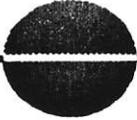
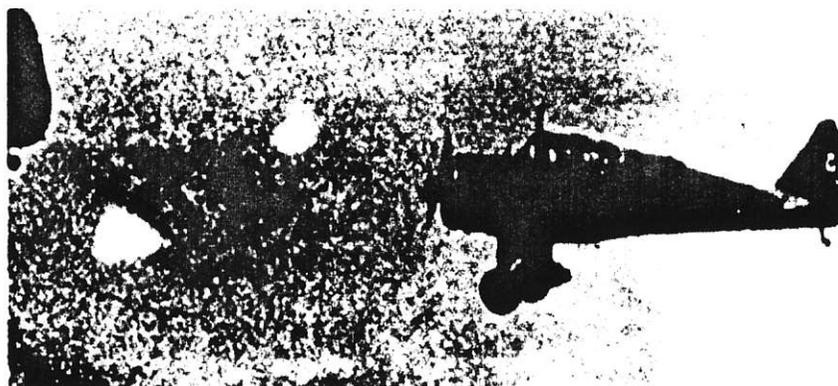


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# **BUFORA BULLETIN**

Bi-Monthly Journal Of The British UFO Research Association



## **In This Issue:**

**Foo Fighter Picture Mystery  
West Freugh Incident  
Preston Flying Triangle  
Questions In The House**

**No. 7**

**DECEMBER 1998**

## Stagnated Britannia?

Contemporary British Ufology is currently heading down a path of (possibly irreversible) stagnation. I am not talking of a stagnation of numbers, but one of intellectual and critical standards. Even at it's zenith, the intellectual spirit of "populist" British Ufology was about as high as that of the average horror comic. Compared with other countries - such as France, Italy and Spain - our Ufology is lacklustre, undynamic and often lacking in academic rigor. Where is the trailblazing British UFO research? The lengthy case-studies? The theoretical studies of possible UFO origins? Some work along these lines is conducted in this country, but never enough and always (it seems) by the same (very) few people. Where is everybody else? Our subject is wallowing in stagnation and decay, a fact that the British UFO community should start waking up to and take action to counter.

A major cause of this low level of involvement is the voluntary basis upon which Ufology is mostly based on. This subject asks researchers to conduct high-quality, scientifically rigorous UFO study efforts with no funding - **in their spare time!** It is hardly surprising that most study-efforts fall far short of a critical scientific ideal! Nonetheless, a substantial level of good UFO work is carried out on a voluntary basis throughout the world. So, why does the high-quality ufological output of other countries dwarf that our own land?

One possible answer to this conundrum is British Ufology's apparent dependence on the United States. All the speakers at most large British UFO conferences are American (who often present highly controversial aspects of Stateside Ufology). Nearly all our books are American, or focus on the concerns and approaches of American Ufology. The same goes for most T.V UFO documentaries and (even) Internet UFO web sites! As a consequence, British Ufology expends most of it's energy on the UFO controversies of America, while effectively ignoring all that happens within our own country and Europe.

Another failure of modern British Ufology is in the low number of academics and other similar respected figures prominently involved in this subject. Compare this with the number of like people involved in the **Society for Psychical Research (SPR)**. And also compare the high intellectual and critical level of the papers in the SPR Journal with those appearing in the average UFO magazine....!

There are bastions of intellectualism within Ufology. But most ufoists condemn such work as the product of "armchair sceptics". Most research - it surely does needs not be said - is done sitting in a chair! And is not the ability to question all commonplace notions - scepticism in it's highest form - is the first step to true understanding? Prior to the Renaissance there were the Middle and Dark Ages. They only came to an end when mankind first began to question "what was" and began to look for a better "could be....."

Sadly, this has yet to happen in our subject... If it never happens, Ufology could become the realm of demagogues, fanatics and snake-oil salesmen, and what remains of the critical spirit in British Ufology will become just a fond and cherished memory.

# BUFORA BULLETIN No. 7.

DECEMBER 1998.

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## OBITUARY: RON WEST

This month it saddens me to tell you that **Ron West**, founder member of the Essex UFO Research, Group died on the **15th October, 1998** after a long struggle with cancer. Ron set up a local group and enthused many members to begin researching the UFO enigma. He was an ardent believer in the government cover-up of UFO information and believed that a proportion of UFOs were Extraterrestrial in origin. Until he fell ill in February, his persistence with the MoD was second to none, he kept writing to both local politicians and to people within the MoD requesting answers to UFO sightings.

He was a great believer in the authenticity of the Rendlesham Incident as a significant event in UFO history and would regularly organise skywatches in the forest. Approx. one year ago, Ron and several members of his group saw several UFOs through the trees in Rendlesham Forest, this sighting spurred himself and many of the members of his group into investigating this bizarre incident which took place not far from his doorstep. Ron was quite possibly the first person in the country to catalogue every sighting that he referenced or investigated himself.

He will be sorely missed by this researcher and many others. I can only hope that the energy, enthusiasm and persistence that he showed will be replicated by many of the new researchers in the field. This is a great loss to ufology. You will always be remembered.

**Richard Conway. 12th November, 1998.**

**By way of a tribute, BUFORA BULLETIN now presents details of the 1988 Godmanchester incident; a significant unexplained UFO event that Ron West investigated, assisted by Ernest Still:**

At 19.35 hrs on the **2nd March 1988** at **Godmanchester**, (a small town on the edge of East Anglia), a 14 year-old girl was in the garden of her house mucking out animals, with a transistor radio by her side for company. Suddenly, a faint, vibrating roar was heard

above the music.

Inside the house her parents both heard this noise but did not immediately react to it. RAF Alconbury is only three miles away and they automatically assumed the airbase to be responsible. A terrible odour "like vile rotten eggs" then hit the area as the noise grew painfully loud.

The radio blanked out and, as the girl stared into the sky, she saw a bizarre object approaching from the east. It was jet black, square in shape, and seemed to have little holes or perforations all over the side with an aerial sticking out of each corner. The whole thing looked thin and was only a few feet in diameter. As it raced over towards the north west the noise and grinding vibration was terrible, but the instant it passed the radio came back to life and the smell abated.

The girl fled back indoors and it took some minutes for her parents to calm her down. She was in turmoil. They rushed out to find their pet horse trembling beside the wall in clear distress. Describing the sound they heard they claim it grew to a crescendo over a few seconds and the whole house literally shook. For a moment it felt as if all the air had been sucked out and they were left in a vacuum. They also detected the smell from indoors.

All air traffic was checked but nobody admitted to having any knowledge of what this thing might be. The girl was so effected that she suffered panic hysteria, blurred vision, enlarged pupils and refused to go out at night. She was under the care of a doctor for many days. The family unwisely talked to the press, hoping that somebody would find an explanation. But the story was given short shrift by *The Sun* who carried only a small piece with limited details, concentrating instead on the claim that a "Tea bag UFO" had "Zapped" her.

The ridicule she was subjected to following this press story exacerbated a long standing problem. As a consequence, I was asked to help in the counselling of this girl. Her subsequent recovery was a very slow and difficult one.

**Jenny Randles.**



## **U.S. "Arizona lights" Councillor Loses Nomination.**

**Robert Moore**

From 2000 to 2200 hrs on the 13th March 1997 "hundreds" of Phoenix, Arizona residents observed a variety of anomalous aerial phenomena; ranging from a large "vee formation" of 6-7 lights to a multitude of glowing red spheres. These lights were also captured on videotape by a number of witnesses.

There is some confusion whether these reports could be attributable to military activity, originating from the nearby Luke Air force base or elsewhere.

