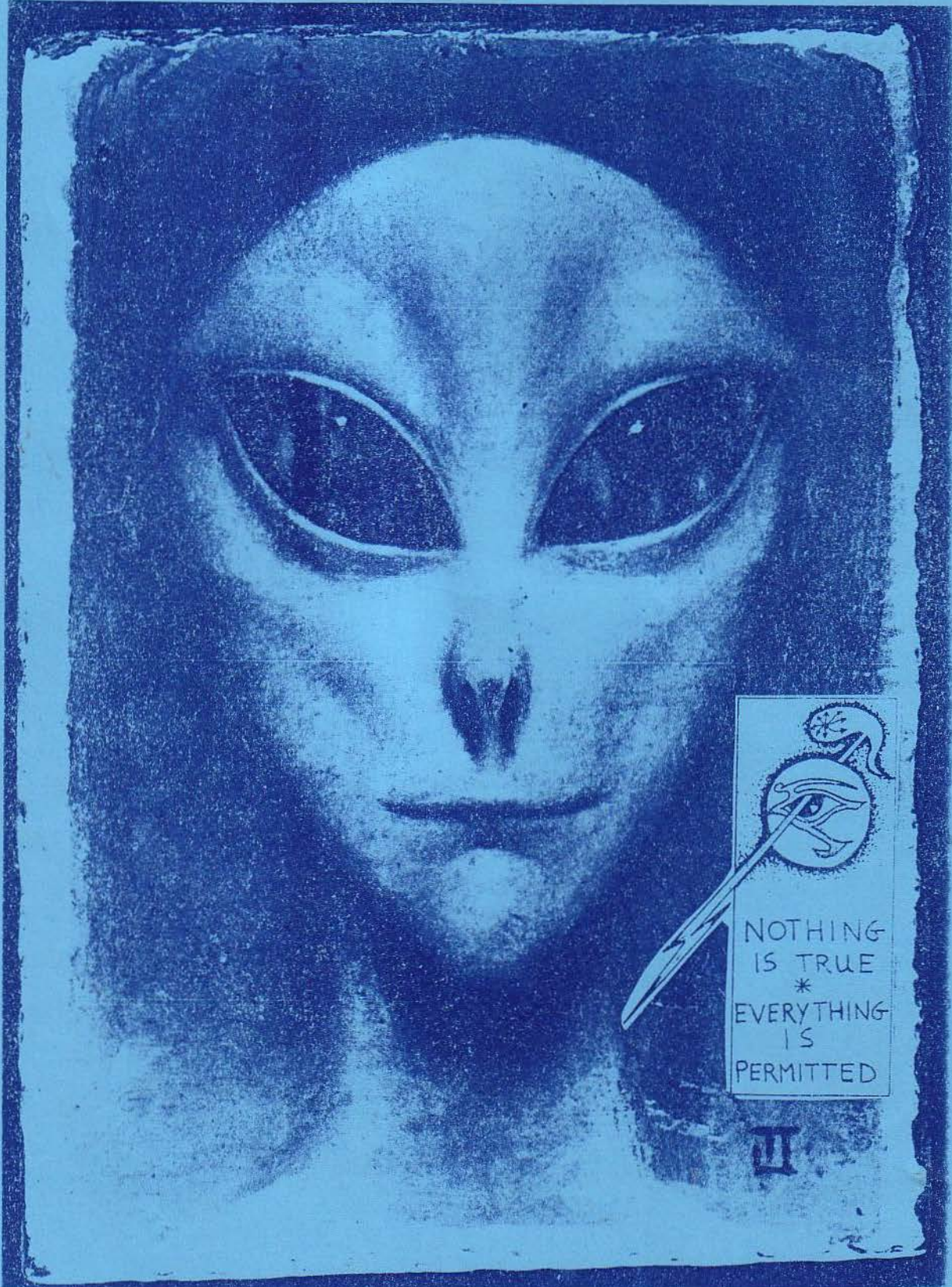


UFO BRIGANTIA



NOVEMBER 1990

No. 46



COMMUNION

Is it taking the biscuit?

Breathe again people, UFO BRIGANTIA is back after our summer break, and what a summer it's been. This issue is packed with UFO news and we look at some pretty strange stuff I can you. I don't know if its been the heat or not but belief seems to be getting stranger and the credulity count is way up. The 'mysto steam', to use a Tom Wolfe-ism has certainly been hissing in some people's heads of late I can tell you, and ufology

looks to be on the brink of dissipating into the general New Age, Light Vs Dark movement if some of the signs we've seen are indicative of the general trend of things. See the crop circles commentary and magazine reviews elsewhere for more strange stuff. In fact this issue of BRIGANTIA is very much a review issue, looking at books, mags and films of the summer together with a round of ufological gossip to bring you up to date with what is happening on the UFO scene. New cases (other than the ubiquitous lights in the sky) have been thin on the ground anyway - if you want case reports subscribe to Northern UFO News or send of for the Aveley Case booklet reviewed and advertised somewhere in the magazine.

The usual round of ufologists suing each other has continued apace this summer (see last issue) and even your editor has been threatened by someone from the far reaches of the belief system with legal action for merely voicing his opinion. Terrible, I know but that's what it's like these days when you say something people don't like.

September 20th saw various ufologists from the north of England gathered at the Odeon in Leeds for a special (freebie!) preview of the film COMMUNION, based obviously on Whitley Strieber's alleged experiences. Philip Mantle has reviewed it elsewhere but I'm going to have my say about it here, and I say go and see it. Yes, at the risk of being called gullible, or worse, I would heartily recommend it as being the best UFO film I've ever seen. To put it bluntly it beats the shit out of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS.

Why? Well I look at it this way. Strieber himself had a great deal of editorial/production control over the film, not to mention writing the screenplay, and I think the film expresses best what happened to Strieber (if you believe anything at all did) better than the book. I can see why it bombed in the US though and why it will probably do so here. A UFO film with no UFOs in sight? Scandalous, but true. All we see of the contraptions 'the vistors' presumably travel in are some bright white illuminations and the odd ball of white light. Even these are seen more often than not from inside buildings and are all (whether intended or not) highly ambiguous as to their source. True, there are objective phenomena in the film. The marks behind Striebers ears, the multiple sightings of the lights by family and friends, his wife and son recalling vaguely similar experiences. But these are played down and I certainly got the idea that Strieber was trying desperately to point something out about the nature of perception and experience rather than trying to prove the physical evidence side of things.

His 'visitor' experiences are bizarre to say the least. Hallucinatory, dreamlike, bizzare, they certainly aren't portrayed as being anything that happened in this version of reality, and as old Witters says at one point to Johnny Alien, 'I'm the dreamer and you are the dreamed'. Stranger still, in one of his meetings with the vistors we have music and he's movin' and groovin' with the 'little blue doctors' as his son Andrew calls them, whilst the grey chappies

with the eye problems look on bemused.

If Strieber is trying to convey something via the film then the message is just as obvious in the non-visitor part of the film. Faces and masks are the order of the day from the word go. Masked Halloween parties, childrens paper mache masks, nothing is quite as it seems. The abductees support group scene in the hypnotists office (hypnotist Dr. Janet Duffy comes over more as an anthropologist investigating human belief rather than an revealer of alien experience - spot the book entitled First Contact subtly displayed on her desk too) are dripping with tribal masks and artefacts mixed with ambiguous images from from modern art, which also again rears its head as a possible statement of ambiguity when Whitley and his wife (played by Lindsay Crouse from David Mamet's House of Games, and if you haven't seen that where are you at?) are re-affirming their torn relationship and learning to live with Striebers' experiences against a backdrop of a modern art gallery.

This face and mask imagery is extended when Whitley is amongst the visitors at one point and sees 'visitor' masks lying discarded all over the place, this prompts him to peel away the said mask from a grey person to reveal a reptilian visage beneath, but he's a clever chap, being a writer an' all and he knows that's not really the bottom line. All in all the film has more symbols than the London Philharmonic Orchestra and you can take away from it whatever you want. Nothing is portrayed as definite and any 'ultimate reality' is left to the fertile imagination of the viewer. The best film so far about the UFO phenomenon. Go and see it today.

No doubt you will have all seen the news coverage given to the alleged 'Satanic ritual abuse' cases from Lancashire. A delicate subject - but just for a moment try to seperate these cases from the emotive issue of genuine, proven child abuse. Here we have a great many people, professionals in their field and belief driven hangers on, alleging human sacrifice, the organised abduction of children, cover-ups in high places and links with governments and satanic cults (especially from the fundamentalist end of the Satanic abuse belief spectrum, who actually think the Devil is amongst us and that listening to rock music will let him into your soul) to name but a few. In other words a belief flap, and one imported from the states where the book Michelle Remembers started it all off in the early 80's and which ended with the Macmartin trial.

No hard evidence has ever been offered to support any of the claims other than anecdotal, or from claimants to be escapees from these cults - even Gods Cop himself, the sanctified James Anderson has found no evidence. Does this remind you of anything? The belief in the reality of reality of UFO abduction perhaps, the belief and involvement of professionals in UFO beliefs systems mayhap? Please don't think I in any way an apologist for child abuse in any form (my work in the real world is often with people damaged by it), but consider the belief element attached to these particular belief oriented claims, the lack of proof, the conspiracy theories and basically it is ufology on a council estate (odd why 'Satanic child abuse' never happens in the leafy groves of Hampstead or Harrogate, but that's another story). Remember the Strangeways claims, the Witch Trials in Europe, Cleveland, the Salem events. Just as we are seeing the rise of belief in extraterrestrial visitation and involvement in human affairs by UFO fundamentalists who want salvation from elsewhere we are also seeing a rise in belief in the Devil and his power over humans and intervention in daily life by religious fundamentalists. Is it any surprise that the Dark Gods theorists, those who cunningly manage to combine the Devil with aliens (see FSR for many examples of this) are attracting people. You can almost feel the end of the millenium now can't you?.... (Sound of demonic cackle and UFO landing noise from stage left). Can't you?

