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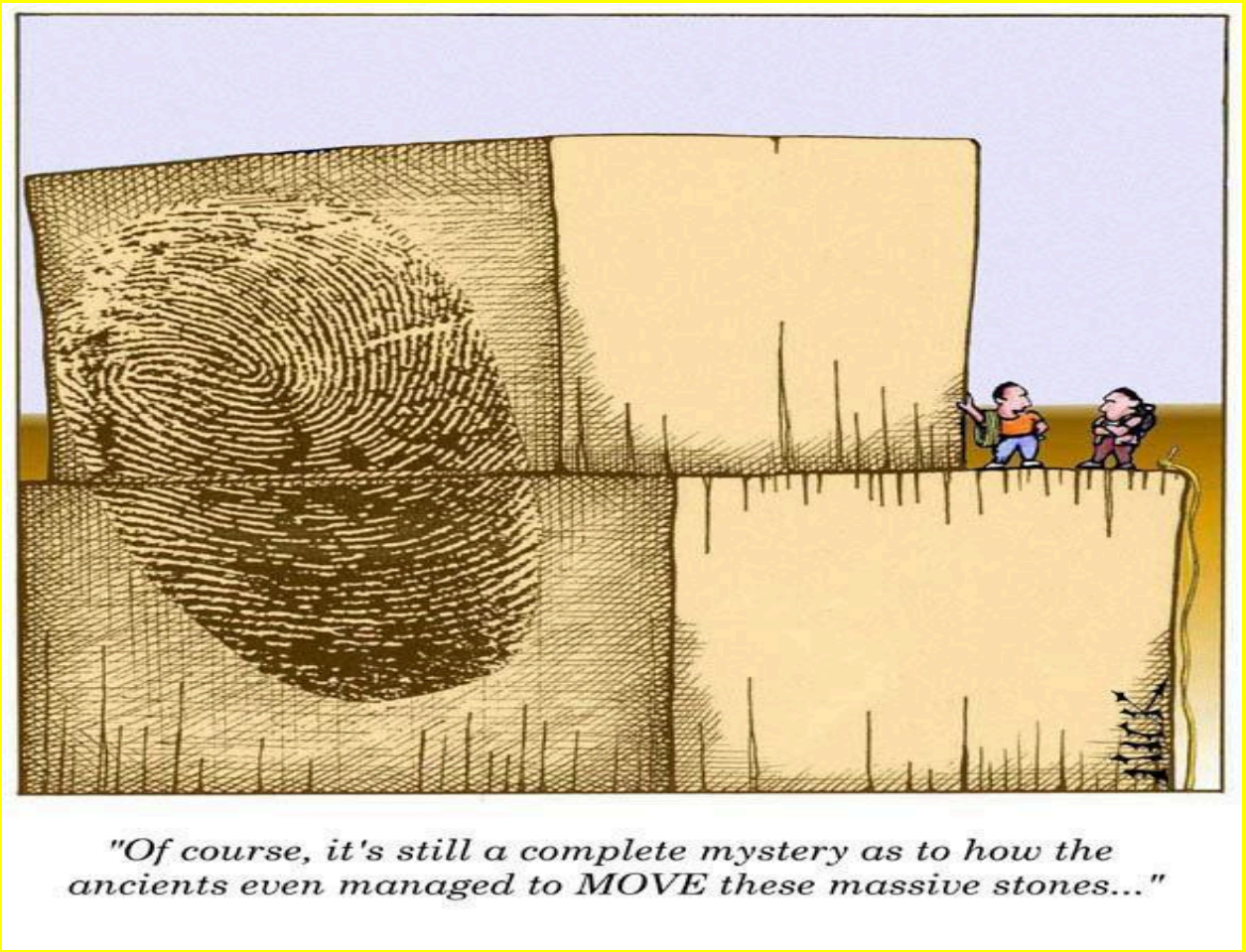
Graham Birdsall
1954 – 2003

# U F O  R E V I E W

**The Truth Is Coming But A Little Too Slowly For My Liking.**

**May 2004**
**£2.50 printed**

**Number 1**



*"Of course, it's still a complete mystery as to how the ancients even managed to MOVE these massive stones..."*

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# WELCOME

A warm welcome to our first edition.

These are “unsettling” times at the moment within UK Ufology. UFO Magazine has gone and the message boards are a chatter, full, in the main, of doom and gloom. On top of that, three recent negative newspaper articles here in the UK, prompted by the magazine’s closure, have further put the boot in and depressed people even more.

Others, like myself, are looking to fill the void. Of course, none of us are either stupid enough or have the necessary cash to inject into a newsstand magazine, which I suspect is what most people would prefer, and so we’re all descending on the Web, looking to do it on the cheap.

And you can hardly blame us. But there is competition around and some of us will sink or swim. Time will sort it all out and eventually a stability of some sort will establish itself. In the meantime though, you the reader have a choice of where to go and what to look at as we all compete for your favour. Enjoy!

Far, in fact, from being depressed about what’s happened, I think these are exciting times. Of course I would rather both Graham and the magazine were still here. Unfortunately they are not and no bleating or moaning will change things. So taking an optimistic view, the magazine’s closure has lead to opportunity for others to take the plunge and from your point of view, I can see that as only a good thing.

The conferences in particular will be missed. They did more than just offer us an entertaining weekend, they were a social outlet as well. That is likely to be gone forever. The impact of the magazine’s closure on Ufology in the UK will run deep.

I want to rush to say to you that we are not meant to be the successor to UFO Magazine, as I think will already be obvious. Even if we wanted to be seen as the heir apparent, we couldn’t be. Who could follow Graham and Russ? Who could match the contribution and commitment that Graham Birdsall made for so many years to British and international ufology? Who could match his stature and the respect he was held in? No one.

And yes, it’s true. If Graham hadn’t passed on, we wouldn’t be here now.

We are not intending to charge for this magazine, at least not yet. It may be that we never charge for it if other longer-term plans come to fruition, but that does remain to be seen.

The editorial policy of this magazine is to acknowledge the High Strangeness of many anomalous sightings and situations. I would have no problems if that were to

be interpreted as supporting the ETH. That said, we welcome the counter arguments and it could well be that from time to time, you may read in these pages a depth of scepticism that offends you. It is true that some debates between “pros” and “cons” can get tied down in pointless minutiae and when the language becomes negative, the red mist can descend and any attempt at rationality soon goes. I cannot complain. I have taken part in more than my fair share of arguments like that. But we shouldn’t be smug or close-minded to opposing views or be afraid of being challenged, however uncomfortable that can be.

Feel free to call or write or e-mail with suggestions. It isn’t a case of sitting here and with all the usual honest earnestness proclaiming, as many do, that “This Magazine Is For You”. Of course it’s for you. If you don’t like it you won’t read it. Simple market economics.

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*If you use public transport, then you might just be one of those people that draws the nutters. No matter what bus or train you're on, the loonies seem to find you. They sit themselves down next to you and tell you their life story.*

*This bloke collared me on my way to a match at Old Trafford. Serves me right I guess for being a Man. United supporter. Turns out he has a signed pix of Dennis Law on his bedroom wall and once had a trial at Tranmere.*





**Nick Redfern**

# Monster Man

By Stuart Miller

Are there any other authors who have made as great a contribution to the literary annals of British Ufology as Nick Redfern has? Yes, actually, but only the names of Tim Good and Jenny Randles come to mind. For years, the trio, known only within the realms of my pitiable imagination as the Axis Of Excellence, straddled the international best-seller lists and made a disproportionately significant contribution to UFO research, patriotically carrying the Union Jack into an area dominated by the Stars and Stripes.

Of the three, Nick had the common touch, probably as a result of a debauched adolescence spent in the Midlands. There was something intrinsic about him that said, “He’s one of us. If he can do it, so can I.” The fact that we couldn’t was neither here nor there. He made us think that we could.

After years of fantastic output from all three, silence. The well has dried; the baton has been passed on to others. Or so it seems.

Not quite. Mr. Redfern is alive and well, and still writing. But where has he been? Where is he now? What has been going on? Will we see another new book? Best thing I could do was to sit him down and ask him. Nick was delighted to agree to an interview for the readers of UFO Review, and what follows is one of the most extensive interviews Nick has ever given. We started at the beginning.
NR: I got interested in the late 70's in the UFO subject in general because my dad was in the Royal Air force. He used to work on radar and he was involved in a couple of weird incidents in the 50's where strange things were picked up on the radar scopes in East Anglia and over the North Sea. He was based at RAF Neatishead at the time and aircraft were scrambled from a nearby base at Coltishal. The pilots reported seeing something that was unidentifiable. Nobody knew what it was. Word came down that whatever these things were, they weren't Russian bombers or somebody launching a sneak attack. The story was left open with no conclusions, beyond the fact that something strange occurred.

When he told me this story, I was about fourteen at the time and it got me interested in the UFO subject. I'd never given it any thought until that time at all. I started reading books and subscribing to some of the few magazines that existed in England at the time, which were more like newsletters really.

I left school in '82 and I went to work for about a year on a music and fashion magazine called "Zero", and that threw me in at the deep end in terms of understanding how the magazine and the writing world worked. It was a good education. I learnt about how to put a magazine together and about deadlines, page layouts, and so on.

About '83, things went quiet on the writing front and I worked as a van driver and fork lift driver for two or three years, for painting and wall paper companies.

SM: Was that just to pay the bills?

NR: Yes. It was a straightforward nine to five job. After a while I began pursuing the idea that I was tired of the nine to five world. I figured it was something I didn't want to do, but most people just accept it and put up with it. I thought, "Well, I'm not going to put up with it. I'm actually going to do something I enjoy doing."

SM: How old were you then?

NR: I was 23. I'm 40 this year.

SM: Oh dear! That was quite a brave decision to make at such a young age.

NR: I guess in some ways it was, but maybe not. Looking back on it, because I had exposure to the magazine work first, I saw and experienced something I enjoyed doing. Then I was forced to get out of it because the work dried up, and although I enjoyed delivery work because it took me around the country, I wanted to get back into writing. I missed it.

So I became a freelance writer and from the late 80's onwards, most of the freelance work I did, which is still the case even today, was nothing whatsoever to do with the UFO subject at all. It was just standard news stories for magazines and newspapers. I write for everything from children's magazines on animals to specialist pet magazines, reptile and fish mags, and so on.

SM: Are these areas you know about or do you just dive in and do a thorough research job?
NR: It's a little bit of both. For example, I've written articles for an animal magazine about a newborn tiger cub, and you have to go over to the zoo, get pictures, and watch them feed it milk and things like that. Then you do some follow up research on it. But then if the magazine likes it, they'll approach you for another story and they may send you all the background information, and you just transcribe it into a readable format.

SM: How did you get jobs like that? Did you have an agent?

NR: For the books I did. But with the magazine work, it literally was a case of whom I knew rather than what I knew. What happened was, when you get involved with magazines and newspapers, you inevitably make friends. Most of my friends were on the freelance circuit as well. So somebody in Scotland working for the same magazine as me, if they got a story in the West Midlands, which was where I was living at the time, they'd pass it down to me and the other way round. It expanded from there.

This was going back to 86/87. It was around about then I met Mark and Graham Birdsall when they ran the Yorkshire UFO Society. They put out a lengthy, self-published magazine at the time. I started doing some work for them, writing articles, doing book reviews, that sort of thing, and I'd go up and see them at the conferences every year.

I got some reader feedback from those articles, particularly military pilots and RAF people who had seen weird things in the skies. I wrote articles for the magazine, now UFO Magazine, on a regular basis until about 97/98, but particularly from '87 to '92, I got a huge amount of letters from people.

Coincidentally, at around the same time, Tim Good asked me to do a chapter for one of his old UFO Report series that he used to do. He did these three or four books. Tim was the editor and he just commissioned people to write a chapter for those books. I wrote a small chapter, only about 15 pages, on the files that had been released up until that point at the Public Records Office. This was literally just a handful of files. It wasn't like today when there are thousands of pages and where there's legislation like the FOI Act coming through. It was maybe seven or eight files, each about three or four pages in length that had been found or had been declassified.

And so I summarised those. One was on the famous Topcliffe sighting of ’52. One was on the West Freugh case, a radar case from Scotland from ’57. There were one or two guidelines for military people – what to do in the event they saw a UFO. When the book was published, again I got a lot of feedback from readers, particularly retired or former military people, who would say, “I read your chapter and I was actually involved in one of these cases”. I’d travel around the country and meet up with them, or do a telephone interview, that sort of thing.

I found that around about ‘93/’94, I’d amassed this huge amount of information, first hand witnesses, interviews, and documents, and although obviously people had touched upon the British governments involvement with UFO’s in books, nobody had really gone to the extent of writing a full length book about it. So I figured it might be the right time to do that.
What I did between ’93 and ’95 was to sit down and write the original manuscript for “Covert Agenda” based upon the research I’d carried out. Also, around this time, I was going down to the PRO in Kew once a month for about three or four days and I would just plough through all the old files and see what I could come up with. An interesting thing that a lot of people may not be aware of is that some of the UFO files that have surfaced in more recent years were actually declassified back then. It was just that we didn’t know where to look for them because they weren’t listed under “Flying saucers” or “UFO’s”. They might have been in an obscure file that dealt with something else.

Then in 1993, things changed with the file declassification because that was thirty years after when the Government said that it began actively saving all its files. So instead of having a small trickle of documents, from ’93 onwards you would have three or four hundred pages of documents released at a time. That included everything on the Cosford sighting in December ’63, which was a pretty big case. There were reports by military people; more began to surface on a regular basis. And there were some interesting case files, the Alex Birch photo case, things like that.

All these documents were released and at the same time I was doing research with a lot of retired military people as well. I combined the two and decided that now was the ideal time to do something with all this. I was still doing freelance work to pay the bills and buy the beer. In 1995 the manuscript was finished and I got a literary agent to handle the books, Andrew Lowney.

SM: That’s Tim Good’s agent, isn’t it?

NR: Well actually Tim read the original manuscript for “Covert Agenda” and suggested I approach Andrew with it, or he passed it on, I can’t remember now. But also at the same as writing “Covert Agenda”, I was also writing “The FBI Files”.

SM: Two books at the same time?

NR: They were so different in terms of subject matter that I would do a morning on "Covert Agenda" and an afternoon on "The FBI Files". Then during dinner I'd try to put a freelance article together to get some money!

SM: Did you ever get confused?

NR: Luckily I didn't. I think if I had been doing one book on say, the British Ministry of Defence and one about the Royal Air Force, then I probably would, but with one being solely American and one being solely British, it did work out OK. I didn't quite lose my marbles!

SM: When you were doing "The FBI Files" you were here in Britain?

NR: Oh yes.

SM: Was it difficult researching FBI files from the UK?

NR: Actually, a lot of people ask me that, but I found it wasn't. I've found the FBI, more than any other agency within the States, are the easiest ones to deal with in terms of getting hold of documentation and they were very good also about getting a lot of information from them. Certain agencies, like for example the NSA, are extraordinarily secret about pretty much everything. Prising their UFO files out took literally years and there are still probably a number that haven't been declassified yet. I'm quite sure of that.

But the FBI has been pretty good. They released their whole seventeen hundred-page package of documents on UFOs. They released a huge cattle mutilation file, and files on George Adamski and George Van Tassel that run into hundreds of pages. There are a number of MIB reports, a Majestic 12 file, Wilhelm Reich and so on. They have been most helpful and the most useful in terms of getting hold of material. That book was just a study of official documentation that had been declassified. If I had been trying to track down retired FBI agents to interview them, then I guess that would have been difficult being based over in England at the time.

"Covert Agenda" was published in '97 and "The FBI Files" in '98 and that's when I was exposed to how the book world worked in terms of promoting your book and understanding how publishing companies work and getting on the road. Between '97 and '99, I was on the road three or four days a week, up and down the country, doing promotions or book signings, or lectures to local groups or conferences. That was the height of the whole "X Files" mania and you had all these magazines like "Sightings" and "Alien Encounters" on the stands. Things were hot.

SM: Which book was it where you attempted to prove there was an MJ 12 type organisation in Britain?

NR: That was "Cosmic Crashes".

SM: I thought that was an unbelievably brave effort on your part. To attempt to prove something as difficult and as impossible as that was a real task. I thought you got pretty dam close.

NR: The thing with "Cosmic Crashes" was this. There had been a few rumours, not many, that UFOs had crashed in Britain. But again, nobody had actually delved into those stories to any great extent. So what I did in '96 was to travel around the country, for four or five days a week, interviewing pretty much everyone trying to follow up leads on these crashed UFO stories.

I'd spend £100 on a particular motorway service station, staying there for three days, then I'd travel down to the bottom part of the country and do the same, then over to East Anglia and put up in a guest house or a B &B over there. That is literally what I did for twelve to eighteen months. I'd go back home to have a good time at the weekend.

These stories hadn't really gone beyond the stage of rumour so I thought it was a good time to look into them. Not from the point of view of proving that they happened, but just trying to resolve them. They had just existed in limbo, in a grey area for years where nothing had ever been done with them. I tried to get to the bottom of each case or to find anyone who was involved in these incidents, and try and uncover what happened.

In the book, it looked like each case I investigated turned out to be somewhat strange and you'd think no one would be that lucky. That isn't actually what happened. What happened was that I investigated probably fifteen or sixteen reports, of which three or four turned out to be hoaxes. A couple turned out to be aircraft crashes, two or three I suspected were military aircraft or some sort of event.

But with the space I had to write, which was limited by the publishers, I had to constrict what I wrote about. So I chose the cases that seemed the most interesting. I had to discard the rubbish. But I'd be the first to admit it would have been interesting to go through the anatomy of a hoax as well.

