone was somewhat incredulus, however, more than half in jest Chris was presented with the polaroid camera which had been focussed at infinity and set for maximum exposure. Thus it was entirely due to Chris's'premonition' that better results were achieved in the second set of pictures than in the first.

For comparison, a shot was taken of the near full moon the next night; this proved to be of comparable magnetude.

STRANGENESS 5.

The considerable co-incidence between these observations and the almost identical objects that we were investigating at the time is very striking. For obvious reasons we were even more scrupulus than usual when following up possible explanations for these sightings. Flaresand metioric fireballs were considered the most probable explanations, but we first checked with nearby Dublin airport's radar, they had logged no unidentified blips. After checking with several astronomical contacts fireballs were considered unlikely due to the liesurely motion and to the change in direction, but, particularly as the sightings fall near to a metior shower maxima, this hypothesis could not entirely be ruled out. A more likely explanation seemed to be a paracute flare (an ordinary flare or firework was ruled out due to the duration of the sighting). Firstly, we showed that the launch point for the flares could not have been the same increasing the co-incidence factor. (Nor could the launch point have been at sea, we were much too far inland). Secondly we checked with the Met. office and found that the wind was southerly up to at least 500ft (no direction available for higher). This would directly oppose the object's flight path.

We must mention that the sightings were on the night of haloween, which is almost universally celebrated in the Celtic Countries by the use of pyrotechnics, however fireworks have been strictly banned in Ireland for nearly three years now. A check with the police revealed that there had been no illicit or licenced firework displays reported.

One final sighting was reported by Thomas Higgins, substanciated by his mother and independantly by his young niece is particularly interesting since it enables fairly accurate parametric calculations.

N-41.

DATE AND TIME: 19.00 GMT 5/1/1977. LOCATION: Naas, Eire.

WITNESSES: Tom Higgins, Mrs. Eileen Higgins, Lauraine Higgins (Age 11).

WITNESS's DESCRIPTION:

I was passing a front window when a light caught my eye. At first I thaught it was a reflection on the glass so I opened the window. The light remained were it was

and began to flash a variety of colours (Blue to Green to red) It wavered slowly from side to side and seemed to bob up and down slightly. I thaught that it seemed to rotate though I could not be certain. I went down stairs and called my mother to look at the object. She agreed at once that it was something out of the ordinary. We watched it for several minutes, then it went dark and slowly went down. I hurried to the area, but found nothing out of the ordinary when I got there.

Further Details:

When the object descended it was clearly visible in front of a line of trees. But for this effect the sighting could be explained as a bright star or planet with atmospheric defraction accounting for the colour changes. This is still felt to be the most likely explanation, however assuming that the former factor is not due to missinterpretation we can do some parametric calculations. The results are as follows: (it should be noted that these results are dependant on the object's being in front of the trees.)

Absolute maximum distance of object	120m	± 4m.
Absolute maximum altitude of object.	60m	± 3m.
Absolute maximum diameter of object.	3m	± 1m.

Conclusion.

At the time of writing reports are still comming in from Naas, and our Dublin team has under investigation at least two cases were the object reported was a red fireball. We still feel that a specific natural explanation is most likely for these cases, however as yet, none has come to light.

EDITORS NOTE.

I would like to apologise for the ommission, due to lack of space of the regular artical 'Organisation News' compiled by Miles Johnston and Chris Gaffney. This artical will reappear in the next issue, and I will just summerise some of the news items that they dealt with:

CHRIS GAFFNEY would like to note the formation of a new Dublin group, called Spectrum, after the disbandment of Skyskan. The rest of us would like to wish this new organisation luck, and greater longevity than Skyskan! We look foward to co-operation with their investigators.

MILES JOHNSTON would like to note that BUFORA (Ireland) has now been recognised as an official branch of BUFORA. Also the formation of two new organisations in England : BUDEC, the British Ufo Documentation Centre, which is an organisation of scientists associated with Hynek's Centre for Ufo Studies in the USA, and UK Investigator's Agency, a group formed by Jenny Randles to improve investigative Ufology in the UK. We hope to co-operate with both groups.

J.A.H.