CROP CIRCLES: a Ufologists view

Ken Philips

Ken, one of the most respected British UFO investigators, gives his objective and perceptive comments on the crop circles problem.

Over the last decade a most mysterious manifestation has been occurring in the crop fields of Britain, the nature of which has taken the form of various geometric patterns, mostly rings and discs, being formed by the layering of the prevailing crop.

The crops affected in this way are not damaged in the form of broken stalks or crushed ears of the corn and barley affected but merely laid over to form the patterns described by the many newspaper reports. This fact means that whatever agent is causing the patterns, it is not caused by the landing of a heavier-than-air object.

If the patterns are not caused by objects landing in the affected fields then we are left with a number of alternative natural agents, none of which adequately explain all of the characteristics described. These 'explanations' are:-

1] The patterns are caused by stationary whirlwinds in the lee of hills and escarpments as demonstrated in the book Crop Circles - Mystery Solved by Jenny Randles and Paul Fuller (Robert Hale, 1990) - a hypothesis which might help to explain why there are so few crop circles discovered in, say, Essex, where there are few such impediments to air flow - if this is the case, then what is the mechanism which causes the patterns to develop in an ever more complex way, from single circles, through to doubles, triples, quadruples, quintuples, and now to a whole string of patterns in which can be found non-circular formations?

2] The patterns are formed from the down-wash of air from helicopters - unfortunately for this hypothesis though, down-wash causes radial and irregular damage and not circular and sometimes contra-wise rotation.

3] The patterns are a function of the type of crops planted in modern day Britain and which are, perhaps, subjected to some type of fungal attack or animal activity - again, this hypothesis is weak because, for example, the same type of crop is planted in the fields of Essex as is planted in the fields of SW England but, as far as we know, only two circles have been discovered in Essex and even these were suspected hoaxes (Littley Green, Chelmsford, and Shenfield near London) - to date no biologists have discovered a cause as to why the crop is failing in the way it is.

4] The circles are a gigantic hoax designed by persons unknown for reasons unknown - no doubt some circles are the result of fabrication but to maintain such a vast and intricate communal effort without being discovered (perhaps resulting in legal prosecution for criminal damage and trespass) leaves us bereft of an explanation here.

4] The circles are formed by electro-magnetic, rotating columns - whatever the hell they are !

From a personal point of view, none of these hypothesis exactly fit this highly dynamic and evolving phenomenon, but there are amazing parallels with the genesis of previous phenomena which have occurred

over the year; one being the genesis and development of the UFO phenomenon. For example, the social response to the two phenomena are practically identical, beginning as they did with a sudden, dramatic and media-propagated report. Next comes an ever more bewildering development of manifestation, forcing the establishment of both authoritative and private groups to find an explanation. This is then followed by a spiritual involvement, mostly by persons who are of a sensitive nature and/or prone to what is generally called ESP; this latter set of conditions will eventually give rise to a new religious belief, i.e. 'New Age' - Man/planet in crisis etc.). Finally, there comes the ultimate in the 'human condition'; destructive and rigid belief systems based according to the particular side of the social 'fence' one happens to be standing at the time.

So, what does all this mean? Well, from my own world view of events, the crop circles form a continuing part of an educational process by agents unknown, in which we are constantly presented with a new set of conditions to make us think. From the Fox sisters in nineteenth century America (the origins of 'spiritualism'), through to the 'ghost airships' at the turn of the century and the genesis of the UFOs in the 1940s, right up to the crop circles of the last decade the circumstances are the same; the presentation of unique, yet ambiguous, manifestations of new phenomena, seemingly designed to make us think about ourselves and the world about us. The ultimate question though is: who is doing the designing - us or something else?

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CORN FED TURKEYS?

Andy Roberts

Following on from Ken's 'Crop circles as Zen Koan' article, you know how people who are not quite a full shopping basket sometimes have to go to psychiatrists to be shown strange patterns in which they aren't supposed to see anything weird (such as people's naughty bits)? A Rorschach Inkblot test in fact. Well, I've got this theory that the great cosmological power (Bob to you pal) has decided that, on the evidence available to him, some ufologists are so stupid that he's sent them a cosmic Rorschach blot test in the form of crop-field circles to test them for admittance to the New Age. This past summer has seen a great many of them take the test and so here's a brief round up of their beliefs, a couple of new magazines, a book and so on. Now you can almost hear the psychiatrist saying "Look deep into these circles. That's right. Now tell me what you see..."

Let's start of with some reviews:

CROP CIRCLES - A Mystery Solved by Jenny Randles & Paul Fuller (Robert Hale, 1990, £13.95)

Randles and Fuller have been in the thick of crop circle investigation since the early days and have already produced a BUFORA publication dealing with the subject. This book is the result of their further investigations and they aren't going to be too popular. It is however the best book to date on the subject, taking it from an historical point of view, which seem to be very relevant as most of the circle proponents are saying it is a new phenomenon. On the evidence given here, patently it isn't.

The authors, whilst giving space to most of the theories available, are rather enamoured of the Meaden vortex explanation and go into it in some depth - which is why they won't make many friends amongst ufologists as many will see this as being sheer reductionist ufology.

Which in a way it is but combine the reductionism of the theory with the beliefs of the people and the media as Randles and Fuller have done, and how people manipulate and interpret reality takes on a completely different hue. This years crop of arrow/key type patterns may stretch the Meaden explanation somewhat though and his theory as represented in the book does come across as a 'one theory fits all' attempt, but that's the job of theorists and it is down to people like Jenny and Paul to put theories into perspective and to set them in the context of 40-odd (and I mean odd) years of UFO research. This takes up the latter part of the book where a great many UFO cases, car stops, lights in the sky etc are related to Meaden type vortices in a chapter entitled 'The Death of the UFO'. The ETH as you may expect comes out of all this rather poorly but all the speculation is backed by case histories and is fully referenced. Whether they are right or not remains to be seen. Personally I don't really think they have considered the hoax theory deep enough as I know for a fact that quite a few 'genuine' circles have been hoaxes but this exposition of a core phenomenon which accounts for many a circle is well worth buying.

In thought amid the alien corn

From Mr Gordon Joly

Sir: The crop circles (Letters, and "Going round in circles", *The Sunday Review*, 29 July), are not hoaxes as such.

They are a lateral thinking problem, devised by Edward de Bono.

GC JOLY
London E14

Write your own crop-circle theory here

Letter to the Independent on Sunday 5/8/90

This book, together with John Spencer's Perspectives and, dare I say it, Roberts and Clarke's Phantoms of the Sky, have ushered the ufological 1990s in on a high note. Randles and Fuller have stated what they think is going on and backed it up with the necessary facts. Anyone who wishes to intimate 'alien intelligences' or the rest of the odd idea has now to prove it or remain stewing in their own belief systems, rudderless and at the mercy of every new and weird idea that comes along. Crop Circles won't be well received by those corn-fed turkeys already too far gone to try but amongst the critical and the perspective newcomer to the field (if you'll pardon the pun) it will be a touchstone to the fading grip on reality demonstrated by many. My cheque is apparently in the post so we'll move swiftly on to:

The Crop Watcher (No. 1. Sept/Oct 1990) edited by Paul Fuller, Jenny Randles & David Reynolds. Six issues a year £1.25 per issue or £7.00 sub. from 3 Selborne Court, Tavistock Close, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 7TY. Cheques to 'The Crop Watcher' please.

Two 'circles' magazines have appeared this summer. This is the Fuller/Randles axis publication and rather than wallow in speculation as to what they are (Randles & Fuller know 'cos The Mystery Has Been Solved (see review above), the C.W. blends circle cases and facts with gossip and rumour from the wonderful and increasingly wacky crop circle world. It includes reviews of other publications, a round-up of circles from outside the 'haunted Weasel' area, proving that it is a countrywide phenomeneon, an amazing report from Clive Potter of a mutilated white horse at Westbury which is bound to end up deeply attached to circles mythology, and some in-depth case reports of

particular circles- essential hard facts. Most interesting is some eye witness reports of circle formation (yes they do exist) from Belgium of all places. All those strange researchers in the subject are neatly commented on in a column by the name of 'Rumours & rumours of rumours' and one day I hope the full story can be told about some of the nutcases involved in circles work. Meanwhile it's all here in code. I can't think of much horrible to say about the CW except they appear to have nicked UFO BRIGANTIA's style a bit, but we won't sue yet. If you want to keep up to date with the phenomenon you'll have to buy this but then again you'll also have to buy this:

The Cereologist (No. 1 Summer 1990) Edited by John Michel. Published 'thrice yearly' at £2.50 per copy or £7.50 sub. from 11 Powis Gardens, London W11 1JG, cheques to 'The Cereologist' please.

Edited by John Michel (of View Over Atlantis fame) the Cereologist takes a different tack to the Crop Watcher and frankly whilst it is still essential reading and better produced than the C.W., I don't like it as much. Here crop circles are implicitly accepted as being caused by something outside our ken. The Cereologist is very definitely New Age tinted and it seems to me there is a very great waste of brains going on judging by some of the contents of this magazine.

Dowsing - Lucy Pringle relates a tedious anecdote in which she loses her pendulum whilst out dowsing a circle (nasty, but apparently, 'real' circles can be differentiated from hoax circles by dowsing you know - what can you say?). Coincidence - Ralph Noyes hits us with an article in which the 'haunted Wessex' idea is trotted out, lines are hinted at and the apparent prevalence of circle locations at places beginning with the letter 'W' is raised. I hope Ralph has his tongue firmly in his cheek here. A crop watch is related at which the most peculiar effects are witnessd, but sadly, as always, no photographs were taken. Unfortunately 'meditation' and 'channelling' creep into this article and it all smacks of the sort of thing groups of 'believers' get up to and experience when involved in any subject. Bob Rickard contributes a piece looking at what Charles Fort would have said and examining what we mean by 'intelligence' when attributing events to such a cause. All in all the magazine is an interesting round up of the more off the wall theories.