SM: Are you convinced there is an MJ 12 type set up in Britain?

NR: No. What I'm convinced of is that there are people in Britain that know more about the subject than has surfaced through Air Staff 2A, Nick Pope's old division, or through the files at the PRO. There are two reasons why I say that. One is simply that the testimony provided by retired military people who have nothing to gain, and who say, "I just want to tell you the story. I don't want it published, I don't want my name used, but this is what happened." When you can verify their backgrounds and they tell you an extraordinary story about how they saw gun camera footage of UFOs, photographs held by the military, that they were allowed in on a meeting and so on, it's very impressive.

One guy told me that in the 70's, when a detachment came over from the American Defence Agency, they wanted the British to look at photographic material that they had obtained from spy satellites over Russia. Things like this convince me that there are people that know a great deal more about the subject and that it's being hidden.

Now, whether it's being hidden because of some dark and horrible truth or, as I used to think, they were sitting on certain evidence, or, they were kind of confused and realised something was going on, I'm not a hundred per cent sure.

SM: Do you feel that the upper echelon, shall we say within the British MOD, are in the loop with the Americans, or do you think the Americans don't tell them anything?

NR: I think for the most part, what goes on in the American intelligence community probably stays there. I think where there have been occasions where the two countries have been involved together, or where there's a vested interest in sharing information with each other to try and resolve something, then they tell.

A good case in point was one particular incident I investigated from early '47 and I interviewed a guy who had been working on radar in England. He'd been involved in an incident again over the North Sea and East Anglia. This was in same time frame as the ghost rocket sightings that Andy Roberts and Dave Clarke have researched quite extensively.

He told me about how there had been some liaison with the USAF. This was at the time Project Grudge and Sign were kicking off and it's almost certain, although he didn't have names and details, that some of the British Royal Air Force radar people, were interviewed by people acting on behalf of Sign or Grudge. He said that extensive interviews were undertaken and the USAF guys were quite open with them. They told them they had established various projects and operations to look into these things and were not really sure what was going on. Any information that the British had would be helpful.

It's in circumstances like this when there is a to and fro and a give and take between countries. But I'd be surprised if Britain was completely in the loop with what America knows or believes it knows.

For "Cosmic Crashes", in the end I discovered three or four cases that I found to be credible in terms of something genuinely weird occurring. One being at RAF Cosford in December 1963 when "something was seen to hover near the airfield". It actually comes across, when you read the old files again today, as something similar to Rendlesham. A glowing object, semi physical if you like, coming down near an air force base and being seen by air force personnel. Nobody really knew what was going on and there were conflicting stories, and things like that.

Until the Rendlesham Forest file was released a few years ago, the file on the Cosford case at the PRO was the most extensive on any one incident and it runs to

almost a hundred pages in length. Anyone can go to the PRO and pull that file. There are interview notes, letters, and newspaper clippings that the MOD put together. That was an intriguing incident.

Throughout that whole period of '63 to '64, there were a lot of weird reports that were filed with the MOD. Shortly after the Cosford case, there was the second earliest verifiable report of a crop circle reported to the MOD. This occurred in Cumbria in February 1964 and it concerned what was described at the time as a perfectly formed circle of flattened ground on farmland.

In that case, the witness described seeing this column of blue light hovering over the field and then the following day, this circular depression was found. This occurred just after the Cosford case and in March '64, only four weeks after that, there was a story about a UFO crash incident over the Cannock Chase in Staffordshire.

The Chase is this huge forested area that is actually not too far from where I lived at one time. The incident was reported at rumour mill level for a few years and it was only brought to the fore in the early 90's when Leonard Stringfield wrote about it in his last but one report on crashed UFO stories that he used to self publish every so often. He put this report out, with some background information, and I began to look into it with people from the Staffordshire UFO Group. They were literally on the doorstep where all this allegedly happened. Not much research had been done but we looked at all the old newspaper and magazine accounts to see if there was any mention of anything weird having occurred on the Chase at the time.

SM: Was that the incident where somebody died from radiation or am I getting my cases mixed up?

NR: No, that was a separate one. The '64 case was an incident where something was reported to have come down and an area was cordoned off, like in a lot of the crashed UFO incident reports. In this particular case, we tracked down a number of police officers and members of the public who remembered seeing cordons and roads being closed and people being diverted out of the area, in what was roughly the correct time frame.

But I guess the strangest incident was when I went to interview a guy who said he actually saw this thing crashed within a field. There was a whole road cordon around it and there were military and police there turning him away from the site. We interviewed him at the end of '96 so this was thirty two years later, but he recalled it graphically. He said he parked up the road about a mile away, having been turned back, and then walked through the forest towards where there was a clearing and he saw this small object which was about twelve to fifteen feet in length, like a triangular dart if you like.

The upshot of it was that he managed to get a couple of pictures of it, which were later confiscated by the local police. Now this is a typical crashed UFO story that you tend to hear; that people either see alien bodies pickled in a jar and are warned

not to talk about it, or they photograph something and the camera is confiscated. They are a lot of these types of accounts from Britain and America, you name it!

This one mutated into something even weirder because when we went to his house to interview him, he was kind of quiet. This was after we'd spoken to him on the telephone earlier that same day. He was nervous. We asked him what was wrong and he said, "Well, just after you called, I had a phone call from the Ministry of Defence", and it had basically put the wind up him, to the point where he didn't really want to speak to us. We looked at each other and thought, well, is the guy just a fantasist, is he making it all up, is he just crazy? Is he just trying to say this as a way of getting out of speaking to us? So we asked him when the phone call was and he said ten minutes ago. So we asked him if we could do a 1471.

This is where it gets strange because purely for security reasons, military bases very often don't give out their telephone numbers and withhold the number. But when we dialled it, it gave us a number that happened to be an operator service that was controlled by the military. This operator service was responsible for coordinating and transferring calls outside of military establishments to other locations. So if you tracked it back, you wouldn't find the internal phone number that had made a call, just the operator.

We dialled 1471, spoke with the operator, explained the situation, that this member of the general public who was an old man of about 70 had just received this call from the MOD that had perturbed him. We laid our cards on the table. The upshot of it was that we got transferred to another department of the MOD Guards Service, and we were able to determine that that was where the phone call had come from.

Now, we weren't able to speak with anyone who knew anything about this case but the fact that we were able to confirm that an internal phone call had come from the MOD Guards Service at this particular army establishment was kind of strange. At 11 o'clock on a Tuesday morning, this 70 year old guy is getting calls from the MOD fifteen minutes after we'd spoken to him.
SM: Thirty-two years after the event, yet still monitoring his calls!

NR: Now that was the one thing, more than anything else, that suggested to us that there was something genuinely strange going on. Now, in this particular case, people have said that maybe what he saw was some kind of military aircraft or a missile that had gone off target, which is entirely possible, but, my argument is that the Stealth Bomber was still classified twenty years ago but then it was eventually rolled out on to the tarmac. What kind of aircraft could have been classified nearly forty years ago that still needs to be classified today?

SM: Well yes, but it could have been an Avro type of thing or a secret project that just didn't work and they decided not to pursue it, so in the end it was never employed by the military, maybe.

NR: Yes, that is actually a good argument but the only flaw that I've found with that is why would this guy be getting this call all this time after?

SM: Very true.

NR: So that's why I've wondered if it was some sort of missile that had wandered and gone off course. He talked about this as if it wasn't a classic flying saucer or anything like that. But it was interesting that the time frame tied in with the information Leonard Stringfield had about a crashed saucer. That was one case more than any other that convinced me that something weird did occur. One of a hand full of maybe fifteen occasions where I've seen evidence of some sort of surveillance or intimidation.

SM: Have you ever had the suspicion or feeling, or known for a fact that you, yourself, have been the subject of interest to the intelligence services? Ever felt your phone was being tapped? Ever been warned?

NR: I have never ever been warned at all. No one's ever come to me and said, "You know that case you're looking into? Stay away from it." That's never happened. I have never had any knowledge that my phone was being tapped, though if they were doing the job right, I wouldn't know!

SM: Do you regard that as surprising if you're right? Given as you've been sticking your nose in for so long, at least from the authorities point of view. They must regard you as an irritant.

NR: In some respects, maybe. There was one thing that happened but that was nothing to do with the UFO subject and I'm legally not allowed to talk about it, because it involved another aspect of an investigation I undertook in a freelance capacity, to do with government secrecy. I had to hand over all the tape recordings and interview notes, and the bulk of that wasn't allowed to be published. But that was nothing to do with the UFO subject. It was just the fact I get involved in a lot of different things!

On the subject of UFOs, although I've never been threatened or had strange people turn up at the front door, (well actually I have had a few strange people turn up at the front door but not government people), what I have found, and this has happened on a number of occasions so it goes beyond the point of coincidence, is that people who I've wanted to interview, have had problems.

I might have phoned them, for example, on Monday 10th June and said, "Can I come over and interview you on the 20th June?" When I go to see them, in the intervening period they have had a weird and intimidating call. Sometimes when I've turned up they've said, "Sorry, I've decided against speaking to you, I've just decided not to." And when you press them a little further, you get, "I've had this call and it's put me off speaking to you."

When you get that once or twice, you just think, "Well, they just don't want to speak." But when it's a pattern, where I don't do the interview there on the spot

but arrange to do it a week or so later, then you get this backing off, then I genuinely do believe something's going on.

SM: That implies a very extensive monitoring service.

NR: Yes, it does. That's something that puzzles me. The days are obviously long gone where there's some guy sat with his headphones on wondering "Who shall we listen to next?" It's all done through key words on computers these days.

SM: Do you think then that within the UFO community, you were too high profile to target and it was easier to target your targets, so to speak?

NR: I'm not really sure. I guess a more egotistical person might say that. I don't know. Seriously, I think it might just be the case that some people in the UFO research community agree with what I write and some disagree.

But I guess the one place where I was and a lot of people weren't at the time, was because I was freelance I was able to spend week after week travelling around the country pursuing all sorts of leads, which maybe a lot of researchers didn't have the time to do. Maybe somewhere down the line I've uncovered something I've not recognised the significance of and perhaps that's some of the reasoning behind this.

I actually don't think these problems just relate to the UFO subject. I think that anyone who looks into what goes on in the workings of government or asks questions about official secrets is looked upon as a lefty troublemaker. I think that is inevitable in British society, within government and the civil service. Whether you're interested in Animal rights, UFOs, nuclear disarmament, or you do anything that's a little bit out of the ordinary that may have a political/secrecy angle to it, then I think a lot of people will look at it to some extent.

The case you mentioned about the radiation story was an unusual one. It was a very similar incident from '74. The problem with that story is that it came from one person and I couldn't verify it beyond that person. The book itself wasn't meant to be about crashed UFO incidents as such. There'd been all sorts of books about the Roswell incident and follow up books, and the Aztec case and all sorts of different crash stories. So when I discussed it with the publishers, they thought it would be a good idea to do a book based upon my own investigations. That's why it was written in the first person. So it was really a case of chronicling what people told me, based upon this yearlong countrywide excursion.

I spoke with a guy who worked with a television company back in the 70s on outside broadcast work and he said he was involved in this particular case where something had come down on the Cannock Chase. He actually didn't see anything solid, there was just this huge circular patch of ground clearly showing something had landed there. The story was that several people had been injured and later died from radiation injuries.

I dug into the story as deeply as possible to try to determine what had happened and who these people were, and just hit a brick wall. His credentials checked out. There was no doubt he was the person he claimed to be. But this was one of the cases where I tried everything and got nowhere. I don't mean there were sinister people blocking me at every turn. I just didn't find anything, beyond his testimony. The odd thing is, as a person he's very credible. He related the story four or five times to me over the course of several years and I went to his house to meet him and his family, and spent several days with him on one occasion. When he couldn't answer a question he would say, "I don't know. All I can tell you is what I saw."

With a subject like UFOs, if you want answers you have to go out there and get them. That's what I did. You have to do the research. Whether it's going down to the archives or interviewing witnesses and digging deep.

SM: The last thing you could be called is an armchair researcher.

NR: There's nothing wrong with that. A lot of people are content to read the magazines and the books and get all their information that way. I don't have any problem with that, it's fine. The only time I have a problem with the armchair people is when they say, "Oh, that couldn't happen" or "This person can't be credible" when they've never met these people and can't be bothered to get off their backsides and visit them.

If John Smith believes that a witness I've interviewed at the top of Scotland is a fantasist, that's fine. But let John Smith get in his car, do the 700 mile journey, and spend two days with him and demand from him, as I did, photographic evidence proving his previous employment within the military, and documentation that he was at the military base he said he was at. When John Smith has done that and still concludes there's nothing to it, then that's fine. There are people with varying degrees of credibility within any subject and any walk of life.

But I don't have much time for people that just pontificate from the couch and say, "Well, this is all nonsense."

SM: After the third book, which was "Cosmic Crashes", what happened then? Was "Strange Secrets" the next book?

NR: Yes. "Cosmic Crashes" came out in early '99. After I'd finished the promotion for that book, really, the only thing I did in the UFO subject directly were a few lectures and conferences, and I did the book review page for UFO Magazine, which you did.

SM: I can't tell you how pleased I am that you gave it up.

NR: That was purely because all the information I had put together from the 80s had been published. Where people allowed me to publish it, it was in print. This coincided with me getting bigger, doing freelance work for newspapers and magazines, again on non-UFO topics and even non-paranormal topics. Animal stories and so on.

SM: You've mentioned animals quite a few times. Do you actually like animals?

NR: Yes, I do. I'm an animal lover.

SM: Do you have any pets?

NR: We actually had a Sharpei dog that sadly passed away just before Christmas. It was a sad time for us. They're those dogs with all the wrinkles. They look intimidating and vicious but they're just big teddy nears really.

SM: It's like losing a family member when a pet dies.

NR: That's what it is like. That's what it is. Animals give a lot of love but unfortunately they don't live as long as people.

I did quite a few articles for a part work that existed in England; I don't think it's published anymore, called "Animals, Animals, Animals". It was one of those that you'd get from Smiths and build into binders. It was a case of going to zoos and photographing Timmy the monkey who was being given his milk by the nurses in the zoo, that sort of thing. You'd have to write it in a style that children could understand, which is actually quite difficult. When you've got to write in a style for a five or six year old, it is actually hard to do.

SM: I always laugh when I hear people say they want to do a children's book because I think adults view the idea of writing for kids as easy. It isn't.

NR: No, it isn't. I had to do things like, "Here's Timmy. Watch as he has his milk from his mummy" and things like that. It's amusing but it's interesting as well. You appreciate how difficult it is. I did that for a while, also for reptile and aquarium magazines and things like that.

I also wrote for several Midlands based magazines, the ones you see for free on the stands, they get their revenue from advertising. So from '99 to 2001, for the most part, because I'd used most of my UFO material, I went back to doing freelance work for that two year period.

SM: When and where did you meet your wife?

NR: We actually met at the Laughlin UFO Conference in March 2001. Her name is Dana.

SM: Oh, you're joking.

NR: No.

SM: Oh, I bet you have trouble living that one down.

NR: A few people have found that amusing. She's in the other room right now and probably listening! We met at the Congress and just hit it off together and spent the next eight months doing the whole visa waver thing. You can come back and forth between America and England for ninety days at a time and so she would come over to England and I would go back there. After eight months, we decided to get married and settled in the States.

SM: Is Dallas Dana's hometown?

NR: No. She's from Texas but she from the City of Beaumont, which itself is about seventy miles from Houston. We moved to Dallas earlier this year. We're a few minutes from downtown Dallas, where we live now.

SM: Because you're visually out of sight for people in the UK now, people will naturally assume that you've dropped away a bit. And maybe that is right from the point of view of publishing books. But you mentioned that you still took an active part on the lecture circuit?

NR: Yes. As far as things in the States are concerned, I moved over here in September 2001. I was due to fly back two days after September 11th to England to visit and to tie everything up over there. Because of what happened, all the flights were cancelled and I was delayed by about a week. But I went back, closed things down and returned here.

But since being over here, I guess I've been quiet on the UFO front, more so in England, but I have written several books, one being "Strange Secrets" which was published in 2003.

I have done quite a few lectures though. I've spoken for the Roswell Museum several times in New Mexico. Also at the Aztec conference, and several places up on the west coast. I've been to MUFON groups in San Diego and Los Angeles, and also to a few Texas based organisations. I keep my hand in on the lecture circuit. I've spoken at Laughlin too.

SM: Are you still a freelance journalist in the States?

NR: Yes, most of what I do is freelance and book work, and lectures. That's me full time. The only things that have changed are the location and the names of the magazines.

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Part 2 of the interview will appear in our next issue. Be sure to place an order with your newsagent. Oh hold on, that's wrong. See end of this issue for next issue details.

Nick has his own website where you can find out more about what he's up to and where you can also buy his latest book as well as his previous ones. A review of "Three Men Seeking Monsters" will appear in the next issue of UFO Magazine.