Whatever the case, the office of (then) Republican Phoenix city councilwoman, 54 year-old **Frances Emma Barwood** (pictured above) received about 50 calls relating to this event. As a result, she took a personal interest in the Phoenix lights and made a concerted effort to resolve this issue.

Barwood suspected from the outset that these lights were military in origin. During the course of her enquires Barwood contacted the USAF, but to no avail; they refused to conduct any investigation into this occurrence and

denied that USAF aircraft or activities were responsible for the Phoenix sightings. Nonetheless, it is suspected that a military airborne training exercise did **indeed** occur in the vicinity on the 13th March.

In 1998 Frances Barwood sought the Republican nomination for Arizona Secretary of State. Her nomination attempt was supported by a number of American UFO researchers, who hoped that her campaign would focus on UFOs as a **mainstream** political issue. However, it was later claimed by several media sources that Barwood had "**distanced herself**" from the "**UFO community**". This was subsequently denied by Barwood, who (in a personal statement) dismissed this allegation as the product of "inaccurate reporting". In the same statement Barwood reaffirmed her determination to eventually resolve the Phoenix sightings.

Despite this rebuttal, Barwood's campaign mainly focused on conventional political concerns, and made no overt public stance on UFOs (other than in regards to the Phoenix events).

Politically, Barwood's ideals are - in some respects - notably "Libertarian". She endorses the right "**for anyone to carry any weapon in any way, in any place, at any time**", but feels that anyone committing a crime with a weapon should get a minimum sentence of 20 years. She is also keen to modernise governmental departments and encourage a switch from hydrocarbon to hydrogen fuels. Barwood also keenly supports other mainstream American Republican Party aims; such as tighter immigration laws and greater regulation of the voting system.

However, her attempt to challenge the incumbent Secretary Of State (Betsey Bayless) was defeated in September 1998; Barwood's nomination being supported by only 27% of the local electorate.

**"Come And Have A Go If You  
Think You're Hard Enough!"  
- The Carlton T.V Debate -  
Andy Roberts**

Friday 11th September saw yet another skirmish in the Belief Wars between the Queen's Own Light ETHers and the Erisian Sceptical Heavy Infantry. This time the field of battle was Carlton TV's Friday night talk-fest where UFOs were sandwiched between twenty minutes spots on Genetic Engineering and Pornography. Mmmm, nice! The Green Room was teeming with ufologists, geneticists and porn stars - and you couldn't tell the difference

Sadly, the believers had come armed with the misguided notion that they would actually have time to put across a reasoned argument for their case. Fortunately the sceptics weren't that hapless and had worked out a plan to deal with every eventuality whilst getting the point across that there are no aliens and that most ufologists are saps who couldn't investigate what day it was.

Straight into one Philip Kinsella who explained how the aliens tampered with his nethers. The audience simply hooted with derision. And rightly so because the poor bugger didn't have any proof or evidence. Thinking he could defend himself he retorted that the aliens have us all under control, could make us do what they wanted etc etc.

Again a deeply flawed argument begging questions about the nature of free will and so on. Nick Pope wittered to little effect about big things flying overhead, Omar Fowler tried argument by smugness and some abductee sat next to me tweeted about dwarves and missing time.

Clearly the ETHers have proof beyond our wildest dreams!

For the sceptics it was a turkey shoot: Tim Matthews queried Nick Pope's pre-book deal abduction, his motives and beliefs. He was quickly silenced by the host but the point was made. I pointed out that humans have \*always\* had visionary experiences and that whatever the origins it was part of our history, culture and psyche. And so on, back and forth. Clearly neither side was either going to change its mind nor convince any viewers.

Malcolm Robinson made a last ditch attempt for sanity and tried to reveal all about the (very interesting) Livingston Case but wasn't hip to the speed of the debate and just ended up looking like a man holding a pair of comedy trousers. But as the Holy Relic of ufology the Livingston Keks are divine garments and it was nice to see them back in action again after so many years in Phil Mantle's dressing up box.

And then it was all over, back to the green room for food, drink and a good laugh at what had just gone down.

In ufological terms it was a complete waste of time. In TV terms a researcher told me there wasn't enough shouting to make it good TV.

The believers by and large went home in a sulk because their truth hadn't caused widespread social change. The sceptics just drifted off to spend their fees on CDs and loose women.

There's a lesson to be learned here people. If you are asked to appear on TV talking about any aspect of UFOs, go for it but:

- **Make sure you get paid - TV companies are loaded.**
- **Make sure you know what you are talking about and keep it short and sensible.**
- **Don't take it so bloody seriously!**

# The West Freugh Incident Revisited

## John P. Heptonstall.

I have recently had considerable dialogue with Dr. Colin Ridyard since he attempted to explain away the West Freugh incident of 4th April 1957 in Quest magazine initially and now UFO Magazine. His interpretation of the facts leaves much to be desired, though I respect his conclusions and opinions based on the evidence he has analysed- unfortunately he appears to have either discarded, or ignored, compelling evidence from the realms of a 'terrestrial' explanation. I intend to look at the most probable explanation:-

Most of Colin's conclusions are reached from his study of a report on the incident produced by DDI (Tech) entitled '*Unidentified Objects at West Freugh*' which is summarised below. This, as the original, is split into 11 paragraphs; I will detail each highlighting phrases and words I feel are important in italics for further discussion:-

### Paragraph.....

1. Tells how on the morning of 4th April 1957 radar *operators at West Freugh* detected unidentified *objects* on their radar screens.
2. The *object* was first observed as a *stationary return* at a radar screen at Balscalloch. Although its range remained *appreciably constant* for about 10 minutes its height appeared to alter from about 50,000 feet to 70,000 feet; a second radar was switched on and detected *the object* at the same height and range.
3. The information was obtained in the form of *polar co-ordinates* but it can be *converted to give plan position* together

with heights. This information is *fed into a plotting board* which displays the position of the object by means of *an electronically operated pen* while the *height is shown on a meter*.

4. The unidentified object was *tracked on the plotting table*, comparing each radar with the table to check for consistency. After remaining in one spot for 10 minutes *the pen moved slowly in a NE direction* gradually increasing speed. A speed check was taken which showed *a ground speed of 70 mph*, the height was then 54,000 ft.
5. At this time another radar station 20 miles away equipped with the same type of radar was asked to search for the *'object'*. An echo was picked up at the range and bearing given and the radar was 'locked on'.
6. *After travelling 20 miles the object made a very sharp turn* and proceeded to move SE at the same time increasing speed. Here *the reports from the two radar stations differ* in details. Balscalloch tracked *'an object'* at about 50,000 ft at a speed of about 240 mph. The other followed *'an object' or 'objects'* at 14,000 ft.

As the *'objects'* travelled towards the second radar station the operator detected *four 'objects'* moving in line astern about 4,000 yards from each other. This observation was later confirmed by other radar's for *when the object they were tracking moved out of range they then detected four other smaller objects* before they too passed out of range.

7. The radar operators noted that sizes of the echoes were considerably larger than they would expect from normal aircraft. They considered the size to be **nearer that of a ship's echo**.
8. It is deduced from these reports that **altogether 5 objects were detected by the three radar's**. At least one of these rose to 70,000 ft while remaining **appreciably stationary in azimuth and range**. All of these objects appeared to be capable of about 240 mph. **Nothing can be said of the physical construction of the objects except they were very effective reflectors** of radar signals, and that they **must have been of considerable size or else constructed to be especially good reflectors**.
9. There were not known to be any aircraft in the vicinity, nor any meteorological balloons. Even if balloons had been in the vicinity one could not have explained such speeds against a prevailing wind.
10. The type of **radar used was capable of locking onto heavily charged clouds**, and clouds of that nature could exist at such altitudes and cause such large echoes; **it is not thought** that this phenomenon was caused by such clouds.
11. It is concluded that the incident was **due to the presence of five reflecting objects of unidentified type** and origin; and considered **unlikely** that they were conventional aircraft, balloons or clouds.