If you've got a crystal in your house and a rainbow sticker on your car you'll be well into this. But as I said, essential reading if you want to be in on the ground floor of new circles thinking. The Cereologist has the potential for going like FSR. I hope it doesn't. Whilst chatting to John Michel (name dropping or what?) at the Ley Hunter Moot recently I got the impression he just like throwing cats amongst pigeons, so he gets my vote anyway.

Following on from the above review I'd like to mention one article in the Cereologist, by Patrick Harpur, which delves into the 'hermetic' explanation for the circles. This, like many other so many pieces I have read and 'explanations' I have heard this summer seems to imply that some type of 'alien intelligence' is responsible but here it is connected with 'Mercurius'. I must confess to not entirely understanding what he is on about, me being on a more gross, less spiritual plane perhaps but it seems that, as goes with these times it is either trendy or culturally necessary to imply that the circles are evidence of Gaia, the Old Gods, Anima Mundi or a variety of other archetypes who are sending messages like mad to warn us of our impending doom if we don't get our act together soonish. Fabby idea but one that sounds like so much tosh, especially in the light of various 'cereologists' pronouncements about circles which have subsequently turned out to be hoaxes. P'raps it's all a metaphor and

I'm just thick.

Other crop watchers of the season include the Magonia team and in issue 37 John Rimmer argues persuasively why they must nearly all be hoaxes due to their singular scarcity in the Warminster area at the time when it was wall to wall ufologists and only one was ever documented. Get out of that one and stay fashionable Paul & Jenny!

The 'alien intelligence' theory is the biggy amongst non-Meaden researchers it seems - 'alien intelligence' being the New Age version of the ETH, with I would suggest, twice as many problems. The mainstay of the A.L. theory this year seems to be the appearance of the 'Pictograms', a topic well covered in bizarre style in the Cereologist. This year especially has seen a new development in the crop-circles world. Patterns have not only become more complex but have also been appearing in shapes like keys or deformed arrows such as the famous one at Bulworthy in Devon (see diag. below).

Language experts reveal message of corn circles



Warning in early Sumerian? Two concentric circles for a well, parallel lines for double. The message: Multiply your wells.



TODAY 20/7/90

'Obviously', the alien intelligence proponents cry, this has to be the work of an AI as the weather couldn't possible have done this (a hoaxer could though). Maybe, but here we are into deep water. To even call these 'events' pictograms is wrong, as surely a pictogram is a symbol created by an intelligence or intelligent living thing to convey meaning and information as part of a coherent system of information transmission, such as prehistoric art for instance. As humans are the only source of such symbol systems to date the AI/Pictogram connection is complete bollocks for a start as we don't know who/what causes them. Calling them pictograms is the equivalent of Erich von Daniken reading ancient astronauts into Mayan rock carvings. But 'pictogram' started it so people took it up and tried to translate the message, leading one Charles D'Orban from the London University School of Oriental and African Studies to say, "The shapes in the field look like the work of the Sumerians from late fourth and early third century BC."

Squaring the circles of alien visitors

Rice circles make oriental debut in Japanese paddy-field

A number of newspapers picked up on this. That indefatigable team of UFOhounds YUFOS are well in on the act and their last issue of 20/20 Vision (a misnomer in their case if ever there was one) has a report from the Bristol YUFOS team suggesting seriously that, "We believe the same race of extra-terrestrials who visited the Dogon tribe are now attempting to communicate with the people of Earth", HOW you scream - well, it's obvious innit - by revealing themselves via the cornfield circles. Let that be a lesson to you about what can happen if you dwell on crop circles too much. We could go on about the lunacy and probably will in future issues. Just one more little bit to this

rant and then you can get back to reading more serious UFO 'zines.

To get back to the Pictogram sham, the perpetrators of this way of looking at the circles have done the entire circles study a disservice. Talking about them in such uncritical terms now, at the beginning of study into them colours the subject for the less critical people. At the heart of crop circle research (of both the sceptical and not so sceptical sort) is a core of well-educated people, well versed in circle lore, ufology, paranormal events and so-on. They know what is going on and can choose where to invest their belief on the basis of their knowledge. On the other hand, once these odd ideas get out into the public sphere by means of the many books bound to follow a great many individuals just looking for a belief system or with half formed ones are going to hang everything on the crop circles and confusion will reign.

Members of Occult and New Age groups, along with the general public are being force fed ideas by people with little or no knowledge of what is going on (if previous examples in the UFO/paranormal field are anything to go by) will then act on these ideas and the whole thing becomes a circular self-referencing belief system at the centre of which seems to be a little understood natural phenomena and hoaxes (just as ufology became). Now if these people wish to admire the wonders of nature or human imagination, fair enough but mixing it up with pseudo-mysticism fed to them by band-wagon jumpers is a bit dangerous. Such as (and far more frightening than pretending it's Mercurius or whoever is the circles agent) are the CHANNELLERS (strident organ tone here), you know the scene, 'entities' with deep voices speaking through 'mediums'. Of course this opens up a new bag of worms as it gives the circle believers the chance to agree with the channelled entities who voice their opinions or give info which later becomes correct, but to deny those who hold opposite views or predict falsely, with no possibility of any objective criticism being levelled.

We have heard on the ufological grapevine that a prominent cereologist, not entirely unconnected with one of the many books available on the subject (think hard now) has his own 'channel' who goes by the entirely unimaginative name of 'Zirka'! It can't be much longer before talk of 'false spirits' and the like will be all the rage. UFO BRIGANTIA's resident channel who goes by the name of 'No.5' predicts for 1991 (note well cereologists) that patterns will go back to being much simpler next season, colours will be green to golden with accessories being discarded in favour of more, shall we say, 'paranormal' (ie harder to disprove) phenomena. Loki the Norse God will be the prevalent deity and several ufologists will be in tears by the end of the season. Joking aside it is this sort of confusion of issues undercover of which the New Age tat element is creeping into cereology and ufology, hi-jacking it for its own various and no doubt rainbow coloured ends.

So much time and energy wasted on what are essentially only bits of something and nothing in fields.

As the summer and August wore on Mr Hussein in the Gulf (deep thorkus here on all the various UFO end of the world in the '90's prophecies!), took the media's mind from the subject of circles to things more connected with Mars rather than Mercurius and with the cutting of the corn interest dropped off considerably.

Crop circles are now treated with great reverence by those who study them. Some writers refer to 'crop-circles' in the same way they do to UFOs, in the sense that they are all the manifestation of the same phenomena rather than acknowledging a disparate collection of hoaxes and as yet unidentified but well guessed at natural phenomena. The whole thing, young as it is, has achieved S.N.A.F.U. status remarkably quickly.

One last piece of info for circles fanciers and UFO iconographers everywhere. The image of crop circles has been used time and time again for advertising this summer, everything from the football pools to durex (honest). We will be covering these in full in a later issue if the Crop Watcher doesn't. However, and further to my piece on UFOs & rock & roll in the last issue, crop circles have crept into the arena of the Devils Music. The music magazine SELECT has been running a full page advertisement for the Led Zeppelin 'Remasters' album which consists of a photograph of the Alton Barnes circle/line complex with the shadow of a Zeppelin across it. In the same issue another full page ad., this time for Record Mirror, depicts what can only be a man in black, in the centre of a crop circle, stood over a spreadeagled body, a burning sunb in the sky. The MIB is clutching a handfull of wheat and looking at the sky. The caption reads 'record mirror, in a field of its own'. If anyone knows of any other crop circle images used in advertsing I'd like to hear about it.

The crop field circle Rorschach blot test is now in full swing. It has its own clubs and journals. For a modest fee (and your credulity) you too can be a member and have your sanity printed or talked about. The test is now all the rage, a great many ufologists have now taken it- and due to the nature of the subject they all think they have passed! I know I do.

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COMMUNION: the Film Review

Starring

Christopher Walken, Lindsay Crouse, Francis Sternhagen and Joel Carson

Directed by Phillipe Mora

COMMUNION was published in hardback in February of 1986. It sold 255,000 copies and was number one New York Times best-seller. It was on the list for 15 weeks. Published in paperback in September 1987 over 2,000,000 copies were sold. Again it became a New York Times best-seller and remained on the list for 36 weeks. It still sells 18,000 copies a month.

With such a pedigree it is not surprising that COMMUNION has now been made into a movie. On September 20th, members of the UFO community were invited to a private screening at the Odeon cinema in Leeds, West Yorkshire, courtesy of the film distributors Vestron UK Ltd. The movie stars Christopher Walken (academy award winner in the Deer Hunter) as Whitley and Lindsay Crouse (academy award nominated for her role The Places of the Heart) as Anne Strieber.

More often than not, Hollywood has gone over the top when making movies of so-called true stories. You sometimes wonder what they hope to achieve in making such a film; a documentary, entertainment, or perhaps a mixture of the two? With this in mind I feel that Whitley Strieber (who wrote the screenplay) and the director Philip Mora deserve a great deal of credit for taking a less sensational, more docu-drama approach to the movie version of COMMUNION. This type of stance lends a more authentic feeling to the movie which has been sadly lacking in other similar films.

COMMUNION (as if you didn't already know) is Strieber's account of his abduction and examination by strange entities he calls the 'visitors'. In COMMUNION, Christopher Walken plays Strieber, who lives in New York City with his wife Anne and their son Andrew. During an overnight stay at their remote cabin in upstate New York, the Strieber's see strange intensely bright lights over the cabin, but attribute it to dreams or some other normal phenomenon. Staying at the cabin with the Strieber's are two friends who are so shook up by these lights that they demand to be taken home the very next morning. And so the story begins.