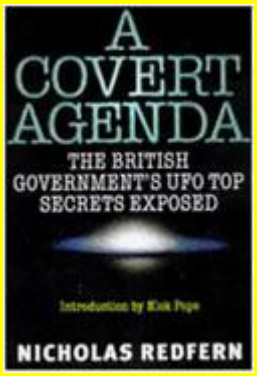
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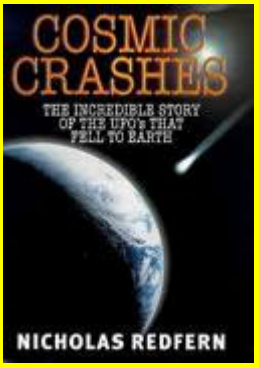
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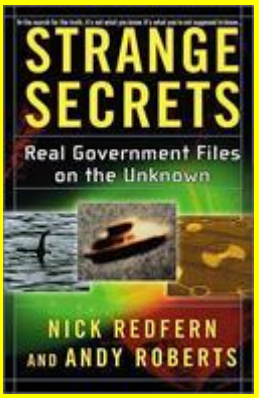
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And if this article has stimulated your interest in crypto zoology, you can visit Jon Downes' Centre for Fortean Zoology at www.cfz.org.uk. Click on any book to buy









# ATTACK OF THE RED CAPE

By ANDY THOMAS

The following article was written by Andy in January 1998 for the SC, the bi-monthly publication of Southern Circular Research. It reappeared in “Swirled Harvest”, a collection of his essays and writings, published last year. See end of article.

Important Disclaimer: UFO Review will not be held responsible for any physical harm that may befall you while reading this chapter. Cars parked here are left at owner’s risk, or something like that.

We guess it is probably a scam from the start. Several members of Southern Circular Research receive mysterious phone calls from a PR agent trying to gather kindred souls who have experience of ET’s, UFOs or crop circles. An important meeting is being set up, he assures us, to pool mental resources for a Sussex businessman interested in creating a foundation for the development of “alien technology”.

Quite how we can be of any help with this is uncertain, but, after a bit of thought, three of us, Martin Noakes, Nexus Magazine’s UK editor Marcus Allen and myself, as a piece of investigative journalism, decide to attend the enigmatic meeting, held at a grand sounding venue, The Sony Centre at, er, Worthing, West Sussex.

So off we go, one sunny weekday morning. Expecting a huge towering edifice of a building with shining windows to suddenly appear before us, we quickly realise our original qualms were reliable after all. The Sony Centre is a small hi-fi shop in a side street. Resigning ourselves to humiliation, we enter. We immediately surmise that a) this is simply the launch of a new retail outlet for home entertainment hardware, and that b) its publicity machine has done an excellent job in fooling the media – and us – into thinking something amazing is going to be happening. Everyone is here – BBC Breakfast News, Meridian ITV, Southern FM radio and representatives from several major newspapers. The Daily Star has sent down one of its starlets for a photo-opportunity, dolled up in a kinky space cadet outfit with silver tights and wobbly antenna (ooer missus, etc.). A bizarre figure with a long cape lined in red also lurks among the battling camera crews, who are trying to find something worthwhile to film against a frustratingly uninspiring background of hi-fi.

Everyone mills around aimlessly, reduced to admiring (as would actually seem to be the point) the television sets, ghetto-blasters and sound units on display. There are no UFO videos showing, no posters or flyers suggesting this is anything to do with alien technology at all. There are more media types than there are guests like ourselves. Relieved to have some new fodder to interview, anyone entering the premises is seized on by the TV crews. We are lined up like firing squad victims and

questions shot at each of us in turn. Press and radio reporters attack, clutching notepads and, appropriately, recordable Sony Walkmans.

Some look disgusted that they've been duped into attending the opening of a tiny shop in an obscure coastal town, and their cynicism shows in their bored questioning. The ITV correspondent, sinisterly resembling an SS officer with dark glasses and a long coat, seems particularly disillusioned. A few are enthusiastic though, determined to glean something useful from the effort spent in getting here. Some constructive interviews are actually conducted, sensible questions asked. Perhaps the reports that will materialise will bear some fruit in spreading the message that strange things are afoot in the world after all?

Worryingly, however, most of the time the crews and reporters are clustered around the character in the red cape, an elderly man who calls himself "Master of Pendulums" and claims to speak with aliens telepathically every day. This is clearly what the media wants. As we learnt long ago with circle hoaxers Doug and Dave, sensible discussions and scientific observations can't hold a candle to the timeless appeal of geriatric eccentrics.

Finally we learn what this business about "alien technology" is all about. The owner of the shop comes clean. Their slogan is that Sony hi-fi is so good, it must be "alien technology" – hence the presence of people interested in the possibility of real such technology as a devilishly subtle marketing association. Marcus then makes the shrewd move, within earshot of a camera crew, of dropping a hint that microchip technology could well have been gleaned from crashed alien spaceships - and thus ensures himself a live spot on BBC Breakfast News. Unfortunately, this will take place, for some entirely unknown reason, in the freezing winds of the nearby Iron Age hill-fort Cissbury Ring at 8:30 am the following morning. That'll teach Marcus to be clever.

The three of us retire to a coffee shop for lunch. That evening, I tune into ITV Meridian's news in anticipation. Sure enough, up comes the report. It's a hatchet job, played for comedy. Our friend from the SS bases the whole report around the fact that more media people were present than ET enthusiasts, and that the whole thing was a PR scam anyway. After the briefest of interviews with the editor of "Alien Encounters" magazine, it's then straight over to the Master of Pendulums himself. With all the "wacky" camera angles and "spooky" zooms, he tells the viewers how he regularly chats with aliens over breakfast, who look at his hi-fi units and laugh, saying they were this primitive once. Apparently. I sigh with relief that none of our interviews are included.

I awake at 7:00 am the next morning to the radio alarm and Southern FM news. Into my dulled consciousness floats the voice of……the Master of Pendulums. All that remains of over an hour's worth of interviews with a dozen or so people. How we all laugh, as do the DJs as the bulletin ends.

All will be put right on BBC Breakfast News, however. Surely? At about 8:45 am, on comes the promised feature. It's amazingly positive. A few sensible snippets of

interviews, some crop circles, Martin gets to speak , everyone looks credible. Then it's over live to Cissbury Ring. Why, is anybody's guess, as the hill-fort is never shown in its entirety and it's only very briefly mentioned that UFO and circle sightings have been made here. Still, there's Marcus……but who's that standing next to him, cape flapping in the wind? Oh God, it's the Master of Pendulums.




On a live BBC news report, Marcus Allen attempts to maintain composure in the face of the curse of the geriatric eccentric.. *"On shuffles the Master of Pendulums. Any credibility to the repor dissolves instantly. The Master has a fail-safe method o communicating with ETs, he says - by playing tunes on a child's toy xylophone, duly demonstrated..."* - from Chapter 11, *Attack of th Red Cape.* Video images courtesy of BBC Television

Marcus stands, tellingly, with his back to the Master, as if pretending not to have noticed. With trepidation, I watch as Marcus launches into his spiel about the potential of real alien technology, which may well constitute Japanese TV sets according to some. He's good, putting a fair case for ET-inspired inventions, even if Marcus is playing his usual role as Devil's advocate.

On shuffles the Master of Pendulums. Any credibility to the report dissolves instantly. The Master has a fail-safe method of communicating with ETs, he says – by playing tunes on a child's toy xylophone, duly demonstrated. My jaw drops as inanity follows inanity, all sympathies with Marcus, visibly cringing next to this spectacle. It sure as hell ain't informative, but Lordy, someone out there thinks this is good television. Never mind sensible insights, this is what the viewers want. Apparently. The curse of the geriatric eccentric remains intact. Returning to the studio, the presenter resists commenting, but his expression says it all.

We exchange commiserations over the telephone as the morning progresses, Marcus threatening to strike off the Christmas card list anyone who ever **mentions** the Master Of Pendulums in his presence again. According to Martin, his

father-in-law, having tuned in specially, merely observed what many would have assumed – that people into this sort of thing are really a bit mad. Martin comes up with a quaint theory. Just as The Daily Star hired a bit of costumed space-totty to spice up their coverage, how can we be sure someone else, thinking the event was going to be more important than it was, didn't deliberately enlist a nutty old man to deflate any potential credibility to the event? Now where have we seen that concept before?
The moral of the story is: beware PR agents bearing invitations. (Actually it was all rather fun).

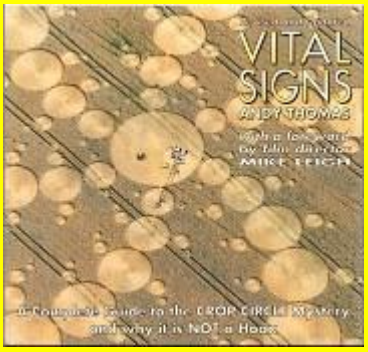
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"Swirled Harvest" (views from the crop circle frontline), is published by SB Publications, ISBN 1857702727. It is available in bookshops or can be bought from Amazon at the following link.

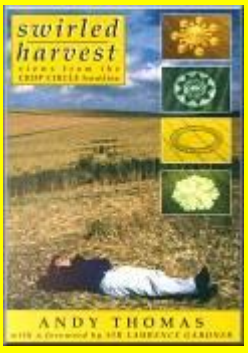
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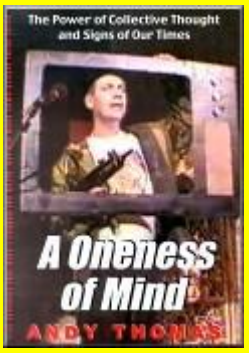
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**Vital Signs** is the ultimate guide to crop circles for newcomers and an essential summary for those already entranced, including the most complete chronological account of the crop circle mystery available. What are crop circles? Where and when do they appear? What could be *making* them? What strange effects surround them? What do they *mean*?




**Swirled Harvest** is a collection of essays and pieces written over an eleven year period – a valuable glimpse into the crop circle culture and how those within it view the world outside. It provides an informative, entertaining and important document of the ins and outs of researching the paranormal.




**A Oneness of Mind** is based on transcripts from Andy's performances. It makes up an astonishing and controversial volume covering many inspirational topics. Famed for his lively, theatrical presentations, Andy explores the huge power of collective thought and looks at the global and personal implications.



Richard M. Dolan was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1962, the son of a police officer and nurse. He went to the University of Rochester, where he focused on German and Soviet studies before moving on to diplomacy. He became a American Cold War business writer and began taking an self-employed subject of UFOs in 1994. In 2000 he interest in the And The National Security State" published "UFOs 1973 and overnight established Volume 1 1941 to perceptive and authoritative himself as a commentator on the subject. The book made a major impact not only because of the thoroughness with which he covered the subject but also because of the style and originality of his insights and observations. His approach was refreshingly different and he touched a chord in the hearts and minds of many who take an intelligent interest in the subject. He is currently working on volume 2. A fuller biography can be found at: http://keyholepublishing.com/about.htm

The following article originally appeared in the American version of UFO Magazine in 2003 and is reproduced here by kind permission of the author.

# What are the Triangles?

**By Richard M. Dolan**

Sightings of "impossible" craft in the sky are universal. They are also **A** Triangular Problem, universally ignored. Ignored, at least, by the official channels and sources of power in our society.

This is nothing new – students of the UFO reality have always known this. Nor is the blanket of denial and disinformation associated with this topic anything unique. I have howled into the wind about this many times, decrying the inability and unwillingness of our mainstream media to discuss an entire range of topics. Yes, this is old news.

As strange as UFOs are, I often think that the silence of official channels is more surreal than the objects themselves. How can it be possible that so many thousands (millions?) of witnesses continue to be ignored?

One subset of the phenomenon, however, has broken through to the mainstream. Perhaps we should say – ahem – the 'fringes' of the mainstream. These are the infamous triangular craft. America's mainstream culture, ever rigid and narrow, yet acknowledges from time to time that such things exist. Frankly, it would be hard not to. The reports are simply too many and too clear.

They also come in constantly. Less than a month ago, as I write this, was an interesting – yet typical – report. Shortly after midnight on March 2, 2003, a security guard at a gated community in Dallas saw "a single solid black triangle, with no lights of any kind," travelling west for about 8 or 9 seconds. The object was completely silent, and seemed to float across the sky at about 1,200 feet. The witness watched the triangle disappear behind one of the homes, contacted the Dallas Police Department, and was told that no one else had reported the object. This report is available on the web at the National UFO Reporting Centre (NUFORC). Indeed, the witness spoke with Peter Davenport, who runs the organization, and was found "to be quite sincere and credible." [1]



Computer rendering by witness of a Triangle encounter in Kingston, Ontario, in January 2003. Thanks to Peter Davenport of NUFORC and witness for permission.

Here is another recent report from NUFORC. On January 24, 2003, a man saw a triangular-shaped object while driving at night down a quiet Arkansas road. He slowed down, turned off his radio, and rolled down his car window. He wondered if this was a helicopter. But he heard no sound. Coming to a complete stop, he watched the object hover 10 feet above a telephone pole, and noticed that it had three lights (red, white, and blue), one on each corner. He saw the object for a total of four minutes, "and then it was gone."

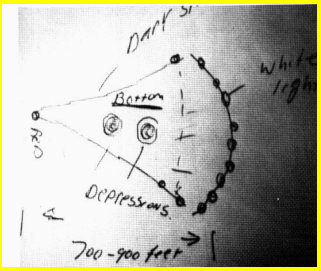
Neither of these witnesses described the size of the craft they saw. In fact, the sizes of these triangles have ranged from small to immense. Most are slow moving and low flying; occasionally people describe them as boomerang-shaped instead of triangular. The fact that they fly so low, and so slowly, is a problem that demands an explanation, both scientifically and politically. Complicating the matter are the many witnesses who describe exceptional speed and manoeuvrability relating to these triangles, such as flat pivot turns or incredible acceleration. It is a tricky problem, indeed.

The famous Illinois "cop sighting" in early 2000 of a giant triangular object is the best known case of the flying triangles. In this instance, the object was substantially larger than a jumbo jet, flying at perhaps 500 feet altitude, either silent or extremely quiet, moving slowly, and edged with an array of blinding white lights. All this is certainly extraordinary. But what really makes this case difficult to explain is the object's manner of acceleration. In the words of one officer, it was able to shoot away "in the blink of an eye" with "no sound whatsoever." One moment, it was a few hundred feet away; the next moment, several miles away. [2]

## What does that?

If this were an isolated incident, one could write it off as a mistaken observation of some sort. But this is not isolated, and here the problem deepens. For an object possibly identical to this one was seen many times in the early 1980s in the Hudson Valley, just north of New York City. On December 31, 1982, people from several different locations reported such an object. This was no mere New Year's Eve partying, either; the object was filmed with a movie camera. The object was huge, triangular, flew at less than 500 feet, had bright lights, made tight circles in the air, and at one point shone a beam of white light onto a highway. In July 1984, the same or a similar object invaded the air space of the Indian Point Nuclear Facility, disabling the electronic and communication systems while it hovered over a reactor. During the early 1980s, the number of witnesses to such events in the Hudson Valley numbered in the thousands. Indeed, on one occasion, video was shot of a sufficient quality that it was sent to the Jet Propulsion Lab in Pasadena. Conclusion: something real, all right, but not a conventional aircraft. [3]

Then we have the Belgian cases, which seem to have been part of series of sightings stretching from Britain to Russia from late 1989 to early 1990. On November 29, 1989, a dark triangular object, making a humming noise, hovered over a Belgian police car and shone a brilliant beam of light on it. Many people reported this object; it was seen throughout the winter, then most spectacularly on the night of March 30, 1990. That night, thousands of witnesses saw a low-flying triangular UFO (or UFOs) with bright lights flashing in the centre. This object could fly as slow as 30 mph, but it accelerated to incredible speeds. Witnesses were adamant that no plane belonging to any air force could have caught this object. Indeed, that night the Belgian Air Force sent two F-16s to do exactly that. The triangles were captured on several NATO radar stations; the jet pilots could also track the objects on radar, and even see them – at times.




Security guard drawing of the object that hovered over the Indian Point Nuclear Facility, July 1984.

But the F-16s – the top interceptors in the world – were completely outclassed by the triangular craft. Not only could it accelerate at incredible speeds, not only could it stop on a dime, but it could change its altitude almost instantly. At one point, for example, radar installations and amazed witnesses observed the triangle to drop about 4,000 feet in one second. That's nearly a mile.

Moreover, this object moved intelligently, at least in the opinion of the Belgian Air Force Chief of Operations, Colonel Wilfried De Brouwer, who stated "There was a logic in the movements of the UFO." Nick Pope, who soon after this manned the "UFO Desk" in Britain's Ministry of Defence, had contacts within the Belgian government who "elicited the conclusion that a structured craft had flown over Belgium that night." They had no idea, they said, of what that object was. [4]

Like the other triangles people have seen, the Belgian object was real enough. The real question is, to whom did it belong?



Photograph of the triangular object over Belgium, April 1, 1990.

## Ours? Or Theirs?

Many people have suspected this to be a secret American project. Officially, however, there is no type of aircraft with a perfectly triangular planform. The B-2 stealth bomber is an angular and odd looking beast, but it's not a triangle. Nor can it do what the triangles do.

There is good reason to believe that the U.S. has developed a triangle. In August 1989, A former Royal Observer Corps member was working on a North Sea gas rig about 60 miles off the Norfolk coast. This man, named Chris Gibson, has been described as one of the world's experts in aircraft recognition, and competed in international recognition tournaments where a long distance shot of an aircraft would be flashed on a screen for a fraction of a second. At the time of the sighting, he was writing an aircraft recognition manual.

What he saw that day was a matte black aircraft shaped in a perfect isosceles triangle, with the nose angle at 30 degrees, in a refuelling operation with a KC-135. Two F-111 fighters accompanied the craft. The triangular craft was slightly bigger than an F-111. Aviation writer Bill Sweetman noted that "no aircraft other than a supersonic vehicle, or a test aircraft for such a vehicle, has ever been built or studied with such a planform."[5]

Generally, people have attributed this sighting to the fabled Aurora, the alleged successor to the world's fastest "official" plane, the SR-71 Blackbird. Of course, the Aurora doesn't officially exist but the rumour mill gives it dimensions that seem to be compatible with what Gibson saw.