Unfortunately we do not have the original report made by the radar stations; nor do we have details on the efficiency or effectiveness of such radar- we can deduce from the above report that the radar systems were not perfect by any means. Only a couple of weeks later on 29th April British radar operators were unable to identify a return provided by a flight of our own Hunter aircraft over the Channel. In para. 6 it is clear that the two radar sites picked up returns that were translated differently, one claiming to have

one object under view, the other finding either one large or four small objects under view. It was later deduced that one large and four small objects had been caught by the radar sites.

Whoever was the author of the DDI (Tech) report, it is not a picture of clarity. However, wording used must be assumed to account for the reports made by the radar operators. The radar returns were only as accurate as the hardware used, the translation of signals by plotting equipments and meters- and variable signals which were not clear enough to distinguish between clouds and aircraft. Also para. 8 sums up the signals as showing that at least one object rose to 70,000 ft whilst remaining appreciably stationary in both range and azimuth.

This statement does not say that the object did not move, it merely says that it kept **appreciably** constant in **azimuth** and **range**. The object is supposed to have varied in altitude from about 50,000 to 70,000 ft 'whilst appreciably stationary' but is then said to have moved off towards the NE at about 70 mph and 54,000ft. In other words it must have descended to 54,000ft from 70,000 ft during the 10 minute static period. ( para 4. ) It then gained speed to about 240mph over the next 20 miles maintaining a height of about 50,000 ft. Another 4 objects appear to have been following the larger whilst travelling at 14,000ft and about the same speed.

From the report it is not clear whether the static object moved upwards or downwards between 50,000 and 70,000 ft whilst stationary, but that it moved off at about 54,000ft. It may be reasonable to assume that it was first picked up at 70,000 ft and by the time it moved off it had descended to about 54,000ft. We are not told what the range was, nor azimuth.

The greater the range, the greater the degree of error one may expect from the radar plotting pens. If say 150 miles a small error may translate on a plotting board, that must be calibrated inevitably allowing a

margin of error, of several degrees in azimuth and perhaps hundred or thousands of yards in range- suitable for a 'gliding' aircraft to descend steadily until stable and ready to pick up speed. A charged cloud could certainly perform such a manoeuvre but is less likely. One must look to military hardware of the time to identify such an object that would have the following properties:-

1. Can climb to 70,000ft.
2. Can glide and move slowly or reach 240 mph.
3. Was not known of by radar sites in the UK.
4. Was unknown to DDI (Tech).
5. Had effective radar capabilities.
6. Was escorted by 4 smaller aircraft travelling at 14,000ft.
7. Could operate in that area.
8. Was in service or under trial on 4th April 1957.

The only aircraft known to have those capabilities at that time in the West was the Lockheed U2 Spyplane. Russia may have been testing the Backfire Bomber at that time capable of Mach 2 and altitude 60,000 with range of 3,000 miles. The USA had other craft such as the North American B-70 under development which was a huge triangular-shaped monster capable of Mach 2 speeds.

### The Lockheed U2 Spyplane

My choice for activation of the radar sites at West Freugh and Balscalloch on 4th April 1957 has to be the U2 Spyplane. Virtually everything reported by the operators fits its characteristics, and it was under heavy

use and trial at that time.

In April 1957 'dirty bird' trials were underway where the U2 pilots were testing various anti-radar formats such as paints and wires. Bob Sieker was killed in April as a rapid heat build-up in his U2 airframe caused him to crash - his plane would have had an exceptional radar cross-section before it descended out of control! The U2 was accepted to have a highly unusual radar cross-section and performance; problems of airframe overheating plus general size, engine, fuel load for 5,000 mile 10 hour sortie etc.

These characteristics could have added to what American radar experts already termed as an aircraft having a 'radar signature as that of a Fifth Avenue bus'. The Scottish radar personnel said their object 'had a radar signature more like that of a ship' ( not 'battleship' which is an apparent exaggeration I have seen written in articles on this subject ).

1. In the **UFO Magazine** article by Colin on The West Freugh case he dismissed what is now known to have been exceptional technological advancement taking place at the very time of the West Freugh incident saying that man could not produce machines that could rapidly accelerate from a hover to 1,400 mph, or give radar returns the size of ships. Then what of air to air missiles produced from the **1940s**?

The D558 Douglas Skyrocket series was produced from **1944**, these were the first planes to reach Mach2. The Falcon AIM-4C ( Gar-2A) missile was introduced in **1956**- it had a scorching acceleration of **over 50 G's** - is that not enough to satisfy the description of hardware that could accelerate from hover to 1,400 mph? The Russian 'Backfire Bomber' is believed to have been under test since the early '50s, this being an aircraft capable of Mach 2 at 60,000ft and operational range of 3,000 miles.

2. The U2 was totally secret- our own personnel were unlikely to be trusted with a secret kept from the USAF whilst under development and increased use. "The airplane and its Ops were kept so secret that few inside or outside Government knew it was flying" according to 'Skunk Works' Management.
3. What better way to assess radar capabilities than to arrange reaction from allied radar sites as well as their own American ones. Russia had been given old USA radar equipment during WWII and testing against allied equipment would give a reasonable assurance of whether Russia would be able to locate the plane during flyover ( They actually the Russians who had upgraded their 'second-hand' radar equipment and quickly located the U2 ).
4. During the Vietnam War U2s carried tiny transmitters which fooled radar operators into thinking the planes were actually B52 bombers; such a device would have been feasible in the '50s.

### Conclusion

Having scanned UFO databases including BUFORA's, the American 'U' database and others it is evident that there was no other comparable 'UFO' activity recorded around that time which may have suggested that 'West Freugh' had located an 'ET-type' UFO. That is not to say that an 'ET UFO' explanation is impossible, merely that it may be less probable. We do know that technology not unlike that described by radar operators, who were by no means infallible along with their equipment, was available in the '50s.

Suggestions that the radar descriptions as reproduced by DDI (Tech) were somehow extremely accurate and detailed is not supported by the content of available reports and margins for error that the equipment carried. We are left without important facts such as:-

- 1: Where exactly were the 20 or so U2s

operating, that were available in April 1957, when the radar signals were obtained? CIA records may reveal such data in time.

2. What were the ranges/azimuths involved for the original location of the objects/s?
3. What was the margin for error for the radar equipment used at that time?
4. Was it common for U2s to be escorted by as many as 4 craft in the Atlantic area? ( They were often 'chased' by support craft T33s or T38s flying at lower altitude.).
5. Was a U2 'seen' on West Freugh radar that was one of the high altitude air samplers in the Sampling Program which performed sorties each Tuesday and Thursday ( 4th April 1957 was a Thursday ) flying out of Alaska?

I personally believe that we may well be under ET surveillance. However, reports like the West Freugh case go down in history as 'probably ET' purely because they have never been adequately researched. Furthermore one can be certain that, even if Government have subsequently identified the 'UFOs' involved in the West Freugh incident as being military in origin, they are unlikely to inform the public they are supposed to serve due to some misguided belief that the public do not have a right to know.

It is more likely that the government involved in the incident, be it USA or other, will maintain secrecy over the events until such times as they are ready to own up to having tried to cheat allied radar in their own national interests.

Dr. Colin Ridyard's assessment of The West Freugh case is commendable. He may be correct in concluding that the returns were 'ET' but for the moment I tend to believe that the U2 offers the best explanation and that when the CIA is ready, and if they still hold the relevant documents, they may clear up the mystery of 'West Freugh' and that the U2 theory will be confirmed in the coming years.