The initial 'sighting' of the lights is followed by Strieber's mood changes, with 'nightmares' of strange creatures. His son Andrew also talks of being taken away by the 'little blue doctors'. Fearing for his sanity and trying to save his marriage, which is then almost on the point of collapsing, Strieber seeks medical advice. Before too long Strieber is hypnotised by D. Janet Duffy (Francis Sternhagen) and the abduction scenario emerges, not just once, but several times. Strieber's encounters with the 'visitors' throughout his early life also emerge. To cut a long story short, Strieber finally seems to come to terms with his experiences and accepts them to be 'real', and is somewhat thankful that he is not going crazy. The film ends with Strieber starting to write the book COMMUNION.

This film is as faithful as possible to the book, bearing in mind that it did not have a huge budget. However, unlike the book, Strieber's screenplay draws no conclusions about the origin, nature or purpose of the visitors. This noncommittal view cements the docu-drama type style. Christopher Walken gives a very capable, quirky

performance as Strieber and Crouse fairs just as well as his wife Anne. Some of the scenes do have an element of suspense while others display the bizarre nature of the abduction experience.

Considering the film had quite a low budget by todays standards the special effects, such as they are, worked quite well. However I feel that there could have been some room for improvement in this area without spending millions of dollars. The tall thin entities with the big black eyes look too much like plastic for my liking.

The movie is complemented by the music of Eric Clapton which I would have liked to hear more of. Is the film worth seeing? Well, if you are expecting something like Close Encounters of the Third Kind, then you are going to be disappointed.

On the other hand, if you are willing to watch a film that possibly suggests an alternative to the ETH explanation for abductions, and you are a fan of the COMMUNION book, then I would say that, yes, it is worth seeing. Having said that, I feel that this movie would perhaps come across better on the small screen rather than the large screen of the cinema.

The movie opens in London at the Prince Charles Cinema, Leicester Place, on October 12th, so check your local press for details. The video release is due for around April 1991.

Reviewed by Philip Mantle.

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THE AVELEY ABDUCTION

A U.F.O.I.N. CASE REPORT

The Avis family abduction at Aveley in Essex is probably the classic abduction case in the U.K. Not only does it have multiple witnesses (the Avis family), but it was also the first abduction case in Britain to use regressive hypnosis in the investigation.

Although the case happened in 1974, it is of no less importance to todays abduction researchers. The original investigation was conducted by Andy Collins, who was then part of the now defunct UFO Investigators Network (UFOIN). UFOIN was a loosely based network of experienced investigators, who, in their time, investigated many of the classic close encounter cases of the 1970s.

The Aveley abduction was first published in Flying Saucer Review (FSR) and has appeared, in brief, in various UFO books and periodicals down the years. This important and fascinating abduction case report is now available in full for the very first time. For far too long the UFOIN files have been stored away gathering dust but now, with the publication of The Aveley Abduction, they are to be made available to the UFO community and the general public alike.

The cost of this first UFOIN case report to be released from the archives is: UK: £2.25. Europe. £2.50. USA: 7.00 (surface). Other countries same as USA (payment in dollar bills please).

If you would like to obtain a copy of the above case report please make cheques payable to Andrew Walmsley, and send to 232 Long Lane, Wheatley, Halifax, West Yorkshire, England, HX3 5JS.

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Philip Mantle, of the British UFO Research Association, reviews

"abduction" is commonly used by UFO researchers to denote a person's alleged unwilling encounter with non-human beings in the United States, both abductees and UFO researchers alike predominantly express the view that the visitors who perform these abductions are physically real aliens from a planet somewhere else in the universe. They point to the similarity in abduction cases and the physical "evidence" in the form of bodily marks as proof of alien visitation. The film largely takes the American point of view.

However, in Europe a completely different notion dominates abduction research. Instead of looking to the skies for a solution for the visitors, the percipients themselves are the focus of study. Are the visitors a product of the human mind? Are abductions an internal rather than external experience? In support of such ideas, researchers point out that there has never been a third-party witness to an abduction taking place. As in *Communion*, the odd strange light has been observed prior to an abduction taking place but that is about all.

The bizarre nature of some abductions is also pointed out as "proof" that such experiences are internally human in origin. In *Communion*, Whitley Strieber is seen dancing with the visitors. Britain, abductee Alan Godfrey encountered an apparently human-looking entity called "Josef" who had a black dog with him. If real physical aliens were coming to Earth would they be dancing dog owners? I rather doubt it.

The apparent description of the visitors also varies. In *Communion* two distinctly different types of beings are observed. One is a small goblin-like creature which is blue (not green) in colour while the other is a slim, tan-coloured creature with a slit for a mouth and with large black eyes. In Britain, abductee John Avis in Essex also reported seeing two different types of beings during his abduction experience. One was almost human in appearance apart from having pink eyes; the other was a short, squat creature with a hairy face rather like that of a bat. It is hard enough to accept the possibility that one type of alien is visiting the Earth, but several different types would have to stretch even the most gullible imagination. It's a quandary which lends support to those who suggest that the abduction is an internal human experience.

Abduction by non-human beings is nothing new. Many folklore books tell of encounters with the fairy-folk who captured humans for much the same reasons as today's contemporary visitors do - moving them to rooms and conducting medical-style examinations. To the persons in the folk tales the fairy encounters were indeed quite solid, but perhaps only in the way that events experienced during nightmares, lucid dreams and hallucinations can seem "real". The film offers few answers, but its main question is the same one that abduction researchers constantly ask: What is happening to these people?

COMMUNION

Starring: Christopher Walken, Lindsay Crouse
 Director: Philippe Mora
 Certificate: 15
 Running time: 109 mins

IN HIS best-selling book *Communion*, Whitley Strieber claimed he was taken off and investigated by aliens. Some people dismissed the claim because it was a 'documentary novel' and he is the main character. Still, Aussie director Mora, who collaborated with the author on this project, had a freaky experience while staying at Strieber's New York cabin, where all the weird stuff started, so...

While the book runs into the realms of cod-philosophy and speculation, the celluloid version is pure Hollywood sci-fi. Yet *Communion's* strength is that it's an offbeat domestic melodrama, chronicling the way Strieber's experiences disrupt his personal life. It seems his family and friends had as much difficulty swallowing his story as some of his readers.

Casting Christopher Walken as Strieber is questionable. A mannered actor, Walken's character is too wacky in the first place, so believing in his sanity becomes even harder. Then there's the creatures themselves and their monstrous rectum probe (is this a rape phobia drama in disguise?), which will raise more titters than amazement.

Perhaps the main problem is that Strieber's dream-like experiences, real or imaginary, do not transfer well to the literal medium of film.

■■■■ MARTIN SUTTON

COMMUNION

DIRECTOR: Philippe Mora
 STARRING: Christopher Walken, Lindsay Crouse
 AND YOU thought Oliver North's testimony was unconvincing? Adapted from Whitley Strieber's avowedly authentic novel of interstellar close encounters, Philippe Mora's big screen bonanza blows what little credibility this story may once have had right out of the window, emerging as a second rate Spielberg rip-off, featuring a third-rate cast fumbling with a screenplay, the ineptitude of which is truly amazing.

Holed up in a house haunted by alien visitations, a bedraggled Christopher Walken is spirited away by extra-terrestrials (represented as disco-dancing teddy bears), who take him to their leaders and proceed to stick pepper-pots up his anal passage in their quest to cement diplomatic relations with Earth.

When our hero's psychiatric health is called into question by his fellow earthlings, he is forced to seek help in the form of a 'group therapy' session with a bunch of similar loons, all of whom claim to have had identical experiences. *Communion* ditches any ambiguity present in the source novel (did it happen or was it hallucination?), opting instead for unsuccessful 'spectacular' visuals.

Mora throws in some visible shock effects which serve only to further undermine the veneer of authenticity. A completely half-witted cinematic rendering of a naff work of fiction, the handsome rewards of which (book sales, movie rights) would seem to suggest that the Mr Strieber is not quite as bonkers as some people seem to think.

Mark Kermode

INDEPENDENT 11/10/90

COMMUNION (Prince Charles, 15) is taken from the book by Whitley Strieber, who wrote the script and helped produce it with Philippe Mora, the director. We must thus believe that it is as authentic a version as possible of the peculiar psychic adventure that he says happened to his family.

Certainly the film makes a strenuous attempt to encapsulate Strieber's tale without sensationalism. It also has the benefit of one of Christopher Walken's most nervy and watchable performances. If ever a man looked as if he'd just seen a ghost, or actually is one, it's Walken.

Strieber thinks he was the victim of an attempted abduction by sentient and not necessarily hostile non-human visitors who nevertheless terrorised his family in the process. The trouble with it lies half in our expectations of a genre practised mostly by second-rate film-makers these days, and half in its own high seriousness. In the end, we get something more than a little dull and not much more credible than your average ET substitute.

GUARDIAN 11/10/90

SELECT Nov. '90

The movie version of *COMMUNION* is on general release. Barry Norman thought it was crap. Others reviewers weren't too keen either. Here's a few of the more complimentary reviews.

Letters



Ears to the Ground?

Dear Andy, We in the centre for Crop Circle Studies were most interested to read your report in UFO BRIGANTIA No.44 that a Mr. Colin Vance claims to have hoaxed the crop circle which was found by the Mansfield UFO Group near Mansfield, Nottingham, on the 16th July 1989.