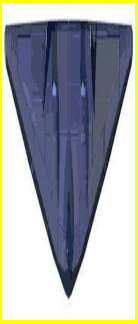
But given that the Aurora (or the same aircraft under a different name) exists, it is unlikely that this is the craft that buzzed Belgium in 1989-1990, much less is responsible for the Hudson Valley sightings. The Aurora is said to be hypersonic, meaning that it is faster than Mach 5, and is rumoured to move as fast as Mach 8. But, hovering? Changing altitude instantly? There are no accounts of Aurora – none by aviation writers, anyway – that indicate it can do anything like that.

## The Black Manta

There is an aircraft in the land of legends that comes closer to fitting the description of some of these triangle sightings. It is the Black Manta, TR-3, another aircraft that "doesn't exist." All we have, apparently, is the rumour mill, which gives this object the ability to hover silently. There are said to be two very different versions, the TR-3A and the TR-3B. The first is supposed to be about 45 feet long

and 15 feet high, with a 65 foot wingspan. The second is said to be a massive 600 feet across.

Bearing in mind that none of this can be confirmed, the most detailed information I could find on this elusive creature of the sky is that, among those who believe it exists, it is said to a tactical reconnaissance aircraft, first operational in the early 1990s. Funding and tasking come from the NRO, NSA, and CIA. The outer coating of the TR-3B is allegedly reactive to electrical radar stimulation and can change reflectiveness, radar absorptiveness, and colour. It is therefore exceptionally stealthy. More than this, however, it is said to have indefinite loiter time at high altitudes (as high as 125,000 feet), and the ability to travel as fast as – strap yourself in – Mach 9.



Artist rendering of the TR-3A Black Manta

By no means am I an expert on the technology involved here. Those who say they are tell us that the TR-3B has something called a Magnetic Field Disruptor, which is a circular, highly pressurized, mercury-based plasma filled ring surrounding a rotatable crew compartment. The plasma is accelerated to extreme speeds which is said to result in "gravity disruption" and can neutralize the effect of gravity on mass by as much as 89 percent. This is not exactly antigravity, which provides a repulsive force, but for all intents and purposes makes the vehicle extremely light, with obvious correlations in performance, including acceleration in all directions.

This, at least, is the claim from the website of Edgar Fouche. One scientist has told me that the technical details, such as the speed of rotation of plasma) are "not credible." While Fouche's site provides an excellent overview of the Black Manta, much of the information derives from anonymous sources, and it is always possible that details can be wrong even while the big picture remains fundamentally sound. [6]

While recognizing that any discussion of the Black Manta is highly speculative, some of the claims regarding it at least come close to the performance characteristics of the triangular UFOs. Is the craft real? I have no idea. While a few aviation writers acknowledge the possibility that it's real, no one can confirm it, and most appear doubtful. Indeed, there those who even doubt that there is such a plane as the Aurora.

For my part, I find it difficult to deny that the U.S. military has a flying triangle. Knowing the credentials of Chris Gibson, if he saw a matte black isosceles triangle being refuelled by a KC-135, I am prepared to believe him. I am also prepared to accept that there are probably other deep-black aircraft out there. The U.S. government has a history of declassifying military technologies at its convenience. By the time the U-2 was public, its successor, the SR-71 Blackbird, was not long in following. We learned of the F-117A stealth fighter in 1988, for instance, only when

it was decided to increase production substantially and that it would therefore be impossible to hide any longer.


Artist rendering of Aurora

## Chronology Problems

But even the aforementioned candidates don't explain the triangle phenomenon. Even if something as exotic as the Black Manta is real, it is clear that this would only explain sightings since the 1990s.

Or would it? How far back could we push the technology and this aircraft? Could the Black Manta have been responsible for the Belgian sightings of 1989 and 1990? And even if that is so, what does one make of the Hudson Valley sightings, which are earlier still? At what point do we move from the improbable, to the implausible, to the ridiculous?

I wonder whether the TR-3A or TR-3B explain the following sighting:

On this occasion, a clear fall night in Hastings, Minnesota, multiple witnesses saw a triangular craft approach from the east at a high rate of speed. When it was nearly overhead at about 5,000 feet, it "stopped dead in its tracks." The object had a reddish orange light at each of its corners; these lights sometimes turned greenish. It sat motionless and silent for half a minute, then made a slow 180 degree turn, "leaving a vapour trail." It then sat motionless for a few seconds and took off at an amazing speed. It stopped dead at a point about 15 miles away from them. It then lifted straight up "at incredible speed" and was gone.

The object in question certainly seems to have had much in common with the Belgian triangle, except it was seen in mid-October of 1968. As far as I know, this report has not been investigated, but there are quite a few triangle reports on NUFORC that stem from the late 1960s. Most of these reports provide good detail and appear to be truthful. These are available for anyone to read.

At the NUFORC, you can read about 25 reasonably detailed reports of triangular UFOs that were seen from 1967 through 1973, and there are several that are even earlier. This must be the tip of the iceberg: the first of these accounts was posted only in 1998, when the world wide web finally became a convenient tool for these people. We will never know how many 1960s witnesses of triangular craft died before they had the opportunity to post their story, but I'm sure there were a few. Indeed, British researcher Victor Kean, who started Project Triangle on the World Wide Web, tracked many triangle reports in Britain that took place in the 1990s, but pointed out that his first reliable triangle report dates from September 8, 1960. This was a "triangular-shaped craft with three white apex lights and a red light underneath," seen in Tyneside, Britain and two other locations that evening, all within a 10 mile radius and within 75 minutes of each other. Did someone invent flying triangles in the 1950s? [7]

If one feels that reports from that long ago are inherently unreliable and need to be discarded, what does one make of the large number of triangle reports from between 1973 and the early 1980s? That is, prior to the Hudson Valley wave? Reports that go so far back pose a serious problem of explanation. There are several factors to consider. First is technology. Granted that the black world of the military has always been substantially ahead of most civilian technology, still, we

can do a reality check by observing the development of leading edge aircraft during those years. For example, the first flight of the F-15 Eagle took place in July 1972. It was the first USAF fighter to have a thrust to weight ratio greater than 1:1, meaning it could accelerate going straight up. The first F-16 prototype flew at Edwards AFB in January 1974. The Rockwell B-1 bomber first flew in December 1974. The Apache helicopter prototype first flew in September 1975. These machines are all impressive, but none are anything like the reported triangles.

It is also important to realize that it was only by the mid-1970s that "fly-by-wire" (e.g. very advanced computer technology enabling an aircraft to make many adjustments per second) was becoming practical enough to allow for unconventional planforms such as the flying wing. Previously, the flying wing design (and by extension the triangle) had been inherently unstable.

Other problems arise when we look at the history of American defence spending. For instance, the USAF budget in 1980 was about $39 billion. Starting in 1981, with the advent of the Reagan presidency, it began a dramatic rise, peaking in 1985 at $99.4 billion. This is an extraordinary development, and while we can acknowledge that there was always a supply of secret money for special projects, we can also recognize that there was much more of it starting in the early 1980s. Presumably this translated into greater operational possibilities for leading edge technology. In other words, while it would still have been possible to fund expensive, secret, and exotic aircraft prior to 1980, it would have been easier to do this after 1980. [8]

Thus, when you examine the history of triangle sightings, track what is known of the development of advanced aircraft, and study the trends in defence spending, it becomes difficult to credit many of these reports as secret technology.

Difficult, but not perhaps impossible. After all, how many years ahead of our most advanced open and public technology are these triangles? It’s hard to be certain, but it doesn’t seem to be a stretch to anticipate similar capabilities in the public realm within the next twenty years.

## Political Problems

But to acknowledge that some group in the secret caverns of the military-industrial complex made this type of breakthrough opens up a new series of questions.

Let us return to the Belgian case, for instance. Belgian Air Force Colonel De Brouwer speculated that if these objects were B-2 or F-117 stealth aircraft (the only known American aircraft that might remotely fit the description), then the USAF had made no requests for this type of mission, as it would be required to do. He also added the obvious fact that the triangles did not "in any way" match the characteristics of either U.S. aircraft.

Still, the Belgian government asked the U.S. government whether or not, in effect, these triangles were American. The U.S. Air Force informed the Belgian Air Force and Ministry of Defence that "no USAF stealth aircraft were operating" during the period in question. Now, this could be seen as merely a carefully worded statement. No "stealth" aircraft – might this allow the over flight of an aircraft that is not, technically speaking, stealth? After all, the triangle over Belgium was tracked at least some of the time on radar. As far as this statement is concerned, it could simply mean that a non-stealth but highly advanced U.S. aircraft was responsible. [9]

If so, then we have a disturbing conclusion regarding how the U.S. Air Force treats its NATO allies. With the advent of Gulf War II, this may not surprise too many people. But in 1990, there was still a Soviet Union, and the vestige of a cold war. At the least, it seems neither polite nor intelligent to treat your NATO allies in such a manner.

Nevertheless, it strains credulity to see this as American technology. Then again, the entire UFO phenomenon strains credulity. That is, until you go through report after impossible report, recognizing that the impossible is here and living quite well in this demented world of ours, thank you very much.

## The NIDS Hypothesis - Big Black Deltas

For now, that will have to do regarding the chronological problems posed by the triangles. There are still a few possibilities to consider. The National Institute for Discovery Science (NIDS), based in Las Vegas, Nevada, has recently been looking into the matter of what it has termed Big Black Deltas (BBDs). These are essentially the large triangles. [10]

In 2002 an aircraft researcher submitted a paper to NIDS on the condition that it be published anonymously ("Big Black Deltas (BBDs): DoD, Not ET"). He argued that these objects are lighter-than-air (LTA) craft, or rigid dirigibles, most likely powered by "electro kinetic" drive, operated by the U.S. military. In other words, U.S. Defence Department airships that serve as large transport vessels, able to carry huge payloads at high or low altitudes, at speeds several times faster than surface ships. The author of the paper theorized that they have existed since the early to mid-1980s.

He theorized that these objects are quiet because LTA vehicles can make use of the "unconventional" electro kinetic system. They would need no propellers or jets, instead using aerostatic, lift gas, like a balloon. All you might hear is a slight humming from high voltage control equipment and an occasional coronal discharge in the older BBDs.

The NIDS author also discussed why the BBDs can accelerate so quickly. I have to confess that my science breaks down at this point, but the explanation is not especially detailed, either. The author argued that the LTA would not require a power supply, as its energy source could be fed remotely by a "ground based power system sending power to the electro kinetic platform by either a tether wire or by microwave link." The maximum transmission distance would be about 62 miles. The thrust to mass ratio of such a craft would be far superior to that of a jet fighter, "between 1.7 to 1 up to 3 to 1 if lightly loaded," which would enable it to accelerate very quickly, including up.

The author discussed other features of the BBDs, such as the ability to turn without banking or its occasionally intense lights. He concluded that "with a number of military mission profiles for such a craft and the technologies to build it having been well developed for nearly a century would any defence department NOT build it?"

This hypothesis seems primarily designed to address the Millstadt, Illinois sighting of early 2000. As a result, we are obliged to ask, if this object was ours, where was the microwave transmitter? This object surely was not tethered, and its acceleration wasn't just high, it was very, very high. Not everyone believes the power source concept described in this anonymous paper is valid. One of my correspondents pointed out to me that while beamed microwave power has been done, it requires a line of sight and what is called rectenna, an array of dipoles which is dangerous to

anything that gets in its path, such as birds. I am not aware, for instance, of reports of dead birds accompanying sightings of BBDs. Finally, it doesn't help that this paper is from an anonymous source. While the people at NIDS know who this author is, it would be nice if the rest of us get the opportunity to learn this person's identity and credentials (although one writer has assured me privately that the author possesses substantial qualifications).

NIDS has also plotted several hundred sightings of the BBDs (all from the 1990s) on a map of the United States, trying to see a pattern. In addition to using its own substantial database, NIDS obtained two other substantial sources of data, from MUFON and UFO researcher Larry Hatch. NIDS suggested that many of the BBD sightings occurred along corridors between bases of the U.S. Air Mobility Command (AMC) and Air Force Material Command (AFMC). These two commands control the logistics of American troop and equipment deployment. NIDS hypothesized, therefore, that the Air Force is flying these objects between AFMC and AMC bases. [11]

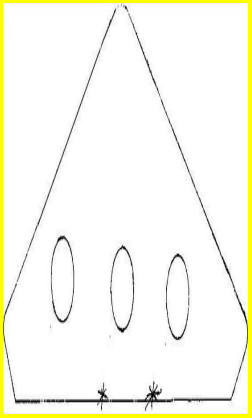
This may be just as NIDS suggests. But although it says the similarities among the various databases are "striking," I found the experience of reading these maps a little like deciphering a Rorschach test. There does seem to be a concentration of sightings along such "corridors," but I can't help wondering if there is another explanation here, and that this is a case where one could find all sorts of patterns to fit other hypotheses.

NIDS did fine work and worded its conclusions carefully. It is to be commended for this. But it must be noted that (a) its study includes only reports from the 1990s (b) only includes reports of the large triangles and (c) is restricted geographically to the United States.

There are such things as rigid dirigibles. An inventor name Michael K. Walden demonstrated a fully solar-powered, remotely controlled, LTA vehicle, to the U.S. Department of Defence and Department of Energy at Nellis AFB in 1977. They seemed to have been rather excited by this, but never picked up the contract. [12]

Reconstruction of UFO over Shiloh, Illinois, January 2000. Thanks to Darryl Barker





Police Report Sketch, January 2000, Officer Martin; Shiloh, Illinois Police Department

I have already said that the long history of triangle reports poses serious problems of explanation. But so does the geography. Researchers commonly write as though the triangles are a North American and Western European phenomenon. This seems to be true in the main, but I suspect it is mainly due to more active reporting in those areas. In any case, it is not entirely true. Russia, for

example, has had many triangle reports, several that occurred during the Belgian flap.

An especially interesting one occurred near Moscow on March 12, 1990. Several groups of UFOs were seen, some of which were spheres and discs, and some of which appeared to be huge triangular-shaped craft. Many local people spent the night on their rooftops watching these silent objects dart through the sky. In fact, during the spring of 1990, it appears that Russia had more, and more spectacular, UFO cases than did Belgium. The CIA retained several accounts of this wave from the Soviet-Russian media, although CIA reports themselves, assuming they exist, have yet to be released.

Thus, while the NIDS explanation of Big Black Deltas may shed some light, the hypothesis is far from proved, and at best is only a partial solution to the mystery of the triangles. Are we to assume that some covert American group was flying triangles (along with other UFOs) throughout Russia during the decline phase of the Soviet Union?

## A Shadow Government?

There is perhaps one last terrestrial explanation, but it isn't a pretty one. Could there be an ultra-black group behind the triangles, one that is so far removed from ordinary channels that the American military establishment has lost control of it? Could such a secret group exist?

Our national security apparatus has many layers of classification (including above top secret) and extreme compartmentalization. There is no question that the American military possesses unacknowledged Special Access Programs (SAP) funded by countless billions of secret dollars. Congress provides no effective oversight of these programs, judging by the history of the few secret programs of which we know. A great deal can get swallowed up by our National Security State and we must recognize the possibility that the flying triangles are one of those things.

It is at this point that an analysis of the flying triangles merges with the UFO phenomenon itself. In the first place, the flight capabilities of the triangles appear to match those of the more traditional flying saucers. There are hundreds of known military encounters with UFOs. Most of these are cases do not show overt hostility, but neither are they especially congenial. Judging by the behaviours of both the American aircraft and of these objects, the UFOs do not appear to be under the command of the U.S. military. This can also be said of at least some of the triangles, such as the one that violated the air space over the Indian Point Nuclear Facility in 1984.

For many years people have been hanging around the outskirts of Area 51, watching all the fun things that fly around there. Bob Lazar and his friends were there in the late 1980s, filming bizarre craft that could hover and dart. In December 1990, Gary Schultz, a chemical physicist, was with a large group of people when they saw, in his words: "a huge, glowing saucer, which was pulsating a brilliant orange-red and flying slowly over the Jumbled Hills - and it was being followed by a military helicopter about a quarter mile behind." The object disappeared behind the hills and into the Nellis Air Force Range, while the helicopter eventually landed at a facility atop Bald Mountain.

There are many such accounts. Is this evidence that the U.S. military is testing field propulsion, e.g. antigravity, flying saucers? Possibly. We may have come very close

to such a revelation in the very curious October 1, 1990 issue of Aviation Week & Space Technology, large portions of which concerned deep-black technology programs, cryptic references to not-fully-understood exotic technology, and reports of black quiet triangles.

Would the other shoe drop? Would someone seriously mention the "U" word? The magazine came perilously close to doing so. One wonders whether someone else urgently desired to hush all this up. It is worth mentioning that Phillip J. Klass, a long-time UFO debunker, was a leading figure with the publication. Neither the staff of AW&ST, nor those of Jane's Defence Weekly, have followed up in a serious way on this.

Presumably they are still terrified of the UFO topic. Or perhaps there something more involved, a quid pro quo? Whatever the answer, they are the watchdogs that never barked.

Compare their silence to the fine work of journalist George Knapp. Here is a man who obtained many solid leads out of Area 51, several of which indicated efforts to understand and duplicate alien technology. He spoke to members of Congress who were blocked in their attempts to get answers. But no mainstream publication has followed up on his leads.

## Conclusion

We are facing a situation in which we know that some triangles are ours (as the 1989 sighting by Chris Gibson demonstrates), some triangles are big, some are small, some do not appear to be "ours." If there is a single terrestrial explanation for this, it would have to be a shadow group, most likely among people deeply immersed in the world of black defence technology who developed their own agenda independent of any formally established government.