# THOUGHTS ON ALIEN ABDUCTION

*Anthony North*

As a researcher I've never contemplated the idea that aliens are really visiting Earth and abducting people. Some would call this bias, but such detractors fail to understand what research is. Research has a specific methodology. You look at the world and collect data. Once a sufficient amount of data has been collected, you can then begin to theorise.

And it is here that believers in the ET Hypothesis move away from the methodology of research. For theory must come as an extension of the current paradigm. If it doesn't, then it isn't research. Rather, it is a process of belief. And as there is no real evidence of real aliens visiting us outside anecdotal evidence, then acceptance of ET moves too far away from the present paradigm.

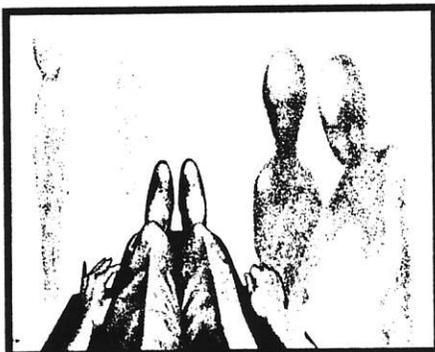
This isn't to say that ET isn't visiting us. I am simply saying that, at our present state of knowledge, there is insufficient evidence to construct a rational theory saying he is.

The ET Hypothesis thus becomes a religion rather than a credible line of rational enquiry. But having said this, I can equally castigate many who claim to be rational researchers.

For instance, if we take a reductionist view, our current paradigm, they say, doesn't really allow for the fantasising of an alien abduction other than during sleep, or immediately upon waking up. For this reason,

sleep paralysis is the in-vogue 'rational' explanation. However, whilst it can no doubt explain many cases, the theory falls down spectacularly when we remember many abductions happen to drivers. Believe me, if this idea was invoked here, it would be a more physical form of paralysis we would be discussing. Researchers cannot be rational if they ignore abductions from cars.

But can a theory be provided for such abductions based upon our present paradigm? Certainly - if we look in the right places. And the best thing to do to find a possible answer is read a boring book. Any book will do.



And I can almost guarantee that some time while you are reading it, your mind will wander. We've all done it. Our mind has not been on the words - it has been

fantasising - but (and, this is an important 'but') we have continued, to mechanically read the words.

We didn't take in those words, but we physically continued to read them. And I can bet you that if you'd noted the exact time, to the second, before your mind wandered, when you realised you'd been psychewalking, time would have moved on.

This phenomenon repeatedly demonstrates that we can mechanically carry out a function whilst our mind fantasises. And if it can happen while reading a book, I see no logical reason to deny that it can occur

whilst driving a car. And such a theory perfectly answers the problem of the missing time and re-location from the point of abduction.

The experiencer has simply continued to drive whilst the fantasy occurred. As for why the fantasy occurred, the first factor is science fiction enculturation. As for the second, the most logical answer is that, bored and near fantasy, the flash of an approaching car merges with enculturation, and off to the space ship you go.....

Another problem with alien abduction is its proliferation in recent years. For some reason we are more and more likely to be abducted than several years ago. I've recently been thinking of this problem, and two factors seemed to come into my mind.



The first is the idea posited by some American Indian mystics that the planet is talking to us and warning us of ecological disaster.

The second is the growing idea among some researchers that the proliferation of mystical and alien experiences could be an evolutionary mechanism to change our consciousness.

Both these factors seem to be religionist, but I must admit, now, to not being so sure. It is now becoming increasingly clear that global warming is causing an increase in the severity of weather patterns.

Now, I'm neither a meteorologist nor a physicist, but I am aware that severe weather patterns can play havoc with electromagnetism; most noticeably during a

thunderstorm.

We are also aware, nowadays, that electromagnetic bombardment of the brain can cause 'visions'. So could it be that electromagnetic disturbances caused by global warming are themselves increasing the likelihood of electromagnetic bombardment of the brain, thus increasing the number of visionaries?

Such a process could give an environmental factor to the increase in alien abductions. And going back to the above ideas, although it may not be aware of it, planet Earth could well be talking to us.

And due to the life change often involved in alien abduction, making us nicer, more ecologically minded people, planet Earth may not just be talking to us, but fighting back.

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# The Preston Flying Triangle Incident; 11th January 1998

**Bill Bimson (MARA & BUFORA)**

## Introduction

The *flying triangle (FT)* is an aerial phenomenon of unknown origin. Observations of anomalous triangular-shaped airborne "objects" have occurred throughout the modern UFO era. However, the seminal FT incident (which defined the phenomenon in the public – and ufological – psyche) occurred at Eupen, Belgium, on the 29th November 1989.

Since the Eupen event, numerous other observations of "flying triangles" have occurred throughout the world during the 1990's.

Descriptions of "flying triangles" vary from case to case, but most are black or dark coloured with a bright white light in each corner of the triangle. They are often accompanied by other lights on the craft itself and occasionally, as in the case of this report, are seen ejecting other lights.

Some researchers believe they are of Extraterrestrial (ET) origin. Others believe they are secret military aircraft, using technology which is unknown to mainstream scientists and engineers.

This article describes one particular case in the area of Preston that was researched by myself and Tony Eccles.

## Description Of The Incident

On Sunday the 11th of January 1998 at 7.00 am, G.D. was on his bicycle in the Ashton district of Preston carrying out his usual newspaper round. He was heading South on Woodplumpton Road (B5411). While cycling along the road his peripheral vision was caught by a bright light in the sky.

The light was very low and close to the Chimney of Tulketh mill which was approximately a quarter of a mile away. The mill is now used by the Littlewoods mail-order company.

After catching full sight of the object, he could make out a red strobe-light similar to the navigation light on a conventional aircraft. He cycled further, then turned left into Lytham Road where he stopped to get a better view of the object.

From this observation point he could see that the light was actually three lights in a triangular formation and that the direction of travel was towards him. After approximate measurements of distance and time, the speed was estimated at 45 mph. The altitude of the craft has been estimated from G.D.'s description as 200 feet. From his new vantage point he could make out that the craft body was black,

## Evidence

triangular in shape and very large. This was difficult to see from his earlier more distant location because it was still dark at 7 a.m. As the craft flew almost straight above him he could hear a quiet low humming noise, but no jet or turboprop noise.

As it was flying overhead, the triangle shot out two small star like lights, which moved very quickly. One was white and moved too quickly for him to track. The other was red and he was able to track this for 5 to 7 seconds before it was lost behind some local houses. Neither of the star like objects changed course in the short time that they were visible but the FT changed direction immediately after firing out the two star-like objects. During the change in direction, G.D. did not notice the aircraft bank as a normal aircraft would.

We have ascertained that the final course of the FT was approximately 240° and its initial course was very approximately 210°. The final course would take the triangle close to the British Aerospace plant at Warton some 10 miles away.

After this G.D. continued with his newspaper round, and about five minutes later he could still see the object in the distance, but all he could make out by this time was a bright light. Measurements were made at the site of the incident and a rough estimation of size made. It is clear from these measurements that the craft was very large, but not outside the size limits of conventional fixed wing 'plane.

No physical evidence was left at the scene of the incident, no photographs or video footage were taken and to the best of our knowledge nobody else saw the craft. The fact that it was a Sunday at 7 am is unfortunate as very few people are about at this time in the area and hence we are left with a single eye-witness testimony.

However, another FT was spotted by witnesses in Cheshire on the same date that G.D. sighted the FT over Preston, although the one spotted in Cheshire had quite different characteristics. Another FT was spotted in Cheshire on the 16th of January 1998 which had a similar description to the one G.D. saw, (Alien Encounters magazine April 1998).