Studying the excellent photographs sent to me at the time by Duncan Walters (of which I sent photocopies to Terence Meaden and other field researchers), I am amazed at Mr. Vance's skill, particularly in producing the elaborate and beautiful swirling of the grain: the latter has tended to be on of the diagnostic signs (though y no means the only one) by which we try to distinguish between hoaxed and genuine events. If a hoax can, indeed, be produced so convincingly, we certainly need to have a further hard look at our criteria.

I wonder whether Mr. Vance could help us? CCCS's Research Panel would count it a great favour on his part if he would join a small committee of us at a suitable site and demonstrate his ability to reproduce his hoax. (CCCS would make the arrangements with the farmer and compensate him for the damage). It may be too late to arrange this for the current season; but we would very much like to make arrangements for next year.

I hope you will feel able to publish this letter. We would like to hear (in confidence if they wish) not only from Mr. Vance but also from any others who claim to be capable of hoaxing with such success. A careful study of their methods by our Research Panel would contribute greatly to further study of this puzzling phenomenon. Let me add that we would preserve anonymity if requested: our sole aim would be to improve our research methods.

Best Wishes
Ralph Noyes (London)

Editors reply: I haven't as yet been in contact with Mr Vance since he originally revealed the hoax to me and I know that there may be some people who think I made the whole thing up. I didn't and hopefully by the January 1991 issue we should have a statement from Mr Vance which will clear the whole thing up once and for all.

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Psychics not in misperception - shock, horror, probe

Dear Sir,

The May edition carried a report by David Taylor of a sighting of an anomalous light seen by ourselves after a psychic quest on the borders of Warwicks/Leics. in September 1989 ("UFO Buzzes Car?" UFO BRIGANTIA no. 43. May 1990).

We wish to point out certain facts which are misrepresented so that a potentially interesting case is not so readily dismissed merely upon the vagaries of the investigator.

Firstly, as regards the psychic quest: we did not know what we were looking for, acting only upon psychic information received by spontaneous automatic writing on the part of Rita Goold. At Brinklow Rita then continued with automatic writing followed by the use of doswing rods as instructed by the writing. Secondly we wish to emphasis

that although we visited a pub afterwards, Rita is a teetotaler and the rest of us only had one drink. Thirdly, as to the actual observation of the UFO, neither of us were talking about the artefacts recovered nor of the evening's activities, the excitement having died down earlier. Rita, in any case, has psychically located and retrieved artifacts on numerous occasions in the past.

The light appeared several minutes after the agitation of the dowsing rods and was first seen by Rita to the right (ie N.E.), approximately 1½ miles from the site of the encounter. Contrary to the report we are both certain as to the exact location of the site, particularly as Rita has links with Brinklow and has travelled regularly along the Fossa Road, including at night. The exact location is between Withbrook and Monks Kirby (GR: SP 456843, Sheet 140). Cloudesly Bush is not a village - it is a farm situated upon a road junction further up the Fosse Way.

The light was the apparent size of a pea at arms length when first seen, approximately 2 miles distant. As the light approached (in the air) it grew larger and it moved over from where it was in the sky to what seemed to be the centre of the road. The starry effect from the light meant that we could not see what was behind it, if anything. It did not blind one's eyes to look at it though it was magnesium white. It did not produce a beam whatsoever either, and at no point did it ever resemble a car/motorbike headlight. In any case, Rita has been driving for 32 years and is no stranger to the road, day or night.

At first we were inquisitive as to its nature but then the object acted in such a way as to make Rita stop the car and switch off the engine. It was coming down the centre of the road, several tens of metres off the ground. Rita electrically wound down her window and heard nothing but a whooshing noise as it sped past us, after having swerved sideways approximately 100 metres ahead and dropping down to the ground, without changing speed.

We feel that this is important as we are both aware of the misperceptions made in observation. Nothing would have been reported merely on a sighting of what may have been a car headlight or ball lightning. It was not reported until we were approached by the investigator who was himself informed by two friends who told him incorrect information, which is presumably why the investigator concerned deems it necessary to suggest that "the case is plagued by confusion" (his confusion, not ours). As with some other investigations the report appears to ignore the witnesses testimony, over-riding their observations to fit in with preconceived ideas, some of them based on little more than supposition.

Being sceptical is a classic statement that serves to, a) cover-up the fact that you do not believe the witnesses actually had an experience, or that, b) one dismisses the possibility that they had an encounter with the 2-5% of cases that cannot be explained. However, we do sympathise with Andy Roberts statement as, if we had read the report without being aware of the true facts, we too would have been sceptical.

Rita Gould & Clive Potter, Leicester

Editors reply: Sorry. I am currently writing out, by automatic writing 'cos it's easier, I must not be sceptical, 10,000 times.

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If I truly believed that aliens could seize me I would spend my life in the company of a hundred other people, all armed to the teeth and ready to demonstrate to any short grey house-guests that happiness is a warm AK-47. I do not, therefore deep down I do not believe.

American folklorist & ufologist Eddie Bullard writing in Magonia37 (Oct.'90)



Quite a few new things to review this issue. Please remember that all the interesting cases, news etc. surfaces first in the small press so please support them wherever you can. Come on, it's almost Christmas, why not buy a guest subscription to one of these magazines for a friend - or even better, for an enemy!

Strange Phenomena Investigations -ENIGMAS bi-monthly £7.00 for five issues, A5, 36 pages from 5 Tullibody Rd, Alloa, Clackmannanshire, Scotland, FK10 2LL.

The August issue of ENIGMAS contains a variety of articles ranging from the Gulf Breeze Hoax, the monster of Loch Morar, Zones of Silence, Corn Circles in Wales, Operation Congo and a lot more. Aply edited by Malcolm Robinson, ENIGMAS is informative, more comprehensive than most magazines and retains a touch of humour to raise it above some magazine we could mention. Rather than go for just the 'UFO angle' or whatever Malcolm has chosen to present as many aspects of anomalous phenomena as he can which can only be a good thing and prevents any magazine from becoming narrow minded.

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HOBGOBLIN - Alternative Arts Magazine, single issue £2.50, 4 issue sub. £8.00 from Northern Arts Publishing, Roper Lane, Thurgoland, S. Yorks. S30 7AA.

Published by every editors favourite printer and all round nice person on the 'phone, Chaz Lippeatt, HOBGOBLIN is an A4 20 page collection of all kinds of art from (mainly) the areas of interest which we would loosely construe as neo-Paganism (or I would anyway) and Earth Mysteries. Poetry, short stories, comic strips and especially the fantastic artwork all reflect the spirit of the (new) age. HOBGOBLIN, to be honest, is a bit 'wet' in parts for me but some of the artwork has ended up on my office wall. The whole point about it is that it could contain anything - even UFO art, so buy it, see what input you could inject - and do so!

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THE WILD PLACES - A New Journal of the Paranormal. Quarterly, £1.75 single issue or £7.50 4 issue sub. from 20 Trembear Rd. St. Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5NY.

Those of you who remember COMMON GROUND as being one of the best strange phenomena journals ever will be pleased to see THE WILD PLACES. TWP is edited by Kevin McClure and is easily up to the standard set by COMMON GROUND all those years ago. The first issue has a very rational and erudite article about the reality of the abductee/contactee experience by Hilary Evans, Michael Goss on messages from the dead and a piece on the Kansas City Prophets. My personal favourite is the piece by Kevin himself, 'Possession & Exorcism' - a hard hitting no holds barred look at the beliefs and motivations of exorcists and the anti-occult Christians. TWP promises to be a focus for ground breaking articles in the future and I think is essential reading for everyone interested in the interface between belief and reality.

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THE SKEPTIC - A rational look at pseudoscience and the paranormal in the British Isles. bi-monthly, A4, 32 pages from P.O. Box 475, Manchester, M60 2TH. £10/6 issues, back/single issues £1.75.

The SKEPTIC seems to have got into its stride now after some wishy-washy issues a year or so ago, and, as with TWP (above) contains a variety of material but here from a strictly sceptical viewpoint. Many of the contributors seem to be from the scientific community and their approach to such subjects as UFOs, Houdini, Creationists, Homeopathy and other such subjects is accordingly rational - and humorous with it. The review section is particularly good and the layout of the magazine excellent being broken up nicely with cartoons and illustrations, and the letters page actually contains letters from people with a brain which is a rarity in the small magazine field where the letters page are usually just an excuse for the editor printing letters which praise that particular mag. You may not be a sceptic but I would suggest you subscribed to this journal (especially if you aren't a sceptic in fact), to see how the sceptical viewpoint affects your areas of interest. In this country we are now fortunate in that we now have magazines which cover any particular area of anomalous phenomena over the whole spectrum of belief. THE SKEPTIC lives at the objective end and we should be grateful for its existence.

THE AVELEY ABDUCTION - A UFOIN CASE REPORT. Original investigator, Andy Collins, now compiled by Philip Mantle, I.U.N. (Custodians of the UFOIN archives). A5, 42 pages. Price £2.55 inc P&p from 232 Long Lane, Wheatley, Halifax, W. Yks. HX3 5JS.

The Aveley abduction is now a staple part of British UFO mythology, so much so that portions of the story were incorporated into Ian Watsons' best selling sci-fi novel Miracle Visitors (a book, incidentally, which says more about the UFO phenomenon than 99% of all non-fiction books). This booklet is a condensation of the original UFOIN case report including original drawings, maps etc. If you want to get to grips with a seminal case in British ufology then this booklet is for you. Profits made from this publication will go towards re-printing other case material from the UFOIN files.

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MAGAZINE

UFO AFRINEWS ed.by Cynthia Hind. Nos.1-1988; 2-1989; 3-1990.44-48ps.Ea: £1.90

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Gossip

An occasional round-up of the latest in Ufological scandal and rumours - stuff that cissy ufological journals daren't touch - if you know of any tell me and I'll include it in a future issue.