One person with whom I write, and whose judgement I have come to trust, tells me he is "ninety-five percent" sure that somewhere along the line the U.S. military and scientific minds in the secret world have indeed developed operational field propulsion. In other words, defeated the problem of gravity and are thus responsible for at least many of the triangles. Another person, someone in whom I place high esteem and credibility, tells me he thinks it's unlikely this is so.

While this is difficult to sort out, I am still left with a nagging question: if the American National Security State somewhere along the line invented some version of the Flying Triangle, why is there no evidence that it has ever been used in our recent wars? Would it not have been useful during the Gulf War of 1991? Or now? There are, of course, answers to this question. It may have been used secretly and no one has found out. Or, the military planners may have believed that it was unnecessary for victory and hence still more valuable as something secret. Still, it seems odd.

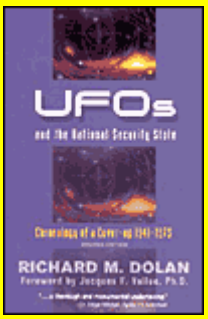
I think it's likely that there are secret, terrestrial, triangles out there. But it also looks to me that some, and perhaps most, of the triangles are "not ours," that is, alien of some sort. In my own view, since I think this is true of the UFO phenomenon in general, it is not especially difficult to see it as true of the triangles. What we can say for now is that there is no explanation yet offered to the public that brings all these triangles down to earth. There is a large body of evidence that continues to elude conventional explanation. The triangles do not all appear to be "ours."

Notes

1. The National UFO Reporting Centre website is at http://www.nwlink.com/~ufocntr/
2. Darryl Barker's website, *Illinois UFO* is at http://www.dbarkertv.com/UPDATE.htm
3. Night Seige, The Hudson Valley UFO Sightings, by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Philip J. Imbrogno, and Bob Pratt, Llewellyn Publications, Second Edition, 1998.
4. See Don Berliner (with Marie Galbraith and Antonio Huneeus), UFO Briefing Document, Random House, 1995.
5. Bill Sweetman, *Aurora*, p. 13-15, 64.
6. See http://www.pastpresentfuture.info/alien_ufo_secret_fouche_tr3b.html; by no means is Fouche's the only such site on the Black Manta.
7. Project Triangle website is at http://homepage.ntlworld.com/project_ft/
8. Walter J. Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue, A History of the United States Air Force, 1947-1997*, St. Martin's Press, 1997, p. 282.
9. "Belgium and the UFO Issue," US Department of Defence document, 30 March 1990.
10. NIDS Triangle Research is at http://www.nidsci.org/researchnews.html
11. "Comparison of Unidentified Triangular or Deltoid Aircraft Location Patterns in Three Independent UFO Databases: NIDS, MUFON and Larry Hatch." National Institute for Discovery Science, June 2001. http://216.128.67.116/pdf/triangularcraftdatabases.pdf
12. See *Lighter than Air Solar*, http://www.lvcm.com/walden/

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## CONTACT

By Stuart Miller

Have you ever wondered just how our lives would actually be affected at a personal level if we ever did make contact with another species of Being? Much has been written in the past about the impact on Society and religion but these are general views that govern the whole population of the world. What would it be like in Britain and indeed, how would our own lives be touched or affected by such an event?

Of course, we can only really guess the answers. It's not something we're truly going to know about for sure until it happens but it does seem difficult to imagine life going on "as usual". I suppose there will be some who just shrug their shoulders and reckon there's not much they can do about it and those people will continue to buy their lottery tickets twice a week and watch "Corrie" as if nothing had changed. But these folk won't be able to hide forever. Even "Corrie" would start featuring

plot lines involving aliens in Weatherfield because it would be too good a script opportunity to miss. You might already begin to realise that a major worldwide event such as this is something that you won't be able to hide from for very long.

Do you remember that ridiculous Jeremy Beadle sketch from a few years ago when, with the complicity of her family, a lady was set up to believe that aliens had landed in her garden so she brought them a cup of tea and started singing to them? Is that what they can expect from us?

There are two scenarios to consider; hostile contact and friendly contact. I am only going to deal with the latter. I think it is rather obvious how we would react if contact were unfriendly. If we had time, we'd panic. If we didn't have time, then it's irrelevant.

I would divide friendly contact into two further sub categories; sudden and delayed. "Sudden" means a space ship landing somewhere without warning and a few ET's step out of the craft and make for the nearest McDonalds. "Delayed" means scientists or astronomers or the government telling us that in three weeks a space ship will be visible in the night sky and a couple of days later it is going to land at such and such. The fact that there is no warning with the first example and some warning with the latter would make an immense difference. The first scenario might produce panic. The second one will create unimaginable anticipation and excitement.

There is one more possibility, namely Contact where there is no contact at all. I am referring to SETI announcing they have received a radio signal that they interpret as extraterrestrial. This would be purgatory for some but for others, a safe compromise. We'd know there was somebody out there but that they were a long way off and couldn't hurt us.

Either way, the cat would be out of the bag and to mix metaphors, the game would be up! So what would be the impact on British Society?
In looking at this issue, I have decided to do the obvious and divide it into palpable sections – economic response, social response, and so on. In this article, I intend to look at the potential religious implications, specifically for Christianity. It would appear that neither Islam or Judaism have any problem with the concept of ET wanting to shake hands with us and indeed The Koran talks openly of Life elsewhere. A Rabbi I spoke to tells me that there is nothing in the Jewish Scriptures that in any way causes a theological problem for the Jewish faith as regards ET and that what reactions there might be would be purely personal.

Christianity on the other hand appears, superficially at least, to be presented with a dichotomy. The problem it seems is in the definition of Christ's role on Earth. We understand these days that God placed himself on this earth in the shape of His Son, Jesus, with the intention of saving Mankind and bringing redemption to all. Indeed, Christ is referred to as Our Saviour. So, does God only care for Mankind and bedevil the rest? Does it mean that his largesse does not extend to other Life

forms and that even though they may be far more intelligent and capable than us, they are still nevertheless dammed?

And if God's care and concern does extend to all other Life forms, does that mean that potentially, on other planets, Jesus has also appeared and that possibly the resurrection has been repeated countless times throughout the Universe?

There was only one way to get a viewpoint and that was to try to speak to someone with a foot in both camps, namely scientific and theological. That might appear to be a contradiction for some. Scientists are not known for their religious conviction as they are trained to deal with fact, but there are a great many that do have faith. While it isn't strictly relevant to compare the United States with the UK, as Christian religious practice there is differently balanced to ours, nevertheless a recent survey among a selected group of scientists showed that around forty per cent held positive religious views.

I mention the following incident as a matter of interest. My first port of call was to the press office at Lambeth Palace. The press officer was intrigued by my request and explanation of what I was trying to do, and engaged me briefly on the subject. After a few minutes, I asked him what he thought might happen if an alien walked into a church service? "Well", he replied, "It would be ushered out of the church in much the same way as a dog might be if it too had wandered in." Not encouraging.

My path finally led me to David Wilkinson. David's title is Fellow in Christian Apologetics and Associate Director of the Centre for Christian Communication at St. Johns College at the University of Durham. Apologetics? What has the poor man got to apologise for? Were it that simple!

""Apologetic" is a word that comes from the New Testament and refers to the relationship of the Christian faith to the culture around it.  I'm employed by St. Johns College here at the University of Durham in a Fellowship that explores how Christian Faith relates to both contemporary science and pop culture. That includes movies, television, music, those are the kind of areas I work in."



David Wilkinson

I couldn't help observing how relevant David's credentials were. With one foot on the scientific side and the other on the cultural side, he was perfectly positioned to offer opinion both as a scientist and a Christian, but also to agree or to disagree with those who claim that UFO sightings are a cultural phenomenon. Where did he position himself on that score?

"My own view on UFOs is that there are a number of unidentified flying objects that we cannot give any reasonable scientific explanation for at the moment. As you know, a great many UFOs as such have explanations behind them, from Stealth Bombers to all the rest of it. But to my own mind, there are a number of sightings that don't have an easy or immediate explanation and to be honest, I want to keep an open mind on that. There could be a whole number of explanations."

"At the same time, I'm cautious myself of making what I think is rather a big jump to saying that these are inevitably alien spacecraft visiting Earth. It seems to me that this is another step up on the argument and needs a degree of caution and debate about it. I simply want to keep my mind open to it. I don't want to be dogmatic in terms of "All UFOs can be explained by laser lights at rock concerts" etc."

“At the same time, I’m cautious myself of making what I think is rather a big jump to saying that these are inevitably alien spacecraft visiting Earth. It seems to me that this is another step up on the argument and needs a degree of caution and debate about it.  I simply want to keep my mind open to it. I don’t want to be dogmatic in terms of “All UFOs can be explained by laser lights at rock concerts” etc.”

“But I think there are other arguments, not least from the scientific area. My background is as an astrophysicist so from that background, there are issues about space travel or about the existence of other civilisations, and the development of intelligent and conscious life that I need to bring to bear on the question as well.”

I asked David to take a leap of imagination forward and to presume that intelligent extraterrestrial life does indeed exist, and that it chooses to officially make contact with Earth. From a Christian perspective, how would he feel about that?

“From a Christian perspective, I’d feel quite excited by it. I wouldn’t feel it to be a threat to Christian Belief. It would certainly be exciting as a Christian who values Science because it is one of the biggest scientific questions about the Universe that we have been pursuing for a number of years.”

“Secondly, it would be exciting from a Theological point of view because the God that I believe in, in the Christian sense, is a God who creates with extravagant diversity. I see that in terms of the billions of stars in the Universe and the diversity in the Natural World. For me, other intelligent Life out there in the Universe would simply be a reflection of God’s amazing diversity and creation.”

“Having said those two things, I think, then, there would be some challenges for the Christian Faith which would mean that I would need to think them through quite carefully.”

I asked if he could identify those challenges.

“I think the main challenge, which you’ve already mentioned, about the possibility of Christ having appeared on other planets, is one that has exercised Christian theologians over the years.  How would Christians then understand the significance of the Jesus Event? Christians believe that God became a Human Being in Jesus to do two things. The first was to show us what God was like in the sense that He became a Human being to communicate with us.”

“The second was to save us from what Christians call Sin, that which alienates us from God. The theologians who have thought about this in terms of extraterrestrial intelligence have asked themselves the question, “Was that Event once for all? For the whole Universe?” So that it happened two thousand years ago, in a particular part of Palestine, at a particular time, in a particular person, indeed on a particular planet. And therefore our job would be to tell any alien visitors about the Jesus Event.”

“Or would a similar Jesus Event happen on another world so that God, if there was a world of little green men and women, takes on little green flesh? “





Further enlargement of the object
Immediately to the right of Mary's head shows an oval or discoid craft with radiating gold spikes of light painted around its perimeter. In other words, what today would be called a UFO.

I asked if he considered that idea blasphemous?

“No. I don’t find it blasphemous at all. I find again I have an open mind on the issue. There is a sense in which some would find it blasphemous in terms of would it mean that Human Beings aren’t special? I don’t think that’s the case. I think the special nature of Human Beings is about relationship, not about us being the centre of the Universe. A friend of mine at Cambridge a number of years ago, when he was asked this said, “The God that I see in Jesus would do whatever is necessary.” I think that’s a good way of viewing it. If there was other Life on other planets, and if

it had come to intelligent self-consciousness, if it had rebelled against God in the same way that Human Beings have rebelled against God, then it wouldn't surprise me that God might have reached out to that Life in much the same way that God has reached out to Human Beings."

"But some Christians will disagree with me on that. I don't think they'd call it blasphemous but they'd take a different view. Fair enough. There are a lot of "ifs" in the argument."

You mentioned a couple of challenges. What other potential problems might you see?

"I think how the Christian Gospel works itself out in different cultures has always been a challenge to Christians. One of the things about the Christian Gospel is how it began in a particular part of the Middle East and has had to be translated and worked out for different cultures all across the world. In the area of ethics and how you talk about Jesus and understand Him, that's varied from Christian congregations in India to North America. There would be a challenge in how the Christian gospel relates in its specifics to a very different culture, like an alien culture. One would always believe there was some common ground between ourselves and aliens, partly if we're all produced by one Creator God. But there would also be difference and how you work out that difference always varies."

"Neither of these challenges are new for the Christian Church. We've been challenged by those in terms of encountering different peoples in different cultures over the years. But obviously the alien dimension would have a different feel to it. A qualitative difference, I think, in lots of ways."

Could the Church meet those challenges and survive?

"Yes. I don't have any worry about it in that sense. That's not to say that we'd simply produce some easy, simplistic answers. That's not been our experience. But my experience of the Christian faith is that it has always been strong enough to meet these challenges and I wouldn't worry about the Christian faith falling apart after the discovery of alien life."

Would there be an element within the Church that would seek to convert any intelligent life to Christianity?

"That's a good question. I'm sure there would be. I think Christians would view alien life with a diversity of perspectives. The Church is broad and there would be different views on the subject."

"My own position would be as it is with meeting people from different faith communities. That is, that first of all I need to listen and learn and understand where people are coming from. And secondly, to offer what is good news for me in Jesus. Now, I don't do that, I hope, in a way that closes down the conversation but

my belief is that I find in Jesus something exciting and something good and I simply want to share it with others."

Is there a conflict between a belief in science and the Bible?

"No, I don't think there's any conflict. Sometimes we need to be careful how we interpret the Bible. Science has often helped us to a better interpretation. Now, that's not to say that Science is the dominant way to interpret the Bible, it's much more complicated than that. But science and new discoveries can help us. For example, one of the things that people don't often realise is that the motivation for SETI in a scientific world came from Christian presuppositions. People like Richard Bentley and Christian Hoyguns, when they began to realize how big the Universe was, from their Christian faith, began to speculate about other worlds and alien life. And this was because they weren't constrained by the Greek idea that said, "In order to be special, we must be at the centre of the Universe." Hoyguns and Bentley and other astronomers said that what makes us special as Human Beings is relationship and that may not be exclusive. There may be other life out there that God is interested in as well. There was a very strong motivation coming from the scriptures, which led to the development of an interest in the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. As well, it may be that the discovery of extraterrestrial intelligence would mean that Christians would have to go back and understand again what the Bible was actually saying."

So it might actually induce a revisionist attitude?

"Well, it depends what you mean by revisionist. It is a loaded word. I would prefer a reassessment in the sense that the Bible is a book that speaks to every generation, as well as having continuity to it. How we read the Bible varies from generation to generation, depending on how we view the world. The fundamental message I believe is constant and true, which is about a God that loves us and cares for us and who gave Himself in Jesus. But certainly, there are parts of the Bible which would need to be looked at again, as is always the case."

Now that's a very interesting statement. When you talk about a reassessment, that strikes me as a very fundamental act, and I don't mean that in the religious sense, to go through. The interpretation that follows from that is that the implications for Christianity might be positive, but nevertheless would be very profound.

"I wouldn't want to predict that before it happened."

But could you see that happening?

"I think Stuart I would have to say "No" because as I've said, there has been a tradition already of theologians looking at extraterrestrial intelligence and thinking through what that would mean for the Christian Faith. Now, as I've said, that's led to certain challenges and certain issues have been raised. But it hasn't been profound in the sense of something completely new or indeed a conclusion that would say,

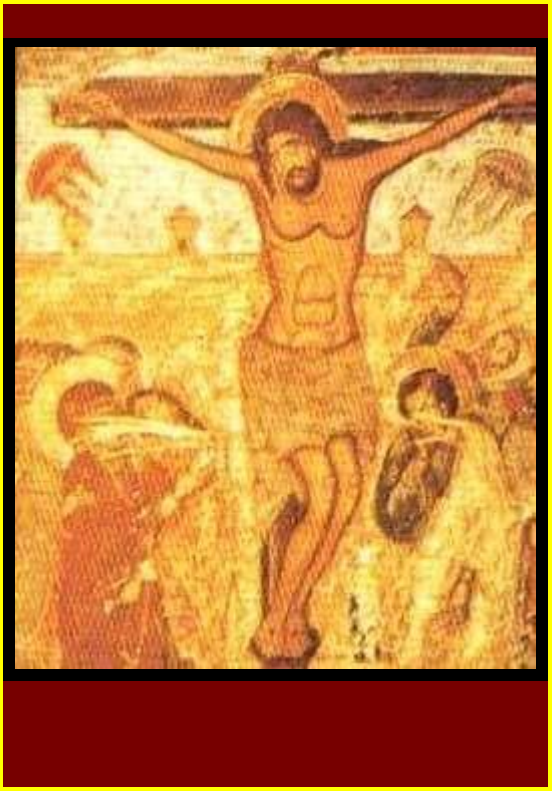
“Well, if alien life was found, this would be so mind blowing for Christian Faith that it wouldn’t survive.”

I can’t see why Christianity can’t absorb an impact like that and come out of it positively and maybe be reinforced.

“I’d go along with that. At the same time I think if Christianity is true, then one has to be open to bringing it into dialogue with every new discovery and be open to that dialogue in terms of where it goes, either with positive or negative affects, for your own particular understanding of Christianity. I’m not frightened about that.”

17th. Century depiction of the Crucifixion. This painting can be found in the Svetishoveli Cathedral in Mtskheta, Georgia. Note the two objects under Christ’s hands.

In the lower pictures, the objects are enhanced. Note the faces inside. Are they angels?





You said that some parts of the Bible would need to be looked at again. Do you have any particular parts in mind?

“I don’t off the top of my head. But I think that the insight that makes us special, relationship, is something that has been a core part of Christian tradition but has often been misinterpreted because of the Greek influences. So what in affect we would be doing is rediscovering parts of the Bible which are important in this area.”