Tony Eccles advised me to file a low flying complaint with Airstaff 2b at the Ministry of Defence to try to determine if any military aircraft may have been responsible for the sighting. However, they denied that it was a military aircraft and advised me to contact the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in case a civilian aircraft was the cause.

The CAA stated that no civilian aircraft had filed night-time flight plans with them for the area of Preston. This is a basic requirement for all civilian aircraft which fly in January before 0800 hours. No flight accident/incident reports were filed with the CAA which is another basic requirement if an aircraft is forced to fly so low over a built-up area due to, for example,

engine trouble.

## Conclusions

The visual description of the craft rules out astronomical and meteorological explanations. Conventional aircraft are ruled out by the absence of turboprop and jet noise, the presence of the low humming noise, and the ejection of the star like lights.

The evidence points to either an Extraterrestrial (ET) craft or secret military technology which is unknown by mainstream scientists and engineers.

## The Case for an ET Craft

The argument for an ET craft is that, if it is not secret military technology, there is little else left that it could be other than an alien craft. The reasons for it not being secret military technology are:

- The military would not be so stupid to test such a secret craft over a built-up area.
- The noise made by the craft and its speed suggests a new type of engine which is so revolutionary that it could not be kept secret for very long. If it was military, the ejection of the star like objects suggest a weapons or decoy discharge which would carry considerable danger over a built up area.
- A flight path so close to the mill chimney would be ruled out by flight planners except in the most extreme

conditions such as an operational sortie during war.

- The witness thought that the aircraft did not bank when it turned. The performance characteristics are so far in advance of other military aircraft that its development costs would consume a fair chunk of any country's gross national product. thereby making it impossible to keep secret.

## The Case for New Military Technology

The craft was described as having a red strobe light which sounds extremely conventional. Some new stealth aircraft (such as Aurora) are known to be triangular in shape.

We do not know the current state of play with jet-noise reduction techniques used to keep military aircraft from being heard by adversaries and new techniques may account for the low noise heard.

The craft's final heading was towards the British Aerospace plant at Warton where it is known that state-of-the-art military aircraft are tested.

Some of the latest air-to-air decoy measures have their own thruster which could account for the star-like objects without firing a projectile with a warhead.

This type of projectile would carry a much smaller risk in a built up area than an offensive weapons discharge.

The craft changed direction after firing the star-like objects which is consistent with the use of a decoy measure.

It may, therefore, have been a test of a decoy measure from a stealth aircraft.

### A Tenuous Link with SDI

The rest of this conclusion is entirely my own opinion and based on a hunch rather than scientific data.

During the years of the cold war between the Western Alliance and the Eastern Bloc countries, the USA started to develop the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), also known as "Star Wars". The purpose of this was to protect the West from a nuclear attack by the former Soviet Union.

This was to be accomplished by using an array of protective satellites which would detect and destroy incoming enemy ballistic missiles before they reached the warhead deployment stage.

This was important because after deployment, the number of targets to be destroyed increases dramatically as each missile carries a number of decoy drones which look similar to the real warheads on radar.

The USA continued to refine SDI after the cold war ended and is still doing so. On the 16th January 1998 the avionics company Raytheon tested a new infrared sensor for SDI. The test consisted of the launch of a specially

configured Minuteman II intercontinental ballistic missile which carried nine dummy targets.

The SDI satellite should have detected a total of 10 targets - the nine dummies and the launch vehicle. However, the June 8th 1998 edition of *Aviation Week and Space Technology* reported that a total of 12 targets were detected.

The extra two were described by the test co-ordinators as "unidentified celestial objects" and the test was proclaimed a success. The unknowns have been dismissed as a 'glitch' by the test co-ordinators.

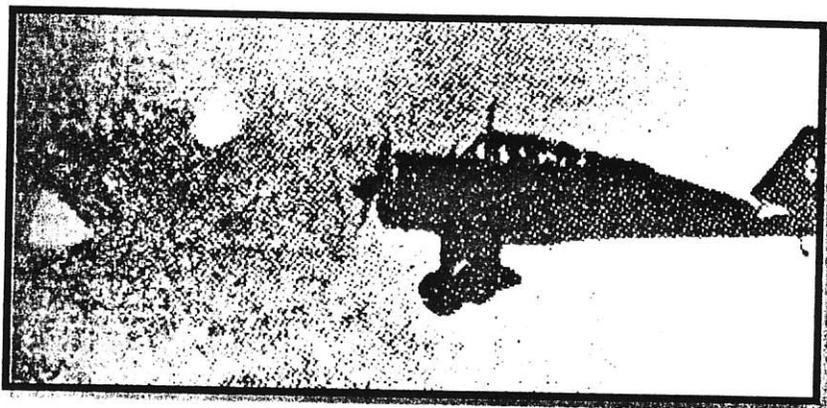
It is quite possible that SDI operational tests would require co-ordination and communication from land, sea and air. With such a top-secret initiative, it is obviously difficult to obtain information about this. However, secret aerial mobile sensor and communication platforms may have been airborne on the test date of the 16th January.

This would link in with the sighting reported in the **April 1998** edition of *Alien Encounters Magazine*. The 11th January event may have been a rehearsal exercise which led to the sighting in Preston.

I urge anyone who has information or has seen this type of craft to come forward and report it to myself and Tony Eccles (via the **BUFORA BULLETIN** address). Without further information we will never know the true nature of these craft.

# Foo Fighter Picture Mystery

## Robert Bull



**The Mystery "Foo Fighter" Photograph. Nothing is known regarding this picture; where it was taken, when and by whom. In this article Robert Bull attempts to get to the bottom of this enigma.**

There's a well-known Foo Fighter photograph (depicted above) which shows two fuzzy lights close to a fixed-undercarriage, propeller-driven aircraft. I've seen the photo captioned variously as 'Luftwaffe, Germany, 1944' (*The UFO Encyclopaedia*, John Spencer), 'Japan, WW II' (*The Complete Book of UFOs*, Peter Hough and Jenny Randles) and 'American, WW II' (a recent coffee-table UFO book by Colin Wilson).

I'm reasonably well up on WW II aircraft, and my feeling was that the aircraft shown is NOT German - the Luftwaffe would not be flying fixed-undercarriage aircraft over Germany in 1944. Also it

doesn't LOOK like any German aircraft I know. Indeed it didn't remind me of ANY aircraft (of that time) which I was familiar with, although I thought there were Dutch and Japanese possibilities. I wondered whether determining what the aircraft type is would help to determine the true location and date of the photograph, which in turn may help with the Foo Fighter mystery.

John Spencer says that the "Germany, 1944" caption was the information that he got with the picture. He *"showed it to an RAF historian at the time who told me he thought it probably did come from the European theatre but I can't remember what plane he thought*

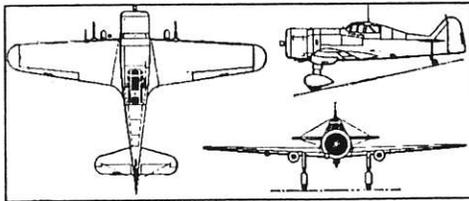
*it was. However, several people after that sent me letters arguing it was just about every plane that had ever been made. I remember one saying that he thought he could see a 'bent' wing in the photo that was, he thought, unique to a Japanese plane."*

John adds that "There were reports from both theatres so the general question is open: for example Hagenau in Germany on December 22nd 1944 and August 1944, over Sumatra where they were seen by Captain Alvah Reida in a B-29 bomber."