GOSSIP:...Remember the South African case? You don't? Well it seems neither does anyone else except those bastions of truth and sincerity, YUFOS, who are the only people on the planet who are still taking it seriously. This has (we hear) led to problems as their only vestige of credibility within the UFO community, Tim Good, has apparently fallen out with them because even he doesn't want to be associated with such a load of hoaxed garbage. Yet again YUFOS prove themselves to be wonderful yarn spinners...GOSSIP:...Clarke & Roberts' book Phantoms of the Sky caused ufologist Nigel Mortimer to circulate a 'statement' in which he alleged the facts printed there about the Cracoe case 'misrepresented the evidence'. You know you're onto something when people start arguing with what you've written!...GOSSIP:...Speaking about manipulation of evidence, a recent conversation with Howard Turnpenny (one of the three P.C.'s who saw 'something' at the time of the 1980 Alan Godfrey Todmorden 'abduction' case) suggests that the Harry Harris conducted interview with Turnpenny and his colleague was not done under quite as much tightness as it would have been had it been a police investigation (that's not libel Harry that's fact!...GOSSIP:...The new crop-field circle journal CEREOLOGY (are they being serious?) are 'associated' with a rather batty group called Fountain International who believe in 'energy dowsing' amongst other things, Cor blimey missus, whatever next. Tempted to ask "what kind of energy", we bit our tongues, knowing full well it would, of course, be 'cosmic energy'. All we need now is someone to be mysteriously murdered in 'Haunted Wessex' for tales of a cereal killer to circulate...GOSSIP:...Worse still is the fact that CEREOLOGY isn't actually the official journal of the Centre for Crop Circle Studies, just appears as though it is. What can this mean...GOSSIP:...Some doubt was cast on the American way of ufology during June when visiting ace ufologist Budd Hopkins was overheard to remark that Regina Cullen was just the sort of person to be abducted. Those who know her know she already has been...GOSSIP:...Ufological heroes no. 666. Tony Dodd whilst at the recent Munich 'New Age' 'Dialogue With The Universe' UFO conference (isn't talking to the Universe certifiable?) was surprised to find members of the South African Embassy in the audience. Thinking perhaps that they were spying on him the conference host gave them short shrift, telling them that they would never stop the revealing of truth and that "for every one they stopped, 100 would replace them". Stirring stuff...GOSSIP:...Bob Lazar, well known in USA ufology as the scientist who 'blew the whistle' on the underground UFO base at S-4 not far from one of the other alien/US facilities at Groom Lake (oh yeah?) has recently been charged in connection with running a brothel and other naughty things!.....(sad)...GOSSIP:...D. Scott Rogo, prolific and fairly sensible author on all aspects of parapsychology, UFOs, NDE's etc was found murdered recently at his home in Los Angeles. One of his books was entitled Phone Calls From The Dead, so we're waiting (brrbrrbrrbrr).....GOSSIP:...Self-styled (ie he introduces himself as such) 'lunatic fringe' representative and UFO Debate editor David Barclay went into a sulk recently when the IUN refused to let him use their files or name to back up some particularly un-provable theories in a book he had planned. Ethics and all that donjaknow. Tears were shed before bedtime and money wasted by him on solicitors letters to IUN GrandFromage Andy Roberts. The book is still on, IUN-less and apparently now has Arthur Tomlinson contributing a chapter. The world waits....

SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL

We often feature the connection between UFOs/Religion/the occult in this magazine and we are always keen to spread other people's ideas of what UFOs are so here we are featuring a snippet from a free magazine by the name of AWAKE! (8/11/90), which is distributed by the Jehovahs Witnesses. Nestling in and amongst such articles as Drugs? Just Shake Hands With Satan! is a lengthy feature called UFOs Ancient & Modern, - very sensible piece of literature, free of religious comment until the last section which is:

Is There An Occult Influence?

When reviewing the mental or psychological experiences of some who have reported contacts with UFOs, it is also possible to recognise similarities with spiritistic or other paranormal phenomena. One example of this is the testimony of John H. Andrews in his book The Extraterrestrials and Their Reality. In his acknowledgements of help in producing the book, he states: "Great appreciation also goes to the four space people [ETs in physical human bodies who circulate unnoticed among us] who told me their stories and who wished to remain unnamed, to the numerous psychics and channels who assisted me with my many experiments, to the extraterrestrials for their many informative messages." Regarding these "space people", he states: "They were all quite intelligent; all were channels for invisible entities." - Compare 1 Samuel 28:7,8; Ephesians 6:12.

Andrews also claims to have received messages from extraterrestrials. He lists some of these as: "There is no such thing as death...There is no such thing as good or evil.[Compare Genesis 3:3,4....]...Creation, evolution and reincarnation are valid processes at work in the Universe...We (the ETs) are not here to control or rule you, but to guide you....The Earth will soon undergo tremendous, cataclysmic changes. When these changes are completed, less than 1/1,000 of the present population will be still alive!"

The Bible also speaks of extraterrestrials, spirit creatures, such as obedient angels and disobedient, rebellious angels who became demons. Down through Bible history, God on many occasions used faithful angels to communicate with men. (Genesis 22:9-18; Isaiah 6;1-7) Satan still uses his demon followers to mislead mankind with all kinds of philosophies, fads, messages, communications and cults that distract from the message that God's Kingdom, his heavenly government, will soon rule over a restored earth. - Compare Luke 4:33,34; James 2:19; Revelation 12:9; 21:1-4.

The Christian apostle Paul gave due warning of demon influence in the last days when he wrote: "The inspired utterance says definitely that in later periods of time some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to misleading inspired utterances and teachings of demons." - 1 Timothy 4:1.

Keeping in mind how deep we are into these apocalyptic days, it would not be advisable for Christians to spend their valuable time investigating in depth matters of this kind. Rather, we should concern ourselves with the more important challenge at hand, that is, obeying the command of the extraterrestrial holy angel who proclaimed: "Fear God and give him glory because the hour of judgement by him has arrived, and so worship the One who made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountain of waters." -Revelation 14:6,7.

40 YEARS OF FRENCH UFOLOGY

Perry Petrakis

AESV (Association d'etude sur les Soucoupes Volantes)

Perry was due to give a paper at the Phantoms of the Sky conference in July. Unfortunately due to various problems he couldn't make it. This is an edited version of his paper which gives a rare insight into the development of French ufology.

As we are limited by space I will try in this paper to give an objective as possible account of what has happened these last forty years in France, putting the emphasis on the most 'interesting' years and thus neglecting others.

Following the 1947 events in the USA, with the rapidity ufology is known for, pioneers such as Charles Garreau, Aime Michel, Marc Thirouin amongst others, got involved with the subject. To such an extent that Marc Thirouin, for example, founded the Commission d'Etudes Ouranos which was to be one of the first UFO groups founded worldwide.

In 1954 all hell broke loose and the now famous wave gave plenty of work for the group who had to endure dozens of cases of CE1, CE2 and CE3 sightings. In France UFOs were the main subject of conversation and the press didn't lose a bit of it. Things were at such extremes that certain newspapers could use titles like, A man shoots his neighbour who was trying to repair his car believing he was a martian, and that was supposedly a true occurrence. Tens of sightings were reported every day some of which are considered classics today.

This wave gave everyone food for thought and, as in other countries, several hypothesis for explaining where they came from and why, were being exposed in the UFO literature. Marcel Pages and Lieutenant Plantier were working on antigravity and electromagnetic fields trying to explain how they flew and there was no questioning whatsoever as to how reliable the sources of information could be, just as there was none regarding the possible involvement of other spheres such as military, psychological, psychiatric and so on. But of course, we were in the fifties.

Things calmed down in the late fifties where, paradoxically, new groups were founded. In February 1958, Lumieres dans la Nuit was brought to birth and has ever since published cases more or less well investigated by its readers because LDLN is not and never has been a group, but a journal.

The 1960s, although much more calm than the fifties was to bring to public attention some of the most important cases one has ever heard of.

In 1962, the GEPA was founded by various people among which, Rene and Francine Fouere who were former Ouranos people who had left the group. The GEPA rapidly became one of the groups with the highest standards of scientific research and objectivity. Most of the important cases investigated during the decade were by GEPA whose goal were to bring ufology to a wider scientific recognition.

In 1965, on the first of July, one of the most important French cases took place when Mr Maurice Masse, a farmer, was hiding in the woods near his lavender fields in an attempt to find out who had been stealing his crop, saw a very strange object. Near the UFO, which was resting several feet away from him on six legs and a central tube, were two creatures picking up plants. When Mr Masse approached them to ask what they were doing one of them unsheathed a tubular object which when pointed at him completely paralysed the witness. The humanoids then returned to the object which swiftly took off. This case, even

revisited by modern ufology is still unexplained. There is however now more facts than originally met the eye since around that date the French Ministry of Defence was due to choose between the Valensole area and the Albion plateau to install its strategic missiles. Some have also hinted that the sixth fleet was in the area at that time and it is true that the sight of helicopters was an unfamiliar one at that time, but all this does not mean however that the case has been solved.



Perry Petrakis

From 1970 to 1975 it was, as we say in Europe, *Le calme avant la temete* (the calm before the storm). There was a steady flow of sightings and UFO groups popped up all over the country. Lumieres dans la nuit stopped mentioning new age subjects to entirely devote its space to UFOs. Ouranos, at the death of Marc Thirouin, fell into the hands of Pierre Delval, our equivalent of Gordin Creighton, assisted by people like Jimmy Guieu, an SF author, whom I will mention later on. The GEPA was still doing good research but with growing difficulties and the death of several of its influential members.