Could you define what you mean by “relationship”?

“Yes. If you read the early chapters of Genesis, God’s relationship with Human Beings is characterised in a very special sense. One is that we are made in the image of God. Another is that we’re given stewardship of this planet and another is we’re given the capacity for intimate communication. Now those things mark out Human Beings from the rest of the animal and plant kingdom as represented in Genesis. And many biblical scholars in recent years have identified the core of that to be a relationship gift from God rather than a status gift. It’s all about God giving a special intimate relationship with Humans.”

“Therefore, if we then project that to extraterrestrial intelligence, the fact that God could be in relationship in a different way with other Beings does not undercut that sense of intimate relationship that God has given with Humans. He can have a number of special relationships that doesn’t undercut our position.”

Do you have any time at all for the modern phenomenon of people reinterpreting the Bible from an alien/UfO perspective? The most common example being Ezekiel. Do you have any time for that?

“I do have time for that in terms of people have done it with, no doubt, very good motives and have tried to argue the case. I don’t want to dismiss it before I’ve had a chance to investigate it for myself.”

“Having said that, my own assessment of the arguments that have been given, not just about Ezekiel but in terms of New Testament stuff as well, is that they don’t hold water. They’re not consistent with the text and they seem to impose an interpretation on it, which goes a bit too far. The Ezekiel material from Blomerick’s book to even Paul Davies who quotes extensively in one of his books on

extraterrestrial intelligence, just seem to me to be misreading the text and it's fairly easy to show that."

"Likewise with some of the Von Daniken et al claims about the New Testament that Jesus was an alien and the ascension becomes "Beam Me Up Scotty". It sounds nice and the parallels can be drawn about medical technology and the rest of it, but fundamentally there are other questions. In terms of the New Testament, if Jesus was an alien visitor, then how do we understand His teachings, how do we understand His death, how do we understand the Resurrection? Doesn't quite fit with the suggested scenarios."

"And likewise the content of Ezekiel's vision, apart from it's form, doesn't quite fit again with the postulated ideas about spaceships and so on."

"I want to take all of these things seriously. I don't want to dismiss it as New Age nonsense or whatever. But when it comes down to looking at the evidence, I'm not convinced. As well as being an astrophysicist, I also come as a theologian to this with the resources of two thousand years of Christian understanding and examination and exploration of the text and sometimes, those who are writing these type of books don't quite take seriously some of the things that would be basic to an undergraduate essay on theology, if that doesn't sound too judgemental."

Wearing your other hat as a scientist, what would your reaction be to contact?

"It would be excited surprise. I have to say, for me the scientific arguments are fairly strong against another form of intelligent, self-conscious life within the galaxy. Let me be clear about this. In terms of self-conscious life in other galaxies, I'm much more open and much more ambivalent towards it. But as you well know, the problem there is the problem of distances and transmission of messages or travel over such vast intergalactic distances. Therefore, I think I speak as a purely personal view, the scientific community is split on this."

On the issue of distances, it's a very commonly put point in response to "Are we being visited?" But is it not reasonable to presume that if a species of Beings is capable of contacting us and perhaps coming here, that they therefore have solved the problem of intergalactic travel?

"Absolutely. One could argue that. The question is however, how have they solved the problem of intergalactic travel? It's partly a circular argument. I'd be fascinated to know quite how they'd done it. My surprise would not be because "This is absolutely impossible", it would be a surprise that says, "We probably are alone in the galaxy. Now where have you come from and how have you done it?" And so it would be a learning opportunity as a scientist, which would be fascinating for me. It would also be something that at the moment our understanding of the present law of physics doesn't give us any prospect of, namely faster than light travel or indeed the possibility of intergalactic travel in ways that would be reasonable. It's not an argument that rules out extraterrestrial intelligence. It's just an argument that makes me somewhat sceptical about it at the moment."

Thank you David.

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The following is an article kindly sent to us by ANTHONY NEVARD giving a Roman Catholic viewpoint.

## The Question of Extra-terrestrial life – a Catholic Response

Could life as we know it have originated outside of Planet Earth? For long the stuff of science fiction, such an idea has increasingly become popularised as a serious hypothesis, linked with the notion of a vast universe of unfathomable galaxies evolving over billions of years. Life, we are told, was not originally created by God but came about through an interaction of natural physical and chemical forces. This has led to the presumption that it is probable that living creatures could have evolved on other planets and even produced intelligent humanoid beings that could have developed sophisticated powers of communication. Millions of dollars have been spent on the SETI project – the Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence. Is this really feasible, or does this whole notion suggest a reduction in intelligent life on earth? Would such a discovery prove evolution to be true? Could it undermine the foundations of Christian doctrines of Creation and Redemption through Christ? This article provides a response from a traditional Catholic position.

### Man's nature – destined for immortality

Man consists of both body and soul. The soul of every human person is created directly at conception by God, and is immortal. Its chief powers are the memory, understanding and will. Man and the rest of creation were perfect at the beginning. God also created pure intelligent beings called angels, many of whom, led by Lucifer (Satan), rebelled and were cast into Hell. Following the temptation by Satan in the Garden of Eden and an act of wilful disobedience (original sin) by Adam and Eve, our first parents, man lost his state of perfection and supernatural grace, which he was unable to regain by his own powers. As punishment for the Fall, the earth was cursed by God, resulting in suffering and death coming into the world. We should not therefore expect the universe to be still in the perfect state in which it was created.

Out of His love and mercy, God promised to send a Redeemer or Messiah to save mankind from eternal punishment. He did so at a precise time in history through the incarnation of His Son, Jesus Christ; born of a Virgin and truly man, but 'conceived by the Holy Ghost', so having God as His Father. Jesus offered himself to God as sacrifice for the sins of mankind by shedding His Blood and dying on the Cross. He was thus uniquely able to fully atone to God for the sins of mankind, so regaining for us Grace and the possibility of eternal life in Heaven. Following his Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven in His glorified state, Jesus Christ lives

now and will return at the end of the world as Supreme Judge of all mankind. The bodies of all human beings will then also be resurrected, and we shall live eternally with God in Heaven or separated from Him in Hell.

The Catholic Church is necessary for salvation

Christ founded His Church to provide the means for men to save their souls through baptism, and nourish their spiritual needs through life by her doctrines and sacraments. This requires assent of the intellect and will to God's revelation through the supernatural gift of Faith. The Catholic Church teaches:

"We believe that the Church is necessary for salvation, for Christ is the one mediator and way of salvation and he becomes present to us in his Body which is the Church, but the divine design of salvation embraces all men. Those who are in ignorance of Christ's gospel and of his Church through no fault of their own, who search for God in sincerity of heart, and who, acting according to conscience, strive under the influence of grace to fulfil his will, belong to his people, even though in a way we cannot see, and can obtain eternal salvation"

(The 'CREDO' of the People of God, Pope Paul VI, 1968).

Does the Bible suggest there is life on other planets?

God has, through His infinite power and love, created a vast universe of space and matter, most of it not being directly visible to us. Much of it might seem neither necessary nor useful to man, though this could just reflect our lack of understanding. In modern times, we have discovered a huge amount about the universe and planets that was previously unknown to mankind. New species of organism are still being discovered, but we still have no evidence of life outside the earth. God has not revealed an explicit answer either in Scripture or in Catholic doctrine as to whether some form of life could exist elsewhere in the universe. However, there are several logical and religious reasons for questioning it.

In the Creation account in the Bible we read:

"And God said: Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day and night, and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years: To shine in the firmament of heaven, and to give light upon the earth." (Genesis 1, 14-15).

This gives no indication of the 'lights' being created for living inhabitants. All the Acts of Creation of plants, animals and mankind are unambiguously connected, and relate only to our planet Earth. Following the creation of the first humans on the sixth day, we read:

"So the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the furniture of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made … and he blessed the seventh day…because in it he had rested from all his work which God created and

made." (Gen: 2, 1-3).

There is not the slightest suggestion here that life was created anywhere other than on earth. On the other hand, although divinely inspired and free from error, Genesis should not be read as if it were a modern scientific textbook. Though there is no statement affirming life exists elsewhere, the Scriptures do not positively deny the possibility. If we were to find that some new forms of non-human life do exist outside the earth, this would certainly be surprising and interesting, but would not be a threat to Christian doctrines.

What do the scientific facts indicate?

The commonly stated presumption, that extra-terrestrial life 'has to exist,' is generally based on the assumption of an evolutionary origin of life over millions of years. However, intensive efforts by scientists to prove that natural chemical processes could account for the creation of life on earth have been a total failure. There are many other reasons why an increasing number of scientists totally reject the evolutionary scenario and assert that the facts point strongly to belief in a recent origin of the earth and its living occupants. Previous missions to the Moon and Mars have failed to demonstrate any signs of previous life, and conditions on other planets are even more unfavourable to the existence of life. Since we know of no way life could evolve on earth, even over a supposed vast time period, if life does exist on other planets it must have been created directly by God. Our understanding of chemistry suggests that the essential highly complex organic compounds on which even a simple organism depends could only be based on carbon and could not have been created by processes of random chance. To imagine that the discovery of water elsewhere in the universe would be sufficient reason for believing there is probably life there is merely wishful thinking, based on the myth of evolution.

Just supposing other beings similar to man in having intelligence and free will might exist in the universe, they would require a complex biosphere to sustain their lives. To our knowledge, the nature and conditions of the earth make it uniquely suitable for life, e.g. suitable temperatures, atmosphere, chemical make up, pressure, gravity, light, etc. It is next to impossible that life could survive anywhere else in our solar system, let alone outside it. If there are planetary systems around stars in other galaxies, they might conceivably include places that could resemble the earth, but it seems highly unlikely that we could make any contact with them. The presumption that 'the odds are in favour of it' is based on unproven assumptions about the vast age and evolutionary origins of the components of the universe. It is increasingly acknowledged by many scientists that life cannot have evolved on earth, but some now think life came from outside by riding on comets and seeding the earth with viruses or microbes. This simply confirms the view that the evolutionary hypothesis is untestable, unrepeatable and unscientific. Rather than being based on evidence, it is more like science fiction, and used as an escape from the conclusion that the natural order of things cannot explain its own existence. It is logical to believe that the order and design of the material world

came from the creative act of an Intelligent and Omnipotent Supreme Creator. At their basis, these arguments about origins come back to differing philosophical positions and are not ultimately provable by scientific experiments.

Would ETI be a threat to Christianity?

If for the sake of argument we allow that intelligent beings with souls might exist elsewhere in the universe, this would seem to pose a dilemma for the Christian. Could such beings have been created in a state of perfection and continued to remain so over many generations until now? This would require that their conditions of life were unaffected by the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, and that they knew no sin, suffering or death. If their ancestors had also sinned as did Adam and Eve, they would also require to be redeemed. It is impossible that the Incarnation and Redemption of man by Christ could have been repeated elsewhere in the universe, as there are many statements in the Bible and in Catholic doctrine that make these events unique in time and place. It is also inconceivable that we should one day discover such beings and communicate with them, despite the fact that we have been given no previous knowledge of their existence in Christian teachings. God has provided for the salvation of mankind through the one Catholic Church, Christ's 'Mystical Body', which could not simultaneously and visibly co-exist on other planets. We have been given all the necessary means for all mankind to be saved and obtain eternal happiness in heaven, if we will accept and co-operate with God's plan. It certainly could not be necessary for us to know about or contact other such beings.

'Hold fast to that which is good'

My conclusion from these facts is that the evidence of true science, human reason and Catholic doctrine do not support the idea of intelligent organic life existing outside the earth. Although not explicitly forbidden to do so by Church teaching, we nevertheless always have an obligation to seek and embrace the truth, for this comes from God. It does seem incompatible with Christianity to hold a firm belief in the existence of "intelligent extra-terrestrial species", though we do know of powerful intelligent spiritual beings in the form of good angels and deceiving devils. Christ has promised that in the latter days there shall be, "tribulations as were not from the beginning of creation which God created until now …there will rise up false Christs and false prophets; and they shall show signs and wonders, to seduce (if it were possible) even the elect. " (Mark 12: 20, 22). We need to be on our guard, as God might allow evil forces the power to try to delude us into losing our faith in Him, using extraordinary phenomena, e.g. 'messages' supposedly received from space. Our defence will continue to be our trust in Christian doctrines, sound philosophy and good science.

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*"You thought they were FREE, didn't you Jimmy? Well we've got news for you... NOTHING in this Universe is really free, Jimmy, NOTHING. We want payment for the steak-knives."*



Sheryl Gottschall

# The Many Challenges of the Volunteer Ufologist

Sheryl Gottschall

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“It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson

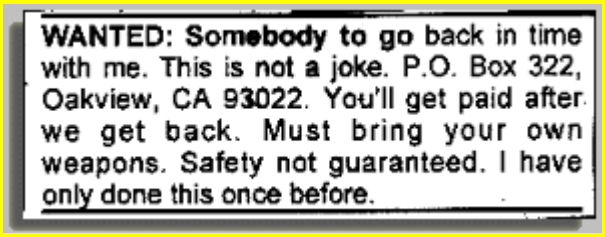
Becoming a volunteer Ufologist may be something you were born to do, drifted into or were dragged kicking and screaming into by your own close encounters. However you got to this place, here you are. Why do people work hard for causes they care about without getting paid for it? That question is often asked and there is no simple answer. Each person has his or her own reason for being involved. However, the one common theme almost universally agreed upon by volunteer ufologists is this: the one who gets most out of this work is the one who volunteers. This is the wonderful paradox.

For many who become what we describe as immersed in this field, but maybe better described as saturated, they have come to the realization that more does not necessarily mean better. Striving for more money and more things does not guarantee more happiness, fulfilment or meaning in life. As Philip Berman states in his book, “The Courage of Conviction”, “It seems important to bear in mind that it is entirely possible to be wealthy with things and yet, at the same time, intellectually and spiritually impoverished.” Ufology is one field where one does not have to worry about having too much money as many ufologists not only seek ways to devote more time to the study of the UFO phenomenon, thereby negating any possible extra energy which may be diverted into making more dollars, but gladly self fund their personal research needs, again keeping many financially retarded. Hence we have our first challenge - funding. There is little paid work available in Ufology. That’s why ufologists are forced to perform their work on a voluntary basis. Some write books about their research but they do not become rich from these ventures and probably only make a minimal return in relation to their efforts. Others will gain a reputation or following and manage to be part of a lecture circuit which may even take them around the world. Again, although their costs may be covered and they have a nice holiday they only make a small return. However, in general, many ufologists are forced to convert to voluntary simplicity so as to be able to redirect what money they do have into purchasing their equipment, funding their travel costs and their research efforts. Most are usually satisfied with this lifestyle as for many their financial desires become less as they become more and more engrossed in their area of interest and study.

Although the field of Ufology is not financially viable at this stage, people still become involved and there are other rewards besides money. One of those rewards is recognition. Recognition is a basic thirst that needs to be quenched. The need to be recognised, accepted and praised by one's own peer group can be worth far more to the heart than many other accolades. However recognition can unbalance a

researcher when it is not matched by an equally intense quest for the truth. Hence we are faced with our second challenge - ego.
While most ufologists are concerned with getting to the truth and heart of the matter and are generally immune to the need of the good opinion of others, some aren't as free from that need. Some researchers require the good opinion of others, recognition and validation. In the UFO arena one cannot help bump into, or up against, one's peers from time to time and if those peers do not share your motivation for being a Ufologist this can create division, disharmony and disillusionment. As the human condition and need for survival requires us to have an ego, it is only natural for us to want recognition. However, when the focal point for research shifts from the search for truth to the need for recognition, this is when Ufology can appear to be a highly- strung, ego-centred, unbalanced and negatively oriented arena. It is something that the UFO community struggles with constantly and to date no solution to the challenge of ego has been found.
On the flip side of this challenge is the freedom and general conditions necessary for each researcher to forge his or her unique identity. Ufologists are free to pursue their personal interest and areas of research while not being encumbered to meet such a narrow focus as scientists adopt. In this way Ufology brings together diversely interested people with many talents and opens the door to ideas which would otherwise be rejected. Without this compensation there may not be as many willing volunteers.
The third challenge to this field, which is rarely articulated but many sense, is the fact that the plight of ufologists is heavily laden with idealism, and uniquely high idealism at that. With such high ideals there is little tolerance for the apathy of the general population whose lethargy towards birthing the new world complete with extraterrestrial neighbours is considered to be like shooting oneself in the foot. Consequently, feelings of 'us against them' often arise which can lead to a sense of separateness and isolation from general society. The UFO community needs to constantly guard against these feelings by consistently building bridges to those it feels isolated from. In so doing, the trickle effect into humanity of changing perspectives nine yards' if given their heads, but one can only take the door being slammed shut in one's face for so long. The truth is we are trying to sell a product that nobody wants to buy. The collective conscious and will of society is stubborn at best and down right blinded by denial at it's worst. This is the challenge. Ufologists may have to be content with merely is maintained and evolution in consciousness is perpetuated.
The fourth challenge is maintaining momentum, avoiding burnout and staving off the feeling of getting nowhere. As many know, getting your point across to the general public and media does seem like flogging a dead horse at times. Spurred on by idealism ufologists will 'go the whole keeping the UFO subject alive until the general flow of consciousness catches up with what the UFO community considers to be 'old hat'. This may be all we can achieve for some time while we play the waiting game.
There are many more challenges but these are some of the most important and prevalent long term stumbling blocks for ufologists and we need to find ways to overcome them. So far we have not done so but tomorrow is a new day.