The first possibility that occurred to me was that the aircraft was a Fokker DXX1 (dee twenty-one), a Dutch aircraft. This was entering service with the Dutch AF at about the time Germany invaded Holland, so it COULD have been a captured example, pressed into service with the Luftwaffe. Also, the Dutch had a presence in the South Pacific at about the time the Japanese were expanding into that area, so that would fit with Jenny's 'Japanese' caption.

Examination of photographs and 3-view silhouettes of the Fokker DXX1 showed, however, that this was not the answer:

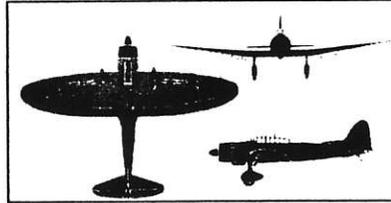
Fig. 1:  
Fokker DXX1 Silhouette



Turning to Japanese possibilities, I felt the most likely was the Aichi type D3A, USN

reporting name 'Val', the 'plane used to torpedo US Navy ships in Pearl Harbour :

Fig. 2:  
Aichi type D3A Silhouette

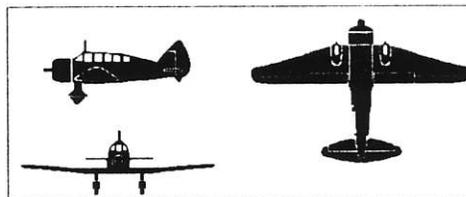


However, a quick comparison of this aircraft with the photograph in question showed that this too was not the answer.

At this point I decided it was time to turn to the 'experts' and I visited the Duxford airfield part of the Imperial War Museum, to the south of Cambridge. The gentleman I showed the photo to didn't know what it showed either, but he said he would get back to me. He kept his word. I soon received a letter from the Duxford Associates (a branch of the Duxford Aviation Society) with a positive ID: the aircraft was a Tachikawa Ki-36, reporting name 'Ida'.

This was not a type I was familiar with, but comparison of pictures of this aircraft with the 'Foo Fighter Picture' left me in no doubt:

Fig. 3:  
Tachikawa Ki-36 Silhouette



The Ki-36 first flew in April 1938, and was ordered into production for the Japanese Army in November of that year. Having entered service as a co-operation aircraft, the army realised it would also make an ideal trainer. It thus entered service as a trainer in September 1939, being redesignated Ki-55.

Production of the Ki-36/Ki-55 ended in January 1944. The Ki-36 was first deployed in China (as part of the Second Sino-Japanese conflict, starting in the late 1930s), where it was highly successful. The aircraft was then deployed in the wider Pacific theatre but, being of relatively low performance, it proved vulnerable to US fighters and was withdrawn, remaining only in China.

Whilst trying to pin down the identity of the aircraft, I also began to sound out other researchers.

**Andy Roberts** recalled that *"The photo in question was taken in the Pacific theatre of war, 1944/45-ish and is of a Japanese plane, and also that it appeared in one of Paul Dong's books of UFO photos."*

He added that he thought that *"almost (if not) all the so called Foo-fighter photos in existence - and I once had ten - were taken in the Pacific theatre. Despite there being rumour a go-go about them being seen and photographed by allied pilots over Europe there weren't actually that many reported."*

Corroborative information came from **Kevin McClure**, who stated that "the picture originally first appeared in Paul Dong's *UFOs over China* and shows a "Mitsubishi fighter". (Most people, if they could name a WW 2 Japanese aircraft at all, would say "Mitsubishi". Mitsubishi made aircraft long before they made cars).

He also stated there had been some doubts expressed over the authenticity of the photograph, and that the picture may well be a later-than-WW 2 fake.

Damning information came from Jan Aldrich: *"I think this is Japanese and originated with the Cosmic Brotherhood Association (C.B.A) in Japan. The late Jun-ichi Takanashi maintained that all the C.B.A "Foo-fighter" photographs were spurious. The C.B.A had many Foo-fighter photographs without providence and pedigree."* He added that *"Publishers, of course, want pictures, so this junk continues to be recycled."*

So. Real or fake? If the photograph is fake, then of course it yields no useful information, other than that the propensity to fake photographs is not restricted to the Western world, also that we should all be on our guard about accepting the authenticity of *any* UFO photograph.

But what if it shows real objects? Does this strengthen the argument of those who would maintain that Foo Fighters were a natural phenomenon?

The Second World War in the air was fought with large numbers of cheap aircraft. Several hundred aircraft could be aloft simultaneously, within a few cubic miles of airspace. Such 'air fleets' will never be seen again.

Could the sheer numbers of aircraft in the air at once be themselves responsible, in some way, for the 'ghost lights'?

The search for the true explanation of Foo Fighters goes on, but the evidence that the majority of Foo Fighters were seen in the *Pacific* theatre must surely sever the slender thread of credibility attached to arguments by Renato Vesco and others that the Foo Fighters were sightings of the secret **German** "Feuerball" weapon.

**THE HOWDEN MOORS INCIDENT  
- Part 3 -**

David Clarke

**QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE..**

In an attempt to reach a fuller understanding of the Howden Moors incident, David Clarke enlisted the aid of his local PM Mrs Helen Jackson (Labour: Hillsborough). On Monday March 23, 1998, Mrs Jackson laid the following questions to Defence Minister George Robertson and Home Secretary Jack Straw in the House of Commons:

1. To ask the secretary of State for Defence if RAF/NATO military aircraft were engaged on an exercise over Northern England between 9.30 and 10.30 pm on March 24, 1997.
2. To ask what complaints were received by the RAF concerning low flying aircraft relating to that night.
3. To ask if an RAF/NATO aircraft was responsible for the two sonic booms above Sheffield detected by Edinburgh University Seismology Unit on March 24, 1997.
4. To ask the Secretary of State what reported sightings of UFOs were received from the public and police from South Yorkshire and Derbyshire on March 24th and 25th, 1997.
5. To ask for what reasons the RAF imposed an air exclusion zone around Howden Reservoir on the morning of 25 March 1997.

6. **What regulations cover military aircraft breaking the sound barrier above urban and other areas.**

Home secretary Jack Straw was also asked what complaints police forces had received concerning low flying aircraft that night. In the Commons Jack Straw told Mrs Jackson that :

*"Information to the police of low-flying aircraft are not held centrally. I understand that on the evening of 24 March 1997 South Yorkshire Police received reports of a low flying aircraft which was thought to have crashed. An investigation by police and other authorities failed to find any trace of the aircraft."*

Following this statement by Jack Straw, the MoD replied in the Commons on the 30th March 1998 stating;

*"A number of military aircraft were booked to carry out low flying training in northern England on the evening of March 24, 1997. The MoD received 13 complaints about aircraft activity for that date from locations across the UK."*

It should be stated at this juncture that the RAF Press Office told both South Yorkshire Police and the Press on March 25th 1997 that there had been no RAF or NATO activity in South Yorkshire on the previous night.

The MoD's reply continues:

**"No reported sightings of UFOs on 24 or 25 March were received by my department. A Temporary Danger Area was established on 25 March centred on the Howden reservoir, to allow an RAF search and rescue helicopter, in response to a request for assistance from South Yorkshire Police, to carry out a search of the area without disturbance by other military aircraft. Such Danger Areas are routinely established for search and rescue operations."**

In reply to the specific question about the sonic booms the MoD stated:

**"We have no record of sonic events being generated by RAF or NATO aircraft for the evening of March 24, 1997."**

Note, however, that Edinburgh's Seismology department's Dr John Lovell had confirmed to David Clarke that two sonic booms were recorded above Sheffield at 2152 and 2206 hours that night and these (in his opinion) **"could only have been caused by a military lane reaching supersonic speed, possibly while performing a mid-air turn"**.