In 1974, AESV, in other words our research group was founded. Whilst on the 21st of February a not yet well known journalist from French TV was interviewing former Minister of Defence, Mr Robert Galley. Galley more or less 'officialised' the UFO phenomenon by

saying that the government should be extremely open minded towards the witnesses and their sightings, and that material was being sent to the GEPA by the government. Journalist Jean-Claude Bourret's interest in UFOs then suddenly became public knowledge and was spread by the publication of four books (Crack In The Universe in this country-ed.). In fact his notoriety along with his books and at one time over 300 public appearances per year did quite a bit to bring vast public interest to the UFO phenomenon, although he later confessed to being more interested in the cash flow than in UFOs! It was during this humdrum routine that French ufology was to go through the most important crisis ever.

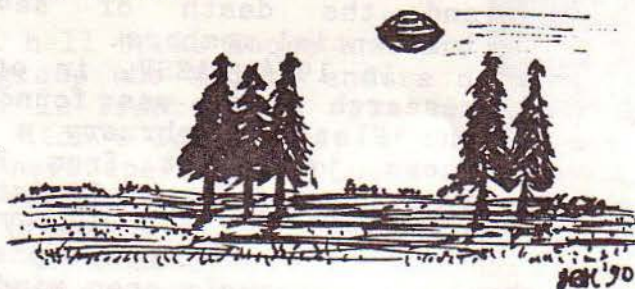
In 1977, Michel Monnerie, a former investigator for the magazine Lumieres dans la Nuit, published a book entitled Et si les ovnis n'existaient pas? Which even in good English means And what if UFOs did not really exist?. It was a good question but a very badly formulated. However, Monnerie wanted to stress a few things.

That, for example, the whole of what people called the UFO phenomenon was just a mixture of misinterpretation of mundane objects, hallucinations and so on. That the raw material in UFO files wasn't worth anything, and that witnesses interpreted all these sightings in terms of the UFO stereotype brushed into their minds over the last thirty years by the mass media. The result of this was that both book, hypothesis and author was shot down by most of the UFO groups in the country, but the bad was done. Some honest researchers knew that he had made a few good points and realised they would have to raise their research standards and spread their knowledge to such fields as military defence, history, psycho-sociology, astronomy, meteorology, even sometimes psychiatry, all of which were lacking in past investigations, if they hoped to progress in their knowledge of the phenomenon.

Things did not calm down even with the creation of the official

group GEPAN in 1977. Formed within the corridors of the French Space Agency the group, its creation was a logical continuation of government policy due to public interest. To explain in detail the whole of the GEPAN history would be really too long. But in the following log-book fashion I will try to stress the most important points.

Shortly after the meeting with the UFO groups, Claude Poher was replaced at GEPAN (in 1978) by Alain Esterle. For five years Esterle put a heavy lid on public relations, emphasising internal research instead. During that period, even 'optimistic' ufologists were beginning to wonder if it was not a remake of the Condon Committee. Esterle, in fact, was undertaking a certain amount of research projects, one of which would concern research into magnetohydrodynamics, or in other words magnetically confined or directed high temperature plasmas. Since the beginning the GEPAN was to be monitored by a more or less secret scientific committee comprising of scientists but also important manufacturers and also scientific consultants. That implicitly meant that if there were to be industrial outlets to the GEPANs research, money wouldn't have been poured into it in vain.



Unfortunately for GEPAN, Jean-Pierre Petit, who is one of Europe's most capable researchers into MHD and who was, at the time, a scientific consultant, was kept away from the project. Instead GEPAN chose one of Petit's former students and thus engulfed hundreds of thousands of francs in very expensive experiments which were a complete fiasco.

In 1983, the cash flow towards GEPAN suddenly stopped. Esterle was replaced by Jean-Jacques Velasco and technical notes stopped being published while the debate regarding whether GEPAN was an immense black hole or not was still raging. Those ufologists who had always believed GEPAN was nothing were very happy but for others an interesting period was to begin which continues to the present day, in which an exchange of information with Velasco became possible.

Sadly GEPAN unofficially folded in 1988. 'Unofficially' because the situation is very ambiguous. In fact the French space agency became very nervous about the terms 'group' and 'unidentified' when it began to negotiate billion franc contracts to satellize space material for different countries and CNES policy was to put an end to GEPAN by transforming it into the present SEPRA in order to avoid problems. In France we call that a change in continuity since the SEPRA, which is ostensibly for satellite re-entry tracking is directed by Velasco, who in turn still receives UFO reports from the gendarmerie and who also still occasionally investigates cases.

But let's leap backwards in our chronology. In 1977 a man called Jean Miguères published a book entitled I have been a Guineapig for extraterrestrials. Miguères was a contactee, completely unknown in France at the time. His alleged adventure is as follows. In 1969, while driving a private ambulance from the south west of France carrying his brother, a dying man who passed away during the journey and his wife, he had a very severe accident.

This happened outside Paris in the early morning when Miguieres said he saw a bright cloud, then a car driving up in front of him following his own manoeuvres to avoid it, as if in a mirror. Just after the accident he saw a being who applied a device on his neck and who told him he didn't have to worry. 'They' would always be there to protect him and his family. Then the being disappeared before firemen arrived to cut the car open. Miguieres went on to say that this was all proved to be true by the fact that he had been declared dead and miraculously saved four times by doctors. He published medical certificates and so many details in his book that verification of the case seemed to be an easy job. And that's exactly what we tried to do.

Miguieres never accepted to meet us during the first two years of research although he had written that he was willing to meet anyone wishing to sort out the story.

During those first two years we checked everything we could. SF writer Jimmy Guieu as well as UFO writer Guy Tarrade confirmed an episode in which the car was allegedly teleported from a highway to a smaller road. Dr Marcel Pages who had been credited in France as being an 'antigravity specialist', to whom Miguieres said he showed plans of a flying saucer and who allegedly replied "here are the pieces of a puzzle I've been investigating for years", wrote to us saying that nothing besides the accident was to be believed. In fact we found out a tremendous amount of things that just didn't look right. For example it was impossible for Miguieres to have left Perpignan at 1840pm with 3 people and 700 kilos of oxygen on board, to have drove over 900 km, being on the outskirts of Paris at 5am. There were many other such facts that would be too long and complicated to explain here.

What we can say is that when he came in our town, in 1979, we had published a special issue of our journal revealing our results and the least one can say is that his public conference that evening was very agitated! His lawyer wrote to us soon after demanding public excuses. Jimmy Guieu and Guy Tarrade tried to intimidate us by asking for 150,000 franc damages (£15,000!). People, among whom were scientists, journalists and the entire French speaking UFO community were backing us up for a future lawsuit. In the meanwhile, details regarding Jean Miguieres honesty were pouring in. We learnt for example that he had blackmailed someone who had reached our own conclusions, that people he alleged he had met in Canada belonged to universities that did not exist etc....

Because our means of defence were growing day by day and because Miguieres would have to prove UFO existence in court and so on he let the whole affair go and, after two other books, was slowly forgotten by ufology.

In 1979, French ufologists had another great shock when reading Barthel and Bruckners book entitled The Great Martian Scare. The two researchers had gone thoroughly through most of the 1954 wave with a ruinous effect. Demonstrating that most cases when taken up and re-investigated just would not stand up. Pessimism was beginning to seriously overwhelm the few researchers left as that meant the breaking down of one of the last values of French ufology, such as for example, the Aime Michel theory where sightings from the 1954 wave pinpointed on a map for a particular day would give straight lines. But this new ground was to be a beginning for a new generation of researchers who did not have any particular beliefs to save or hypothesis to defend.

At the end of 1979 the world famous Cergy-Pontoise case broke in the world's news in which a young man named Frank Fontaine disappeared whilst with two friends of his and remained missing and unlocated for a week long period. The whole affair was arranged for the press in order to suggest the young man had been abducted by a UFO, whereas a nationwide police hunt was set up by police who thought he might have been killed and his body hidden by his accomplices.

GULF BREEZE: AGAIN

Allan Staithes

Remember the snippet on page 46 of the last issue of UFO BRIGANTIA about the Gulf Breeze case being a hoax? Well a lot's happened since then. But where to start? Assuming you all by now know the hideous details of the Gulf Breeze case the plot was thickened considerably over this summer, under circumstances that are 'odd' to say the least, so we'll go straight at them. It's a confusing story but stick with it 'cos Gulf Breeze is UFO history in the making. We sent Allan Staithes on the Gulf Breeze trail and after weeks of grubbing about in US UFO magazines this is what he had to tell us.....

First the original 'hoax' story. Basically the current resident of Gulf Breeze witness 'Mr Ed's' former home discovered a model UFO whilst in the attic turning the water supply off. Moving some insulation he discovered the model, consisting of four plastic foam plates and some type of paper (said to be 'drafting paper' on which was house plans drawn by Ed himself). The Pensacola News Journal subsequently managed to replicate the 'original' Gulf Breeze photos using the model. All over? Not quite. Apparently the new tenant had discovered the model and had kept it to himself for some while believing it to be 'not significant' (!!??), which is odd considering the amount of interest the story has generated. In fact, the model only came to light when the present tenant was asked by journalist Craig Meyers if 'he had come across any models of UFOs'. And slap everyone's thigh if he hadn't! The fact that Meyers had been assigned by the Pensacola News Journal to 'bird dog Ed for the purpose of developing something of substance' may give our readers some terribly libelous thoughts. Anything is possible in ufology you know.

This all prompted cries of 'plant' and although even Mr Ed agreed that the replica photos look very like his own, he sticks to his story and rightly points out that his house was empty for a long while during the period it was for sale and it would have been easy for someone wishing to discredit him to have planted the model. 'Evidence' for this claim came shortly after the hoax was made public, when Ed's wife Francis 'remembered' that a neighbour had told her of a stranger in a car with out of town license plates who had entered the garage, pulled the stairs down, entered the attic, and then left suddenly. Walters said this occurred after he moved, but before the current residents moved in. Memory can be such a wonderfully convenient thing sometimes - but why oh why didn't Ms Walters reveal this before?.