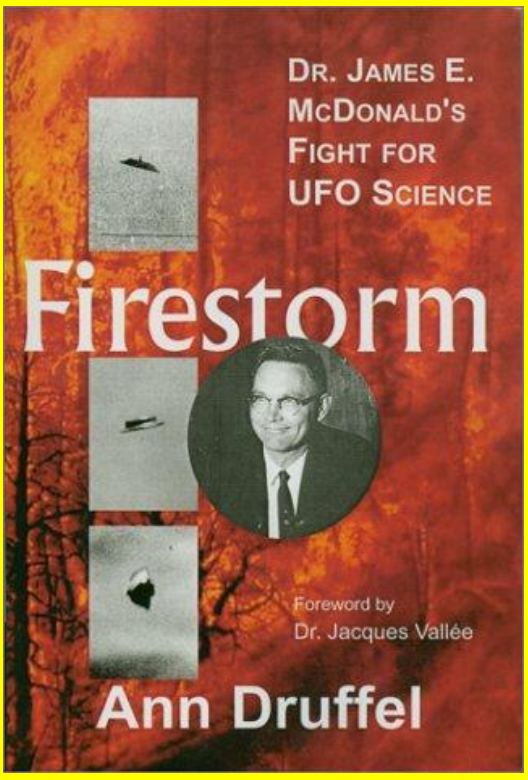
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WANTED: Somebody to go back in time with me. This is not a joke. P.O. Box 322, Oakview, CA 93022. You'll get paid after we get back. Must bring your own weapons. Safety not guaranteed. I have only done this once before.

## BOOK REVIEWS BOOK REVIEWS BOOK REVIEWS

Guide to ratings:

| | |
|---|---|
| ***** | You must buy it! |
| **** | Excellent |
| *** | Good |
| ** | So so |
| * | Avoid |




FIRESTORM

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Sometimes, Life conspires against you and in the case of this book, there seems to have been a plan to stop me reading it. Published in July of last year, various review copies went missing in the post and I have only now received one to read. Worth the wait.

Despite the title, which might lead you to think this was a novel, it is in fact the story of one man, a scientist by the name of Dr. James McDonald, who fought for scientific acknowledgement and recognition of the UFO phenomenon. His is a remarkable tale and we were lucky to have him on our side.

He was born on May 7th 1920 in Duluth, Minnesota of Irish-Scandinavian parents, and by the age of 34 was selected by Chicago University to help set up an Institute of Atmospheric Physics in Arizona, a State with unique atmospheric properties of its own. McDonald's specific interest was meteorology. Perhaps inevitably, and I say that a little cynically, Druffel spends some time telling us what a wonderful Human Being he was. With an I.Q. hovering around the genius level, his enthusiasm and manner made him not only popular as a person but also as a teacher and general academic. With over 50 technical papers published in prestigious publications and 60 semi-technical papers and articles published elsewhere along with various "Letters To The Editor" and so on, he was a man very much at the top of his subject and much admired by his peers.

He had a sense of humour too. He published an article for the general public on the shape of raindrops (comparing them to a hamburger bun) and even got involved in measuring the speed of swing needed to hit a home run in baseball. Married to Betsy and with eventually a family of 4 girls and 2 boys, this was a dynamic man who seemed to have it all.

Because of his speciality, the subject of UFOs was something he came across and quickly took a very deep interest in. His immense drive was based on his personal curiosity. Whenever a subject interested him, and it wasn't always science based, he would submerge himself in it until he knew more about it than even the alleged field experts. Given that mind frame, you can imagine the appeal that the subject of Ufology had for him.

He started quietly taking an interest in the early 50's but kept his head down. He was after all in a somewhat precarious situation. Holding a senior position in the science faculty of a well known university, it wasn't the done thing then, and it isn't the done thing now, for scientists of that status and esteem to put their professional careers on the line by getting involved in such populist and eccentric subjects like Ufology.

In the cases that interested him initially, he learned a couple of things. The first was that the USAF lied. He had trouble coming to terms with that at first, his generation was less cynical than ours and were reluctant to accept that their government or other authorities would attempt to deceive the public. He was also a man used to getting answers.

The second thing he learned was that members of the public who reported sightings to him, as knowledge of his interest grew, were in the main honest people who tried their best to describe, without embellishment, just exactly what they had seen. As a scientist used to strict procedures and protocols, this was a minor revelation, that “ordinary” people could deliver information in an appropriate manner.

What was interesting at this stage was his unexplainable percentage figures. As a meteorologist, he was able to give satisfactory and acceptable explanations for the majority of sightings reported. But there is always a percentage that just cannot be explained. Over the years and depending on which institution or individual is doing the researching, these figures can vary from as high as twenty percent to as low as 5 percent. McDonald’s hovered around 0.5 per cent to 2 per cent. Very low. Yet still there were sightings that this quite brilliant man just could not get his head round. Through contacts, he managed to get himself involved in Project Blue book, the USAF’s investigation into UFO’s, which these days is acknowledged as having been nothing more than a simple PR exercise. In the mid sixties, he went down to see them at Dayton for the first of many visits and spent a couple of days with Major Quintanilla, the head of the project, and Dr. Cacioppo, the senior scientist. What he found was absurdity – ridiculous explanations for reported sightings, which were plainly unreasonable. Even the once a month presence of astronomer Dr. J. Alan Hynek who came down to audit the Blue Book reports did not seem to make much difference. Hynek would change the odd thing that Quintanilla had put in but the remainder was often still impractical and farcical.

McDonald was frustrated. He thought a good many of the sightings were non-terrestrial.  There was a fine line here in McDonald’s definition. Non-terrestrial, which was a term he used often, did not mean from another world. It meant not of this earth. You could argue that this hair splitting equates with the difference between an agnostic and an atheist, and he probably held the view to satisfy his academic side, which may have objected to speculative threads. Later on, he would describe the ETH as the least unsatisfactory explanation possible – an interesting double negative.

And despite earnest assurances to the contrary from Blue Book, it was at this point that he began to suspect that there might be others somewhere else within the military complex who had a keen interest in the subject matter of UFOs.

His relationship with Hynek is explored in detail in the book and it was a stormy association. Hynek was, for more than 20 years, the USAF’s consultant on the UFO problem and is now seen as having been complicit in the Air Force’s campaign to debunk the UFO phenomenon. Later in life, Hynek changed sides and went on to

make a massive contribution to the UFO cause. But while with the air force, MacDonald attacked him constantly for his lack of initiative and investigation and poor scientific practice. He wondered how Hynek could be so blind? Hynek wasn't. He went out of his way to keep the air force consultancy, as he needed the money to put his kids through college. McDonald saw him as part of the UFO problem, not part of the solution.

While his deep curiosity about UFOs was well known, McDonald had delayed voicing his interest in the subject publicly. Despite his upfront bravado and courage, he also had a professional reputation to protect and he discussed his problem with close friends. In 1966 he "came out" and became heavily involved with NICAP, the most competent and able civilian UFO reporting and investigating organisation to have emerged. He was warmly welcomed. It was hoped that a scientist of his standing, coming out and speaking publicly on the subject, might eventually encourage other professionals to take the topic seriously.

Ah…….the best laid plans of mice and men! The publicity around McDonald's "emergence" instead drew interest from the Contactee Movement who suddenly perceived a new figurehead. NICAPS viewed them as a nuisance as the tabloid and even the serious press turned to them for sensationalist stories that detracted from what was considered to be the more serious side of UFO research. And yet, some researchers had a little bit of time for these people. Maybe, some thought, there were grains of truth among the ridiculous claims.
Druffel examines McDonald's relationships and the reactions of those closest to him in the context of his interest in UFOs. His wife Betsy was worried that his efforts would go unrewarded and that others might take the credit for any breakthrough he might achieve. Only one of his 6 children took any interest and that unsettled him a bit. The reaction of his work colleagues varied. A good many were supportive, even though some thought he was wasting his time. Those who disagreed were still respectful of his abilities and felt that he was applying best scientific practice, even though it may have been applied to a subject they regarded as pseudo-science

In 1967, he went to Australia to carry out official duties in his role as a scientist and in his spare time there, to look at the UFO scene in that country. Falling in with local research groups, he was able to speak to a large number of witnesses and examined many cases. His visit to the country caused some interest in the local media but at first he refused all interviews, preferring first to get on with his work. Towards the end of his trip, he did a couple of TV interviews in which he criticised Project Blue Book and the USAF. It would appear that doing the same thing in the States was acceptable but to do it on foreign soil was another matter altogether, and his comments caused a real furore back home. Suddenly, he found that his enemies were multiplying and Navy grants, which he had been receiving for nine years and which were a vital part of his income, were stopped. He appealed to NASA for replacement funding but was turned down. He still had income, but it was reduced.

It's easy to say this with hindsight, but he didn't "get it". He was pursuing this subject with naïve vigour and still thought that Blue Book was more a foul up than a cover up. Simply put, he wasn't paranoid enough. He failed to truly realize just how sensitive this subject was.

One particular enemy was Philip J. Klass who at the time was a senior editor at Aviation Week and Space Technology. The two of them engaged in a series of private and public arguments but there was something particularly nasty about the way Klass tried to get at McDonald and the way he harried those responsible for awarding him financial grants. One suspected ulterior motives.

Likewise with Dr. H. Menzell who also was a particularly vociferous opponent, but puzzlingly so. A scientist of standing and respect, he would argue against McDonald in the most ignorant, unscientific manner, frequently making himself look foolish. Again, one suspected other reasons. Intriguingly, Menzell was one of those listed as being a member of MJ12.

McDonald finally woke up to the politics of Science during the Condon Committee investigation into UFOs. The Air Force was compelled to initiate another UFO study and with a bait of a $500,000 grant, approached Universities around the States to take up the project. Eventually, the University of Colorado accepted the offer, the Air Force having been turned down by many others before hand.

Despite the fact the Air Force had stipulated that only scientists who were not involved in UFO study should be selected to take part, the UFO community were extremely optimistic that the Committee would investigate the best possible cases and make real inroads into the problem. Until, that is, a memo surfaced from Robert Low, the assistant project director of the Condon Committee, sent to the Dean of the University in which he revealed that the outcome and conclusion of the Committee's enquiry was already pre-determined even before the enquiry had been completed. And the conclusions were negative.

Naturally, civilian UFO researchers were incensed and made a fuss. When Condon found out that McDonald had a copy of the memo, he responded aggressively and "all hell broke loose". McDonald realised that in his earnestness and drive he had started a firestorm. As is usual in situations like this, the dishonesty and deception of Robert Low and Professor Condon himself was over looked. Oh indeed. The real issue it appeared was the "theft" of the memo. In truth, the true issue was the "theft" of $500,000 of US government funds by a disreputable and morally corrupt University faculty who were about as "scientific" in their approach as my dog is when he smells a bitch on heat. A true opportunity thrown away.

Druffel plots the continuing ups and downs of McDonald's careers, both his academic one and his interest in UFOs. In fact the two are irretrievably connected. She is ably assisted in this task by the voluminous journals that McDonald left behind and without which, this book could never have been written. But she was also there at the time, knew McDonald, and was a committed and able researcher for NICAP and became involved in many original cases that these days are looked

on as Classics. This lady has paid her dues and one can see that in the obvious attention to detail and insight she brings to the manuscript.

And because of her own experience, the cases she highlights are well presented and fascinating to read. The photographs are excellent.

The tragedy of Jim McDonald was his premature death at the age of 51. And as in Life, his passing too was controversial. An emotionally stuck man, for whom everything was intellectualised, he had occasional bouts of depression. As the continuing stress of what he was doing built up, and with his incessant travelling and extended periods of absence from home, he and his wife Betsy drifted apart and eventually she met someone else. The shock of this pushed him over the edge and he attempted suicide by shooting himself in the head. He missed his brain and instead survived but was now blind. He slowly recovered, seemingly started to adapt to his new life, but a few months later bought another gun, took a taxi out into the desert and this time successfully killing himself. His UFO colleagues, who had no knowledge of his occasional depressions, felt the shock of his death more greatly than his academic colleagues, who, while also devastated, were slightly better prepared.

There is one line of thought that McDonald was driven to his death by outside influences. That he might have been a victim of the CIA's MK Ultra plan, that he was getting too close and was too much of an irritant. It's possible.

So, what is this book? At one level it is an historical snapshot of the UFO panorama forty years ago, at a time when arguably, things were more exciting then than they are now.

It is also a Human story of one man's courage, conviction, and determination and how, despite the idealistic dream that we all hold, one man alone, even accompanied by expert and competent assistants, was unable to force a fissure in the stone wall erected to keep him and us away. You should not feel ashamed if after reading this, you put the book down and say, "Well, if he can't do it, then what hope is there for the rest of us?"

Druffel highlights a number of different strands that are worth mentioning. The first is the appalling fragility, arrogance, and pathetic over emphasis on status within the scientific community. Druffel paints an extremely bleak image of the posturing vanities of some of those involved, and it is not a pretty picture. Conclusion? Nothing's changed.

It also shows how hard McDonald strove to find conclusive proof of the reality of UFOs so that scientific colleagues would be convinced and would help support and lobby for a more scientific investigation. Always, this search for acceptance from science. Science could find the answer and bring respectability and acknowledgement of the problem. This constant striving irked me as I have rather eccentric views on this point. I don't believe we need science on our side and I don't particularly welcome its presence other than as a point of reference.

Neither has anything changed in relation to the theories that we hold today about UFO reality. Forty years ago, they were all there. About the only one omitted was the Hollow Earth theory.

The book is also an indictment of the Human Race. Frightened, terrified of thinking the unacceptable, permanently entrenched in selfish, ego related issues at the expense of the Greater Good. You conclude that UFO visitation is wasted on us. We don't deserve it. Our Condition is such that we are hardly a fit and proper race of being worthy of taking our place in the Galactic Community.

So it's depressing? Only in the conclusion. Druffel has produced a masterpiece and her enthusiasm and love for her subject is plain to see. At just over 600 pages long, it is both a story and an historical document and one that will appeal to both newcomers to the subject and dog-eared oldies! Enjoy.

Star rating: *****

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CHALLENGES OF CHANGE
Author: Stanley A. Fulham
Publisher: Amisk Enterprises Ltd. Winnipeg
ISBN: 09687321-1-9
Price: Canadian $19.95
Availability: Contact author at 149, Kay Crescent, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2Y 1L1.

This is another book about channelling although this one is slightly different and as such, is also slightly more interesting than the run of the mill.

The first point that struck me was that Stanley claims he is a former NORAD operator who watched UFOs come up many times on radar screens at NORAD headquarters. But that's all he claims in that direction. In other words, no assertions that he worked for some very secret organisation involved in dialogue with aliens or that he's visited other worlds or that he has a pet Gray that he keeps in the outhouse etc. etc.

His adventure started when he was recommended to a channeller who worked for the Transender Group, which consists of 43,000 entities that function as a single mind. He put questions to them and they answered. A refreshing aspect is that the language they use in speaking to him is plain and straightforward and not the flowery nonsense we often get in books like this. And a lot of what they allegedly say is practical as opposed to ethereal. That's what I like – solid facts instead of airy-fairy waffling.

The Earth it seems is monitored by two races of aliens – the Pleiadians and The Alpha Centaurians, both friendly and protective. The Pleiadians have the more advanced technology and can travel "instantly" by a process involving the folding of

the space-time continuum. The Alphas monitor us and call upon the Pleiadians for help if muscle is needed. And it has been on a few occasions, notably when a reptilian species wanted to invade us, as we seemed like attractive food for them.

Neither does Stanley claim that the Human Race is seeded from an alien one, but the Pleiadians are human shaped (the blond Viking types) and very tall. Of all the alien races out there, they resemble us the most in that on their planet, there is entertainment. For the rest, Earth is a place of much interest and amusement because of our emotional range, which is not only unique in the universe but also, provides much drama and excitement. Watching us react while watching sports events is particularly intriguing to them apparently.

There is a Council of Eight consisting of representatives from the Pleiadians, the Sirians, the Bootes, The Alpha Centaurians, the Zeta Reticulians, The Pousetis, the Comsulis, and the Orions. When earth started to develop, some of these races wanted to invade, some wanted to use the earth for research purposes, and so on. Eventually, and after a long period of time, and at the behest of the Pleiadians, an agreement was reached where by Earth would be left alone to develop.

Stanley then launches into a delightful detailed breakdown of all these other species and what they are like, and what they get up to. The funniest are the Zeta Reticulians who are totally enchanted by us and follow what goes on here. They amplify and draw in radio and carrier waves from Earth to keep up with the culture but they are still a way behind. Because of the time delay, they are still watching “Father Knows Best” and think everyone here drinks and smokes a lot and does too much laundry. They follow Earth fashions. It doesn’t bear thinking about.

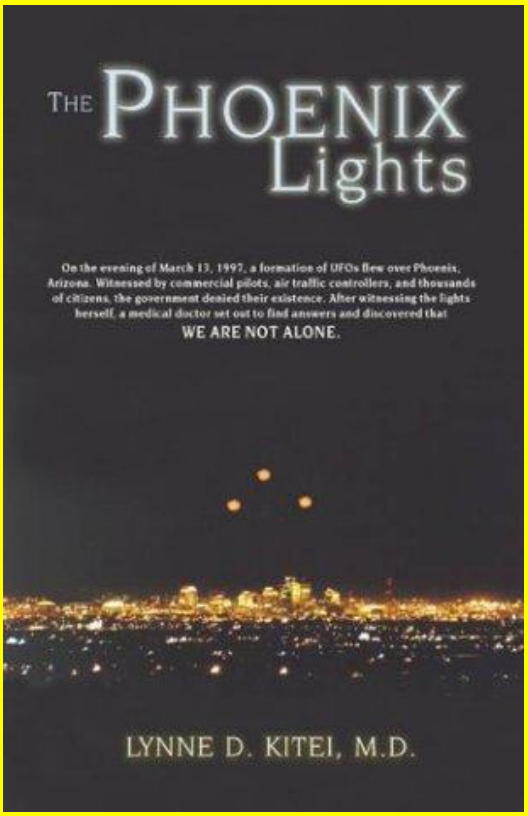
In every other book you read, Man is an unstable species who has discovered nuclear fusion and is a menace to the entire Universe. In this book, we are admired by aliens for taking something as destructive as nuclear power and turning it into something positive by way of nuclear reactors. Different.

