

LUFORA

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B U L L E T I N

VOL. IV NO. 1
JAN / FEB. / MAR.

1968

Apologies

We regret this issue is rather overdue and apologise for the temporary format. Nigel Stephenson has been carrying the burden of producing the bulletin, almost single-handedly, for some time past. In view of his new B.U.F.O.A. responsibilities he felt unable to continue as editor. Accordingly the committee have had to appoint a successor and make arrangements for continuing the production and distribution of the bulletin. We wish Nigel well in his new tasks and hope we may continue to maintain a high standard. We also hope you will not hesitate to tell us if we do not. Suggestions, criticisms, articles and letters are invited - please send them to the new editor: Charles A. Stickland, 22, Roseberry St., London, S.E.16.

LUFORO'S AIMS: Unbiased scientific investigation of reports of Unidentified Flying Objects and associated claims, collection of first-hand evidence of verifiable data; publicising information in bulletins and by other means; bringing about closer co-operation and understanding between UFO researchers.

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Editorial

'The scientific attitude is a straight and narrow path between two deep pitfalls:- contempt prior to investigation, and credulity.'

This quotation rather aptly expresses what I believe should be our attitude to reports of unusual phenomena. It would, perhaps, be fair to say that the majority of accounts we receive do not contain sufficient information to enable us to reach firm conclusions. Yet such is the nature of man, we are nevertheless expected to produce them. 'Guilty' or 'Not Guilty' must be the verdict. Is it too much to ask that we borrow from Scots law and occasionally say 'Not Proven'?

In other words - we should honestly admit we do not know enough to be able to make a sound judgment. Before we present our 'evaluation', have we considered all the possible explanations of the particular observation under review? Have we done our homework? If we say that someone saw the planet Venus, do we really know where Venus could be seen at that particular time and on that particular day, from that particular place? Do we know in what direction the observer was looking when he saw this object? Do we know how accurate his estimation of direction is - within how many degrees? Do we know how accurate his estimation of altitude is - within how many degrees? Unless we have answers to these questions we can no more say that he did see Venus than that he did not see Venus. Yet time and time again we have sweeping statements made from both sides of the UFO controversy with very little evidence to support them.

The study of this subject will not proceed very far unless we get down to fundamental thinking and inquiry into the facts of human observation. Otherwise we shall continue to fall into the pitfalls mentioned above - a hasty dismissal of an observation on superficial grounds, before investigation, or a credulous acceptance of a report for equally superficial reasons.

To stimulate thought on this issue you are invited to answer the following two questions:-

(1) Given a report from an observer, what kind of information would help to convince you that this was a report of a machine of extra-terrestrial origin?

(2) Given the same report, what kind of information would convince you of the contrary?

If I receive a letter of sufficiently high standard on this subject there will be a small prize of 5/- for the writer. The editor's decision is, naturally, final.

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Talking of money

You're not one of those members who have not renewed their subscription yet? You are? In that case our treasurer will be delighted to receive it at 33, West Towers, Pinner, Middlesex!

WHAT LIFE FORMS CAN EXIST ON MARS

by Alan Watts

In spite of space-probes and speculations we still do not know very much about the conditions on Mars. The Red planet has a very dry and alien climate by terrestrial standards, its atmosphere being largely composed of nitrogen and very little oxygen. The accepted values of the constituents of the Martian atmosphere by volume are nitrogen 93.8% (Earth 78.08%), oxygen less than 0.1% (20.94%), argon 4% (0.94%), carbon dioxide 2.2% (0.08%) the rest being trace gases. However, research is being done into what life forms could exist in this rarefied atmosphere with its low oxygen content.

Reporting in Nature for January 26th 1963 on work towards this end were a team of five scientists (Siegel, Halpern, Guimano, Rerawich and Davies) of the Union Carbide Research Institute, Tarrytown, N.Y. They have shown that higher plants and marine life and insects such as ants can exist quite adequately in atmospheres with very little oxygen.