Ed had his own thoughts on who could have planted the model, blaming everyone from the debunkers out to discredit him to the government engaging in some kind of double/treble/quadruple disinformation game about which we can only wonder in awe at. Fortunately so can Ed. The 'Ed Hoax' theory was almost thrown out entirely when it was alleged that the plans used in the models construction had been drawn up after the first of the UFO photos had been taken but later investigation by Gulf Breeze Mayor Ed Gray and police Chief Jerry Brown has illuminated us all with the discovery that Walters made the offending house plan six months before the first of his UFO photos were taken, thus making it possible for the plans to have been used in a putative faked UFO by Ed.

Several US UFO investigators have suggested that a simple way to solve the 'did he didn't he' question would have been to have the model fingerprinted. Sure would. But by an unhappy eventuality, shortly after the model was found, Mr Ed visited the Menzer's (the people who bought his house) and handled the model. Not exactly what would happen in a police investigation but there y'go.

As if all these problems weren't irksome enough for poor old Ed, who is after all only trying to make an honest living out of photographing alien craft, the above mentioned Mayor and Police Chief (a bit like Batman really!) have also managed to find a person who says he witnessed Ed making several of the Gulf Breeze photographs. Orbiter (May/June 1990) has a reprint of the full confession, and it looks plausible - even down to the guys comment about the 3-D Nimslo camera photographs being of a landing airplane (check 'em out in the book). His final comment was that "Ed said he would die and go to the grave with this story".

True or false, what the Gulf Breeze case has done to American ufology is worthy of study on its own and the disputes over there make British ufological tiffs look tame. The Gulf Breeze farrago has had far reaching effects in US ufology which seem to be only just starting to be felt. For instance, Marge Christensen, a long standing member of MUFON (Mutual UFO Network- America's largest UFO investigation organisation) and currently their Public Education officer has become so disenchanted over MUFON's slavish acceptance and lack of criticism of the case that she has resigned from the organisation. As usual all real ufological work (whatever that is) has stopped while hostilities go on under the mask of objective investigations. Even Bill Moore, Roswell apologist, alleged CIA mole and general well known ufologist about America has cast his doubts on the case now with the arrival on the scene of the witness to the alleged hoax.

Florida beach is highway to heaven

Six Soldiers Found in Florida AWOL From U.S. Spy Unit

As we go to press the case is still unresolved but the sheer amount of evidence against Ed Walters is mounting all the time. If he has hoaxed the case he has been very clever. If it is ever proven to be a hoax ufologists will be guilty of a home goal - ufologists rushed in and instead of saying "ok Ed. prove these are genuine" they chose to take it on themselves to prove they were. Rather a curious way round for objective researchers to go on, ne'st pas? Worse than that they let their beliefs come to the surface and have rode right along with the garbage, ignoring why the original polaroid pictures differed from the Nimslo camers shots which in turn differed from the video pics, in each case the image looking less and less 'real'- compatible perhaps with the task of hoaxing becoming harder and harder as the technology increased (please consult the Gulf Breeze book here). As an example of the psycho-social hypothesis in action Gulf Breeze has been the best thing for a long time. What does all this say about groups of people (who claimed to have seen the 'thing' in their dozens), about individuals (who may be prepared to go to such lengths to fool so many people), about so-called UFO researchers (who are taken in every step of the way and excommunicate those who raise dissent), about photo-analysts such as Dr Bruce Macabee (who said "I have concluded that there is no evidence of a hoax and that the photos....are genuine"), about life in general? You tell me.

But amongst all the tawdry goings on in the primeval pit of ufology there is still fun to be had.

One such event which has come to our notice and is sure to enter Gulf Breeze mythology is that six soldiers from the US Army 701st

Military Intelligence unit stationed at Augsburg in Germany apparently deserted and legged it to, yes, you guessed it, Gulf Breeze. Why? According to the Syracuse Herald Journal (19/6/90) they believed that the aliens had designated them the 'chosen few' and in some cases they alleged that they went to Florida to hunt down the anti-Christ, in other versions that they were waiting for the 'rapture' which is what all good Christians can expect when the shit really hits the fan - (note the curious confusion here between ufology, the rapture, christianity, and the anti-christ - religion, especially the Devil and Christianity type is going to be big in ufology over the next few years we think).

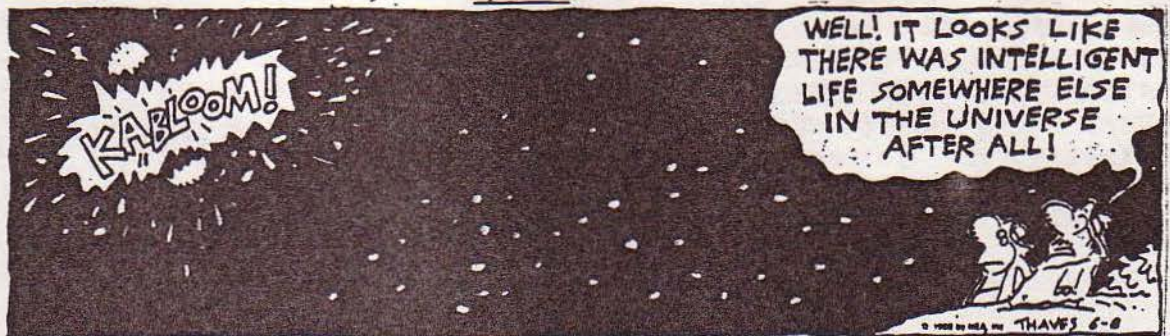
Even better is the rumour printed in Saucer Smear, that one of the soldiers friends happens to have once worked at a New Age shop in the locality, attended the recent MUFON conference in Pensacola and may have been Ed Walters' offspring. Ooooooooooooo.

Jim Melsecuic of Orbiter magazine writes that Ed Walters went to the Police for protection when he learned about their quest for the anti-Christ. I wonder why. Nevertheless I bet it's not the last we hear of this story by a long chalk. And besides, everyone knows the Anti-Christ really lives in Leeds.

Prescience or what?

Whilst we are on the subject of people being fooled, the Yorkshire UFO Society (YUFOS) magazine QUEST (vol.9. no.6) had the IUN team in stitches for quite a while with its story about some Russian mushroom hunters (see page 5 of last BRIGANTIA for our clairvoyant comments on this) who had found a landed UFO. They subsequently died of radiation poisoning and the military moved in, natch, to cordon it off. Loony Russian UFO investigators (how, we don't know given the foregoing military intervention, although the way it is put, Tony Dodd has been told by Russian investigators that some of their people are 'in contact' with the aliens- so look out for channelling coming your way soon in QUEST) have determined that "the craft was a radio probe spaceship intended for investigations in mountainous areas", and in fact belonged to expedition NZ-2 from Orion (don't laugh at all this, it's there in black and white in QUEST, I'm not making it up - ask serious questions instead - like "what happened to expedition NZ-1?") We shouldn't miss opportunities such as this to study alien life forms (the Russian UFO that is, not QUEST).

FRANK & ERNEST



Going along with current Russian sightings the pilot was four metres tall. Flying saucer fact fans will learn that the body of the UFO was made of POLKOR, that well-known metal used in all UFO construction, and that the craft consisted of three separate parts; the container vessel, the SHEER or 'auto-investigative hovercraft' and, as any fule kno, nestling snugly inside that the GIMINKON, a 20kg 'micro auto explorer'.

In line with their stance of deep integrity in all aspects of investigation YUFOS quite rightly stated that they don't take things

PHANTOMS OF THE SKY

The Conference Review

By
David Barclay

The only real objection I have to writing reports such as this is that I have a limited vocabulary of superlatives which is soon exhausted in attempting to convey the overall excellence of IUN gatherings like the one that took place over two days (14/15 July 1990) in the Library Theatre Sheffield. In my opinion there is a distinct possibility that Aliens are Green because they envy the Organisation That Doesn't Really Exist to produce Close Encounters of the Informative Kind which draw people like iron filings to a magnet, while THEY have to resort to forcible Abduction to get people to take any notice of THEM.

Despite the seemingly enforced absence of the Russians, and the regrettable circumstances which forced the French speaker to be absent, the Conference still fielded a packed programme that cogently covered every aspect of present day ufology, and which offered those attending the widest selection of ufological publications to purchase at their discretion.

Over the two day period those attending the conference heard professional presentations from ufologists espousing a wide variety of ufological paradigms beginning with Andy Roberts, from whose new book the title of the conference was taken. Andy presented his and Dave Clarke's joint thesis that the Phenomenon gives every indication of being a Fairy Tale (of sorts) in such a way that sales of the book itself were 'brisk' to say the least. Peter Hough once again paraded the Little Green man of Ilkley Moor, and - unarguably - once again demonstrated his ability to survive the slings and arrows of outrageous ufologists by advancing

his investigation of an event which I believe bears all the hallmarks of a genuine confrontation with Alien (not necessarily extra-terrestrial) entities. Much of the credit for the obvious success of the first day must go to the audience who were both attentive and informed - and rather generous when it came to putting their money where their interest was when purchasing the many publications on offer in the foyer.

The first day was rounded off by the presentation from Budd Hopkins whose forte is Abductions of the American Kind. One of the aspects of his investigations that he found most distressing was the uncovering of evidence that strongly indicates that juveniles are considered 'fair game' by the alleged 'Greys'. Interplanetary child abuse which if true, is quite intolerable. He backed his presentation with illustrations made by sundry children who had allegedly undergone mistreatment at the hands of the Aliens, and his data was such that at least one ufologist of my acquaintance was considerably upset by the ramifications inherent in it. However it was disappointing, at least to your reporter, that Budd Hopkins seemed unaware that Demonic intrusions of yesteryear were characterised by their predilection for involving children or childlike individuals. This crucial correlation