Further questions about the incident were laid in the Commons by Helen Jackson on March 30th, asking: **"If the military exercises were carried out over the Sheffield area; what regulations govern a) military and b) other aircraft breaking the sound barrier; and if the sonic booms detected by Edinburgh University Seismology Unit above Sheffield, on 24th March, 1997, were the result of aircraft breaking the sound barrier."**

To this query MoD Press Office Chief Alan Pattison replied directly:

**"This was a regular training flight involving two Tornado strike aircraft. These are not aircraft which would be**

**employed to intercept a threat to UK airspace This type of low-level training is carried out regularly over areas like the Peak District and is essential to give pilots experience for possible action in the Gulf and other trouble spots. There has been no cover-up over this incident and we did not scramble aircraft to intercept a UFO. All missions sent out that night were regular training flights."**

Further questions regarding the incident over Howden Moors, Derbyshire, were tabled in Parliament during April 1998 by Mrs. Jackson. On April 7 the Under Secretary of State for Defence John Spellar replied to Mrs Jackson in a written statement:

**"It is not possible, twelve months after the date in question, to state precisely where military activity was being carried out. Records kept show only that aircraft were booked to carry out low flying over the Peak District between 2030 and 2107 hours local time on the evening of 24 March 1997."**

**No low level flying is permitted over the Sheffield urban area, or any other major conurbation. Records of flying at medium level - between 2,000 and 24,000 ft - are not maintained so it is possible that there were aircraft in the area at medium level [too]."**

He adds:

**"The regulations governing military aircraft flying at supersonic speeds are contained in the Joint Service Publication entitled 'Military Flying Regulations', an extract of which was provided in the answer I gave [Mrs Jackson] on 1 April..."**

The relevant section of **'Military Flying Regulations'** stipulates:

**All high level supersonic flights are to take place over the sea and low-level**

flying only allowed when a radar visual search is maintained for shipping, helicopters and civilian aircraft. Supersonic flight over land not allowed and all planned flights must be notified to radar stations in advance and any breaches must be reported by captains within 30 minutes of aircraft landing.

In regards to a further question re the BGS-detected "sonic events" Patterson replied:

***"As for the sonic event detected by the British Geological Survey at Edinburgh University, I refer my Hon friend to the answer I gave her on 30 March."***

#### **MoD on the spot.....**

David Clarke had previously contacted a number of air bases operating front-line fighter aircraft; all of which, however, denied having any 'planes airborne'. However, RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire - the home of 56 Squadron - admitted that six Tornados had returned from an exercise over the North Sea at 9.25 that night.

David Clarke followed up the various parliamentary questions with a direct audience with the RAF Press Office chief Alan Pattison (the current civilian chief of the MoD desk dealing with UFOs and low-flying) and his deputy RAF Squadron Leader Tom Rounds. His aim was to ask whether this "military exercise" was pre-planned or really an interception mission launched to pursue an unidentified object picked up on Air Defence radar, as some have claimed.

When Clarke asked if the incident on March 24th involved fighters scrambled to intercept this "UFO", Pattison replied:

***"This was a regular training flight involving two Tornado strike aircraft. These are not aircraft which would be employed to intercept a threat to UK airspace. This type of low-level training is***

***carried out regularly over areas like the Peak District and is essential to give pilots experience for possible action in the Gulf and other trouble spots. There has been no cover-up over this incident and we did not scramble aircraft or intercept a UFO. All missions sent out that night were regular training lights."***

They also stated that other Tornados and Jaguar fighters from other NATO bases took part in this night-time sortie, which involved night time flying at a minimum 250 foot altitude over the mountains west of Sheffield.

These details coincide with the descriptions of witnesses in Dronfield, Derbyshire who reported seeing a huge triangular shaped UFO at 21.30hrs. There is an obvious time discrepancy here, when compared to the previously stated air-exercise times of 2030 and 2107 hours. This can only be explained either by the witnesses being in error or the MoD's stated times being wrong (note these stated exercise times are only the 'booked' times).

#### **UFO tracked by radar?**

I then asked specifically about claims by researcher Max Burns that a "UFO" had been tracked by the Royal Signals at RAF Linton-upon-Ouse, near York, at 9.55pm that same night - three minutes after the first sonic event detected in Leeds.

I had already established from Flight Lieutenant Philip Inman that the radar at Linton is not used as part of the UK Air Defence system and (when in operation) is only used for training purposes. It does not have sufficient range to be used for air defence. The base was closed down on the night of March 24; radar cover for the military exercise being provided by West Drayton.

These facts were confirmed by the MoD, who further stated:

***"If an unidentified object is picked up on radar screen which we could not***

*explain we would scramble fighter aircraft to intercept. This has happened on a number of occasions, not so much now but certainly in the past. But we often find that these radar blips are caused by people in light aircraft who have wandered onto the radar screens without notifying anyone of their presence.*

*Air defence radar is directed out towards the sea to detect incoming objects as a result of the Cold War. We would only intercept an object if we thought it was a threat to this country as we are only interested in establishing if there is a threat to UK airspace. We don't discount some of these objects may be unexplained phenomena but we are not funded to investigate these."*

### **The "Sonic Events"**

The MoD/RAF current position is that the two sonic booms recorded at 2152 and 2206 that night remain "unexplained." They claim the low-flying exercise was over around 50 minutes before these sonic events were recorded, and say they have no record of them at the time of the exercise.

They do admit they received a complaint from the British Geological Survey afterwards. Furthermore, the BGS themselves say the RAF told them they "could not confirm" whether one of their aircraft was involved. But note they are admitting the exercise was "booked" between the times admitted, which does not rule out the presence of other aircraft later that night. They have already admitted they received 13 complaints about "aircraft activity" from different parts of the country.

Certainly numerous witnesses testify to the presence of aircraft until 11pm, and when pressed Patterson accepted it was "logical" to connect the exercise with the sonic events which occurred within one hour of the admitted times.

Patterson specifically says:

*"Our pilots know very well they should not fly at twice the speed of sound over land. It's not impossible that a pilot might have accelerated to supersonic speed in order to take avoiding action if a civil aircraft was detected in their flightpath. It is also possible a pilot might have covered his tracks if he had broken the rules and the only way we could prove this is by studying radar traces from the night in question. We could never rule this out."*

In summary the MoD have made an unambiguous statement about the events of March 24, 1997.

They say: *"We did not chase a UFO and there has been no cover-up. "*

What's more they add: *"We responded to a request by the police for help to search for a crashed aircraft and sent a helicopter from RAF Leconfield. We don't know what caused the sonic events and the whole thing is a mystery to us too."*

But note they are admitting the exercise was "booked" between the times admitted which does not rule out the presence of other aircraft later that night. They have already admitted they received 13 complaints about "aircraft activity" from different parts of the country. Certainly numerous witnesses testify (in the South Yorkshire Police log of the events of which I have a copy) to the presence of aircraft until 11pm, and when pressed Patterson accepted it was "logical" to connect the exercise with the sonic events which occurred within one hour of the admitted times.

Note also sonic events have three general causes, space debris [none reported that night], Concorde [not flying] and military aircraft. The BGS say the two booms *"could only have been caused by a military aircraft reaching supersonic speed possibly while performing a mid-air turn."*

## The Howden Moors Event: Some Preliminary conclusions.

Robert Moore

So, at the end of the day, what actually happened over Howden Moors on the 24th March, 1997? In regards to the actual nature of this incident a number of options present themselves;

### a: UFO.

While it is true there were observations of a triangular UFO at Dronfield, Sheffield, any direct link between this sighting and the events on Howden Moor half a hour later are tenuous at best. To begin with, the object(?) seen over Howden Moor had a **totally** different shape to that of the Dronfield UFO.