For example, amongst the plants the following germinated in an atmosphere consisting of 2% oxygen and 98% argon almost as readily as in air: lettuce, portulaca, onion, rice, celosia, carrot, cucumber and rye as well as many others these being the most notable. The last four of the list germinated in water-vapour only and present studies of Mars cannot yet detect what water-vapour exists, how much is trapped in the surface and even whether bodies of water exist.

These workers conclude that many terrestrial plants require very little oxygen and 10% may function in atmospheres from which it is practically excluded. Low temperatures which would exist on Mars are no barrier to development as many seedlings have been found to do better against frost damage when reared in atmospheres with low oxygen content. The simulated atmospheres used were temperature cycled from 20°C for Martian day to -10°C for night.

Even more significant is the report that the common salt-water shrimp (*Artemia Salina*) hatched in a synthetic gas mixture of 0.1 Atm. Hence marine organisms could readily adapt to an apparently alien environment. The black ant (*monomorium minitum*) retains its general activity after a full fifteen hours in a rarefied atmosphere of 1% oxygen and 99% argon. This opens up tremendous possibilities for life

in atmospheres said to be quite alien to it.

Thus one can expect that many higher forms of life can exist and species will naturally select into those forms which are adapted to the conditions in which they find themselves. This does not however mean that man-like forms can exist as man is a very highly developed creature and his needs from the point of view of temperature regulation, oxygen intake etc. are rather more specialised than either ants or shrimps.

Help!

We have a few undated newspaper cuttings which we would like to date - can you tell us either the date of the cutting or the date of the sighting?

The first appears to be American. It refers to the George H. Fisher family of 15445 Cobalt St., Sylmar, who looked into the north sky on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday nights and saw five lights that zig-zagged from side to side and changed colour while doing so. They were also seen by Chief Master Sgt. Donald Ramsden of the San Fernando Civil Air Patrol Squadron.

The second is an observation by the Rev. Cedric Wright of Seighford, near Stafford at midnight on a Thursday. This refers to 'a great illuminated crab-like thing hovering about 80 feet in the air'.

The third concerns a Mr. Allen of Linden Cottage, Culston Bassett who at 8 p.m. on a spring evening saw a circular object move from north-west to south-east.

If you know anything about the above please write to the editor. (He'd also like to know where he can get a typewriter ribbon about 5/8ths inch or 15 mm. wide!)

UFO RESEARCH

by Eric Smith

It is the aim of this article to show the approximate extent of the research problem, the present limitations and the future requirements.

Commonly, we hear the words "investigation" and "research" bandied around in civilian UFO circles. The newcomer and non-scientist may thus obtain a mistaken impression, being led to believe that flying saucers are at present being adequately and systematically studied. Nothing could be further from the truth, and indeed, the seriousness of this insufficiency must not be underestimated if, as appears possible, we are under surveillance by extra-terrestrial intelligences who may be little more than unconcerned about our welfare. However, even if it

were not possible to show a "reasonable probability" that we should be concerned about UFOs from the defence standpoint any scientist worthy of the name, and given the time to study the subject, must realise that in Ufology are many fruitful avenues for research. In fact, it is my view that anyone who is honestly concerned about the future development of the human race will, without hesitation, place Ufology high on the list of subjects in need of urgent and extensive study. This is true for a number of reasons which can affect our future, for instance:

1. The saucers appear to be associated with a mature technological race.
2. The saucers appear to utilise scientific principles outside our range of knowledge.
3. The inadequate communications with UFOs suggest that the beings responsible for their movements are not prepared to meet us on common ground.

(The above points assume that the flying saucers are space craft under the control of extra-terrestrial beings).

4. The saucers as a "modern myth" of reported objects in our skies constitute a unique subject for study by psychologists. (This last point assumes that we consider only those cases which apparently cannot be shown to manifest the qualities of "solidity" and controlled movement, together with those mental images which occur during wakefulness or whilst asleep.)