And so the book goes on, weaving its way through UFO history and interaction, explaining this case and that, and a rational for alien thinking. Major issues are discussed and clarified. Stonehenge, Nazca, artefacts on Mars and the moon, the Brown Mountain lights, Billy Meier, Albert Bender, portals, the environment, UFO crashes, religion and so on. Very little is left out.

As with many books in the UFO field, you can choose to either believe or disbelieve, but you don’t need to believe to enjoy this book. And I did. Very readable, informative and good fun.

Star rating ***

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## THE PHOENIX LIGHTS

Author: Lynne D. Kitei, M.D.
Publisher: Hampton Roads Publishing Company
ISBN: 1-57174-377-4
Price: £8.07 at Amazon, see link. Should also be available from bookstores as well.

http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/1571743774/qid=1077639066/sr=1-8/ref=sr_1_8_8/202-8127571-8707011

If you are interested in UFO's, as you appear to be, then you must have been hiding somewhere if you have managed, over the years, to avoid the film of the Phoenix Lights. Can there have been a better-filmed UFO event in history? I can't think of one.

The crux of the matter regarding this case is that a substantial part of a large American city saw the phenomena, and filmed it. This is not an instance that relies on the evidence of one witness.

An interesting point about this book is that the author is a "civilian" – in other words not a recognised researcher. You'd never guess. Also, it's all told in the first person.

On the nights of March the 4th and 5th.1997, a series of strange coloured lights appeared over the city of Phoenix in Arizona. Or at least, what happened on those days caught the attention of the media and the population of the city, but Lynne and her husband Frank had been observing similar lights on and off for the previous two years. Not only had she seen them but she had also photographed and filmed them too.

Orangey yellow in colour, sometimes golden, The Lights would hover, devoid of any sound. They would fade and then reappear. They would merge, blend, change, and

assume different symmetrical positions. There would be three or six of them, sometimes seven. Some people thought they could discern a triangular shape in the darkness to which the lights were attached. One witness calculated the length of the object to be more than a mile long. When it passed in front of the moon, it became translucent. Most importantly, the lights were seen by thousands of people.

There were actually two shows in town that night. Two more Lights appeared a few miles away and were seen by a witness who also observed two Air Force fighters from the nearby Luke AFB go up to intercept. The Air Force denied any planes were flying or that they had received any calls from the public about the matter. They were lying.

One caller to The National UFO Reporting Centre claimed he was from the military and gave a very detailed account of what had occurred including the names and ranks of the pilots sent up to investigate, the timings involved and even details of radio conversations that took place between the fighters and the tower. The Lights hadn't fled as the planes had approached and the pilots had managed to photograph the object with gun cameras. It was also alleged that their targeting radar had been neutralised by the phenomena. Because researchers at the Reporting Centre had no way of verifying this report, the information was not published.

Lynne was a Doctor by profession and a public educator. She wasn't ignorant of UFOs but had up to that point no interest. Of all the video footage available, it was hers that the media had used the most. Her imagination had been seized by the whole experience and she desperately wanted to know what she had seen. But at the same time, she was very wary of getting involved, of attracting media interest (her footage had been used anonymously) and of having her privacy invaded and her credibility questioned.

On top of that, she also felt a strong urge that she should do something, that somehow, because she had seen The Lights before others and had filmed them, that it was almost her duty to take it further. What's more, the city council appeared totally disinterested in what had happened, to the point of mocking one councillor, Frances Barwood, who had suggested a police investigation. Everyone seemed to be lying; the police who said they had only had five calls, the air force, even councillors themselves. One elected official was known to have witnessed the entire "show" with his wife and yet said he hadn't, and objected to an enquiry. Barwood, the councillor who had suggested the investigation, was bombarded with ridicule and abuse and later on, felt unable to continue to live in the city, and eventually moved.

Do you remember the televised press conference the council called? They were going to make an important announcement. Everyone waited with baited breadth, hoping for something significant. And out walked some clown, dressed as an alien, cheerily waving at the ensemble. Phoenix, you have morons at the top of the municipal pile.

So Lynne's progress was slow. She was eventually pointed in the direction of one recognised UFO investigator, Peter Davenport, and then moved on to another, Bill Hamilton. Eventually she got to Jim Dilettoso of Village Labs, a company that built computers for the government and also provided special affects for Hollywood. Jim was a UFO buff and on behalf of APRO, had developed the first software for examining photos of UFOs that enabled the pictures to be tested scientifically.

The TV media did their bit from time to time and were generally supportive. In fairness, some programmes covering the event were very blunt and direct and demanded answers. Some weren't shy of accusing the Air Force of dishonesty. The press were less supportive.

If you ever wanted confirmation that Ufology can attract the weird, then an incident in this case exemplifies it. A MUFON investigator surfaced whom Lynne gave the name "Martin" to. That was not his real name but she wanted to protect his identity, though why I can't fathom. One explanation that was floated by the Air Force was that The Lights were flairs being dropped. This was patent nonsense because flares don't hover, they descend, and this explanation was very quickly debunked. Martin however, decided to adopt it and bombarded the media with his explanation. At times on talk radio shows he was close to being abusive and very nearly gave Lynne's identity away in one conversation. She sat down with him and went through the arguments but despite being unable to substantiate his case, he still persisted with it. Why? Lord knows. Got at by somebody? Possibly. Or just plain perverse. That's what happens with big cases.

This book does not provide the answer to what happened in Phoenix seven years ago. There are 222 pages but we know by page 130 that the phenomenon is still unexplained and that there are no new revelations, at least not in an official sense. What the book is, is a detailed account of the events involving The Lights and the impact they had on the author.

Lynne makes a great deal of play about the spiritual affect on her. The experience propelled her towards further research into the background of Ufology and from that towards the more spiritual side, Edgar Cayce, Melvin Morse, Dr. Bruce Greyson, Dr. John Mack and so on. It put her back in touch with a Near Death Experience she underwent in the dentist's chair as a child when she was nearly lost as a result of something going wrong with the anaesthetic. The whole experience of The Lights profoundly changed her life for the better.

Many others that she talked to, who had also seen The Lights, experienced similar feelings and experiences. Some of these others were also, like her, in the medical profession, including psychiatrists. Given that, I would have thought that she and these others might have known better. When you see what they saw and then come to virtually the only logical probable explanation, namely that these Lights originated from a source not of this world, then of course it is a deeply humbling experience. Of course it will contextualise your life and indeed the world. Of course you will begin to see how futile and quite frankly, how silly wars and politics and borders are. Of course you will mentally step outside of the mundane and take a more

objective view in a much broader sense. You will look at the planet, at the environment, and you will look at People as one, not as nationals of their own particular countries.

I am not mocking her experience. Far from it. We should all go through it. I am saying she, and others, shouldn't have been surprised by how they felt.

Despite my perception of her naivety, her enthusiasm is deeply infectious and I can't help feeling that this is how she is in life anyway; a very go getting, positive, kindly individual. And no question, she writes this book from deep within. Very deep within.

As I mentioned publicly recently, in many ways the Phoenix Lights is one of the most depressing UFO cases that America has ever experienced. Depressing? Well, when thousands upon thousands of people saw what they saw, with many taking cine film, video recordings and photographs, then the evidence is not only overwhelming but also very blatant.

And yet the Military and the Government said nothing except for making themselves look extremely silly by suggesting flares. Other than that, they blanked it. Given that, you have to ask yourself just what does have to happen before someone in a position of authority turns round and says, "Yeah, well OK, you've got us this time. Here's what's been going on." The conclusion that one comes to is that only The Ufological Cliché would swing it, namely a UFO landing on The White House Lawn. And from that, the word that comes to mind is "pathetic."

Even for those who have already made the spiritual journey that Lynne has made, this book will still be of interest. For those that haven't, it may well set you off down the road towards Valhalla. Yes, it is a story of a personal journey but it is also a detailed and historical account of a major UFO event. Very well written, the final journey for this book should be a resting place on your bookshelf or bedside table.

Star rating: *****



NEWS LINKS

Just in case you've missed any of these over the last few weeks, here is a round up of various news stories, with links provided, that may be of interest. Please note; all these links were checked before publication but as we all know, links expire. Special thanks to Liz R and Frank Warren for many of the contributions.

What does a Martian Look Like

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/3472179.stm

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Hubble's deep view of the Universe unveils earliest galaxies.

http://observe.arc.nasa.gov/stsci/hubbledev/db/2004/07/images/a/formats/print.jpg

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UFO in Martian Sky?

http://marsrovers.jpl.nasa.gov/gallery/press/spirit/20040311a/Earth_Sol63A_UFO-A067R1.jpg

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Astronomer Philip Plait is tired of radio personality Richard Hoagland

http://space.com/scienceastronomy/mystery_monday_040315.html

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Rocks picked for Rosetta meeting

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3505142.stm

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Government 'ignores' space threat

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3501446.stm

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NASA throws Hubble robot lifeline

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3506016.stm

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Plan to melt through Europa's ice
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3548139.stm

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Kids Thrilled By Close Encounter Of Mystery Kind

http://www.rochdaleobserver.co.uk/news/index/articles/article_id=10394.html

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SETI receive an anomalous signal
http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/ap040307.html
This is the signal:
http://www.setileague.org/software/unknown2.wav

Editor's note; it is staggering that this news item did not receive more coverage and debate on message boards than it has done.

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A new wafer thin, Roswell type metal is discovered.

http://www.unknowncountry.com/news/?id=3635

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Bush attacks environment scare stories. Secret email gives advice on denying climate change.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/climatechange/story/0,12374,1185380,00.html

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Earth magnetic filed flip flop. Scientists can't agree

http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/earth_poles_040407.html

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Asteroid protection plan proposed

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3610953.stm

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A new survey of stars near the Sun reveals a wild and crazy past in which wanderers arrived from all directions under the gravitational influences of black holes, clouds of gas and invading galaxies.

http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/milkyway_movement_040406.html

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Europa: Frozen Alive Or Wasteland?

http://www.spacedaily.com/news/jupiter-europa-04c.html

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Alien autopsy film – controversy, opinion, debate.
http://www.v-j-enterprises.com/aafilm/aaindex.html
More footage from first AA autopsy

http://www.beyondroswell.com/roswell/stills.html

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Physicists move closer to the quantum limit

http://physicsweb.org/article/news/8/4/1

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Telescopes take close-up on Titan
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3603607.stm
Professor Rallies Pilots For Meteor Site Watch

http://townsvillebulletin.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,7034,9203013%255E14787,00.html

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An article on newly designed illusion that gives a stationary object the impression of movement:

http://www.sci-con.org/articles/20040401.html

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Burt Rutans rocket

http://www.beyondroswell.com/roswell/stills.html

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Cameras to roll on Suffolk UFOs

http://www.eadt.co.uk/content/news/story.asp?datetime=05+Apr+2004+05%3A52&tbrand=EADOnline&tCategory=NEWS&category=News&brand=EADOnline&itemid=IPED05+Apr+2004+00%3A52%3A50%3A603

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Russian 'Flying Saucers' To Grace American Skies?

http://www.mosnews.com/news/2004/04/05/ufo.shtml

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Observatory adding antennas in effort to make contact with extraterrestrial life

http://www.redding.com/news/stories/20040404lo039.shtml

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A UK-Led Micro-Mission to Mars' Moons?
http://www.marstoday.com/viewpr.html?pid=13988

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A Mechanism For Interstellar Panspermia Napier, W. M. 2004, MNRAS, 348, 46

http://aries.phys.yorku.ca/~rfinger/jc040304.pdf

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In regard to Professor Chris French and the Experiencer study,

http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/alumni/goldlink/almag18/weird.html

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Satellite to test Einstein theory

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3596499.stm

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"Metallic Sound Heard Again By Space Station Crew"

http://edition.cnn.com/2004/TECH/space/04/02/space.station.ap/index.html

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Orbit Comparisons - Quote: "Sedna's presence suggests that this Oort cloud is much closer than scientists believed."

http://www.spitzer.caltech.edu/Media/releases/ssc2004-05/ssc2004-05d.shtml

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Ancient builders followed stars

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3592631.stm

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Amateur sky watchers have been tracking polar orbiting vehicles for decades, see their activities described at:

http://www.satellite.eu.org/satintro.html

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The chances that asteroid impacts and huge bouts of volcanism coincide randomly to cause mass extinctions may be greater than previously imagined.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3582767.stm

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Earth-like planet search to start

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3589005.stm

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The International Crop Circle Database at
http://www.cropcircleresearch.com/database

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"Dr. Luis Corralos, a Venezuelan astronomer working for his National Communications Ministry, discovered an unclear image of an unknown object

apparently trailing Sputnik II, the Soviet satellite launched on 4th November 1957. Investigations were instigated but no public explanation has ever been given...

http://www.violations.dabsol.co.uk/probe/probepart2.htm

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UFO like '50,000 spotlights'

http://www.heraldsun.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5478,9150852%255E1702,00.html

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Huge waves on Titan move slowly

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3583825.stm

Fireball crashes to earth in Queensland

http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/04/01/1080544596673.html

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UFO fragments yield sensational results

http://english.pravda.ru/science/19/94/378/12390_UFO.html

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Radio Show Airs Alien Encounters

http://www.palmbeachpost.com/accent/content/auto/epaper/editions/wednesday/accent_04969bfde471f0c700a8.html

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The loss of the Hubble Space Telescope will rob astronomers of a view of the cosmos in ultraviolet, creating a gap in our understanding of the Universe.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3582433.stm

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Havoc in the Heavens: Soviet-Era Satellite's Leaky Reactor's Lethal Legacy

http://www.space.com/news/mystery_monday_040329.html

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Spanish Theology Sees ET Life As Compatible with God

http://Www.Eladelanto.Com/Noticias/Noticia.Asp

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Mysterious sub-atomic particles from another galaxy could be raining down on planet Earth, according to a collaboration of astronomers.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/3573041.stm

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The detection of methane in the Martian atmosphere may signal an end to JPL's depiction of a sterile, lifeless Mars, as summarized in this article by the BBC:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/3577551.stm

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Private Spacecraft Could Launch This Summer

http://www.startribune.com/stories/484/4684382.html

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Making noise over the hum in Kokomo, complaints remain

http://www.indystar.com/articles/2/133270-5162-009.html
Prime Minister's Plane Has Close Encounter With UFO

http://www.940news.com/news/news.cfm?dir=national&file=n032827A&n=1

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Nasa Mach 7 mission accomplished
http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/sci/tech/3575561.stm
Life on Mars - but 'we sent it'

http://www.newscientist.com/news/print.jsp?id=ns99994812

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Radio search for ET draws a blank

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3567729.stm

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7th Anniversary Of Heaven's Gate

http://www.thesandiegochannel.com/news/2952773/detail.html

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Earth has acquired a "quasi-moon" - an asteroid that will encircle our planet for the next couple of years while it orbits the sun on a horseshoe-shaped path, according to a report to be published on Saturday in New Scientist.

http://dsc.discovery.com/news/afp/20040322/newmoon.html

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Cushing Library Acquires Roy Craig Collection

http://www.tamu.edu/univrel/aggiedaily/news/stories/03/092203-3.html

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Mars Mission Finds Evidence Of Hospitable Sea

http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2004/3/35A11B66-7F1C-497A-BCEC-1B506ED2DDAD.html

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Are we alone? Speaker tells of technology hunt for extraterrestrials.

http://www.press-citizen.com/news/032404seti.htm

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Particle physicists have seen a rare happening that may force a rethink of current theories of sub-atomic matter.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/3564273.stm

Bones hint at first use of fire
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3557077.stm

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Detailed picture of comet's heart

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3557205.stm

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Asteroid Scare Prompts NASA to Formalize Response
http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/asteroid_warning_040322.html

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Tycoon funds hunt for alien life
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/3556873.stm

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Strange morphing objects seen in the sky.
http://rense.com/general50/whatthe.htm

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NASA's Cassini Catches Two Storms in the Act on Saturn
http://www.spaceref.com/news/viewpr.html?pid=14008

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Next time an asteroid or comet is on a collision course with Earth you can go to a web site to find out if you have time to finish lunch or need to jump in the car and DRIVE.
http://www.spacedaily.com/news/deepimpact-04e.html

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Astronomers Take Search For Earth-Threatening Space Rocks To Southern Skies
http://www.spacedaily.com/news/deepimpact-04d.html

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That's it folks. Next issue out June 1st. 2004. And in that next issue, we have the second part of the Nick Redfern interview, an interview with Dr. Lynne Kitei, author of the book "The Phoenix Lights", and a ton of other goodies that I have no intention of telling you about just now. I am also pleased to tell you that we will be welcoming back Andrew Pike, Astronomer Royale from UFO Magazine.

No, I have no idea if the next issue will be as long as this one, but quite possibly. Real value for money that, eh? Why not place a regular order with your newsagent? OK, I know that's not funny anymore.

Although there is a UK slant to this edition, as we are UK based, this is an international forum and if you live elsewhere and wish to contribute, we would be very pleased to hear from you.