As previously stated, most of the Howden witnesses reported observing either a conventional 4-seater aircraft or a cigar-shaped form. That alone effectively rules out any connection between these two cases, on the shape aspect alone. Furthermore, there is **no** actual "conventional UFO" content (or context) to the Howden Moor case. All those involved in this event believed - from the outset - that they were dealing with an air crash, involving an all-too conventional aircraft.

### b: Air Crash:

The possibility has been cited that the Howden Moors "air crash" involved one of the Tornados observed during the Dronfield incident, which - according to this version of events - was later "downed" by the triangular "UFO". There are, however, many problems associated with this possibility. The greatest objection is the total absence of **any** wreckage.

Furthermore, **no** Tornados (or aircrew) were reported missing or lost during this period of time. The only "evidence" which even hinted at such a possibility (the so-called "aviation fuel soaked pilot" encountered by Q.D) turned out, on later

investigation, to be an Asian man involved in an abortive suicide attempt.

### c: Drugs-Drop.

One person involved in the search operation offered the following explanation for the Howden Moors incident:

*"I'm convinced, as are most of the Mountain Rescue service, that the March 24 event was the result of an illegal drugs run. The police know that this valley is regularly used by drug smugglers and the moors would be an ideal drop zone."*

This proposal neatly answers the lack of wreckage conundrum; there was **no** wreckage because **the aircraft did not crash!** The "smoke" and "noise" observed was merely a signal to attract attention to a drugs "drop". This explanation does however have some notable flaws. To begin with, this supposed "signal" was seemingly **too** effective, as evident by the wide attention it received! Even the "aircraft" itself seemed to have been somewhat conspicuous, both by its behaviour and appearance!! This is at odds with what we know of drugs-drops, where stealth and discretion are very much the order of the day.

### d: Aircraft Malfunction:

Another possible explanation for the Howden Moors incident is that it involved an aircraft which **almost** crashed, but didn't! According to this theory, an aircraft ran into problems as it approached Howden Moor. A short time later it malfunctioned dramatically; resulting in the "bang" and "plumes of smoke" noticed by various observers. This accident may have (for example) involved one of the aircraft's engines. Most planes are designed to fly on one engine; hence the reason why most aircraft are equipped with two, as an insurance against such a malfunction.

This explanation is consistent with what was reported. However, it does **not** explain the "seismic event" detected by the BGS at

2206 hrs. This time is so close to that of the Howden Moors event that it must surely have been connected with it. Could the Howden Moors event have involved the malfunction of a military aircraft, illegally travelling close to the speed of sound over land? Military aircraft are equipped with a considerable number of safety devices (such as fire suppression systems) and would therefore have been more likely to have "survived" such an accident.

Whatever the case, we can postulate that knowledge of this accident did not reach the outside world because it was not officially reported (or it was "covered up"). This might have been in order to avoid official paperwork (or even official enquiries) which such an accident would have doubtless generated.

Also, there may have been concerns over liability (or fears of disciplinary procedures), due to the massive search operation this incident generated.

This is, however, all hypothetical, unsupported by any real evidence.....

**e: BOLIDE.**

One final possibility remains - that the Howden Moors event may have been generated by a bolide (or "fireball meteor"). This explanation was initially offered by Dr Jacqueline Mitton of the Royal Astronomical Society, Cambridge University, who in a letter to David Clarke states:

**"I believe the most likely explanation for the sightings on March 24 were the result of a bright bolide meteor burning**

**up in the atmosphere. Very bright bolide meteors are not uncommon and I have seen one myself and it left me very puzzled. The one I saw seemed to move very slowly across the sky and for people who are not familiar with the night sky it would be very easy to see it as a slow moving object with light attached.**

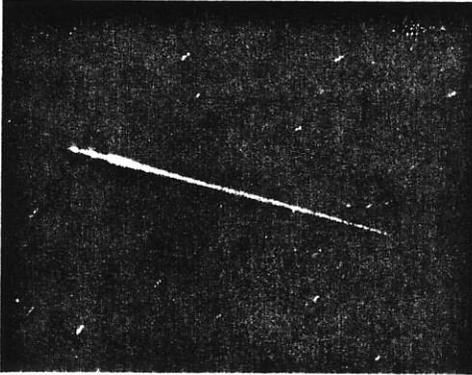
**People were out of doors that night watching the comet when this thing was seen so it was more likely they would notice a bolide.**

**Everything people saw that night is consistent with a bolide meteor which are known to produce sonic booms when they burn up in the atmosphere. They often look like a series of lights in a trail when they are breaking or burning up and that could give people the impression they are watching a flying object."**

This explanation is, indeed consistent with many aspects of the Howden Moors

event. Bolide events have - on many instances in the past - been known to generate numerous false "aircrash" alerts. There are also many documented instances where a bolide was reported to resemble a darkened cigar-shaped form with luminous windows.

Did this same effect cause a bolide to be perceived as the "cigar" and "four seater aircraft" with luminous windows reported by many of the Howden witnesses? Whatever the case, it is quite clear that the aircraft did seem "odd" to some of the witnesses - i.e. in one instance being reported as having very brightly luminated windows. The "bang" may have been caused either by the bolide exploding in mid-air or by it breaking the



sound barrier. Such a bang - due to it's nature - **would** have been picked up by the BGS's seismic detector units. The plumes of smoke may have been the vaporised residue of the exploded meteoric body itself, which can remain visible for up to half an hour. Such bolides rarely produce any meteoric material, due to it's destruction occurring many kilometres in the atmosphere.

There are two main drawbacks to this solution. The first is that the BGS is adamant that the "sonic event" occurring at 2206 hrs was caused by an aircraft travelling - illegally - at the speed of sound over land.

That said, this particular sonic event occurred at 2206 hrs - more than half a hour **after** the military exercise held that day supposedly ended.

With this in mind, a bolide event could have produced a sonic boom at **any** time, unrestricted by flight schedules or regulations.



The second drawback is that we are uncertain as to the exact duration of the Howden Moors "aircraft" sightings. A bolide is visible for an absolute maximum of 30 seconds, but more commonly around 10 seconds or less.

If the "aircraft" was visible for longer than this, it would rule out this explanation, although duration-estimates from witnesses can be notably inaccurate (being often double the event's **actual** duration). Satellite re-entry events have longer durations (of around 2 minutes or so). However, it appears that **no** such re-entry event was scheduled to occur during the time of the Howden Moors event.

## Summary

With the above in mind, I feel that the Howden Moors event is very likely to have had either of two causes;

- 1: **The Event was generated by a Bolide (or "fireball meteor").**
- 2: **The Howden Moors event resulted from a serious (but not fatal) aircraft malfunction involving either a military or civil aircraft.**

Of the two, the possibility that the event was caused by a Bolide seems the most likely of the two, at the present time.

This proposed solution fits many of the facts of this case quite well, or as well as a retrospective explanation such as this ever can. As with all such solutions we can always look at this case again if any new evidence is uncovered in the future.

The Howden Moors incident will probably go down as a notable event in ufological history. It's reality status is certainly **not** open to doubt, and it poses a genuine real-life mystery that requires serious consideration to resolve.

On a sociological level it generated numerous (spurious) tales and rumours, and (for a while) looked as if it would become the U.K.'s answer to the Roswell Incident. As it may well still do in some spheres of Ufology, despite this article.



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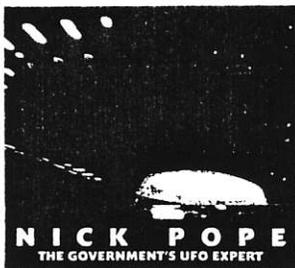
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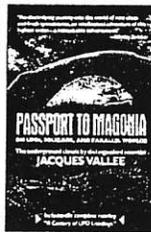
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