Having given my own very much abridged ideas of the importance of Ufology as a topic for research (by a number of disciplines) I must hasten to point out that although what I have stated tends to beg the question "Why is there so little done on the subject of UFOs?" there is no reason to suppose that an established requirement for scientific research will be followed up. Unfortunately the finances for research are not in the hands of those best qualified to place a value on any particular research topic. In addition the social structure of modern science is such that convention and prejudice may easily relegate a subject containing non-repeatable events to the realm of the untouchables (for example, the physical phenomena of psychical research). This point, in itself, could well be studied by a psychologist specialising in abnormal group behaviour!

A study of Flying Saucer literature is useful in indicating the difficulty of studying the objects in anything but a casual manner. Ruppelt and Keyhoe give an idea of the magnitude of the U.S.A.F. investigations which barely scratched the surface of the subject.

However, in spite of the apparent lack of a breakthrough, the U.S.A.F. studies bear careful examination. It is regrettable that the A.F. authorities were bent on falling over backwards in retaining "impartiality", otherwise saucers by now might be investigated with something like the necessary vigour and rigour to create the necessary conditions for the "breakthrough".

In a future issue, therefore, we shall look at part of the U.S.A.F. approach to UFO studies. This will be followed by a critical assessment of their approach to the problem and suggestions on what aspects might be dealt with on a rather limited budget, with a preponderance of casual labour. Finally we will attempt to identify some sections of Ufology requiring full-time work and more capital.

(to be continued)

The Sheffield Sighting

Photographs (en-prints) of the objects seen by Alex Birch on 25th February last year may be obtained direct, price 2/9 each, from Mr. A. Birch, 12, Moor Crescent, Mosborough, Sheffield.

Review

LES EXTRATERRESTRES by Paul Thomas. Plon. 1962.

There have been attempts before this to consider a possible connection between visits from extra-terrestrial beings and certain events in religious history and literature, notably M.K. Jessup's 'Ufo and the Bible' (Citadel, New York, 1956) and A.W. Orton's 'The Four-Faced Visitors of Ezekiel', an article in the July 1961 issue of Analog Science Fact and Fiction. This, however, is the most balanced and closely reasoned account that has yet appeared. The major part of the book deals with events in the Old Testament, the thesis that Thomas (a pseudonym, by the way) is presenting being that many of the religious leaders of that time had special knowledge obtained from extra-terrestrials. Among his suggestions are that Elijah was a pioneer of petrol in Palestine, using it to confound the prophets of Baal. This may seem rather fantastic but the arguments used are not without some force.

Other parts of the book include a description of events at Fatima in Portugal, in 1917; evidence that a discussion of the sex of angels is not as frivolous as one might imagine and many other thought-provoking ideas.

It is to be hoped that an English translation of this book will soon appear, so that its original approach is appreciated by a larger public. British and American publishers, please note!

106, South Hill Park, Hampstead, N.W.3.

Old members are reminded and new members are informed they are able to use the library at the above address on Saturdays from 4.0 p.m. They are warned they may also be engaged in conversation and possibly dragged into doing some work under the guidance of:-

April 6	Dr. Doel	General Ufology
" 13	Eric Smith	Information Systemisation (sorting stuff out)
" 20	Messrs. Midwinter & Kell	Observation and Communication
" 27	Basil Nubel	Photographic Analysis

THE BRITISH U.F.O. ASSOCIATION

(London Area)

The Anglo-Polish U.F.O. Research Club and the London U.F.O. Research Organisation invite you to a meeting at the Polish Hearth Club, 55, Princes Gate (off Exhibition Road), London, S.W.7. (nearest Underground Station - South Kensington, buses - 9, 14, 30, 45, 46, 52, 73, 96).

on SATURDAY, 30TH MARCH, at 7 p.m.

Programme

Introduction

"Flying Saucers Over Central Europe": lecture by Antoni Szachnowski, Chairman of the Anglo-Polish U.F.O. Research Club.

Interval

"What I Saw". Members of the audience who have seen Unidentified Flying Objects will be invited to speak about their experiences. This will be intermingled with discussion.

Refreshments and alcoholic drinks available on the Club's premises.

Admission 3/6.

Bring your friends!

All are welcome.

You are requested to sign the Club's Visitors' Book in the entrance hall on arrival.

WITH COMPLIMENTS
YOUR MAGAZINE
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