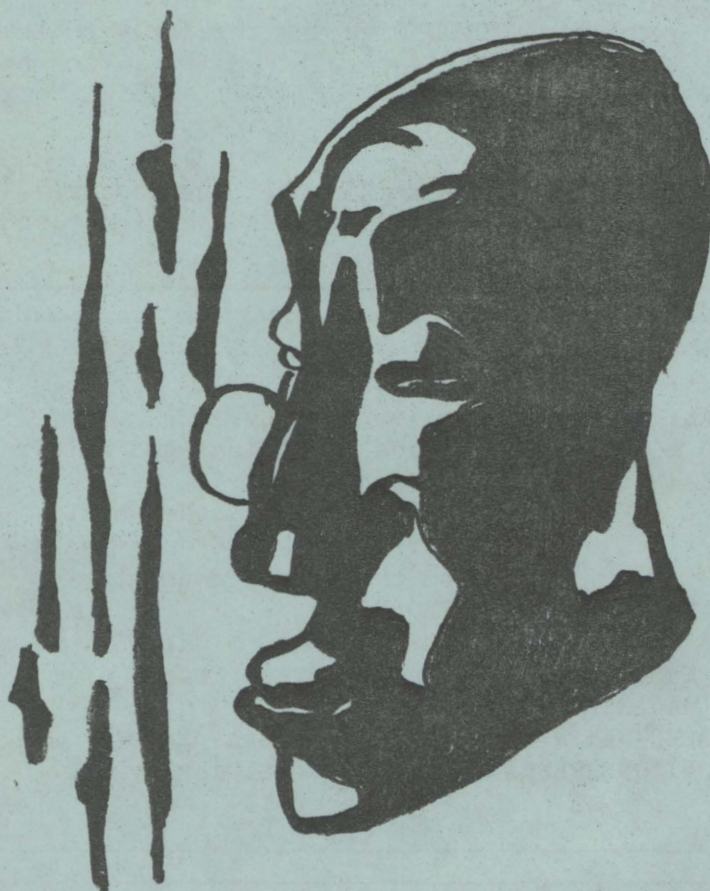


Irish UFO News

UFOLOGY AND PARAPSYCHOLOGY IN IRELAND

July 1977



- **Subjective aspects of the Naas sightings.**
- **The Voyager deep space probes.**
- **Review Special: New Scientist on parascience.**
- **News and Views, Sighting Reports, Letters.**

Irish UFO News is an independant, twice yearly magazine dealing with UFOs and related subjects. It is available on subscription at a rate of 65 pence per year (two issues) or 'over the counter' through various UFO organisations at the cover price shown (30 pence on future editions, 25 pence on this issue.

Items for Publication.

The editor welcomes articles, notes, book reviews, sighting investigations and letters for publication from all sources. The copy date (contributors are asked to note this carefully) is the tenth of the month of publication (December and July). The editor reserves the right to amend items for presentation reasons and to refuse publication, but pre-publication proofs can be provided for inspection if necessary. Contributors will be neither charged nor payed for items published.

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We are interested in exchanging IUFON with any regularly published UFO or UFO related magazine from anywhere in the world on a regular basis. Exchange publications should be sent to the editor.

Back Issues.

Back issues of IUFON-3 are available at 35pence (inc postage). IUFON-1 and 2 are out of print, but photocopies can be made at 55 pence each (inc postage).

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IUFON ADDRESSES

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ADDENDUM

Page 5: The author did not ontend to imply that speculation that Neptune may be covered by a sea is serious. Such a proposition is, of course, ludicrous.

Page 12: Anyone interested in Tom Higgin's suggestion is advised that they can also contact the group at Dublin (01 in Eire, 0001 in N. Ireland) 963947 (Brendan Meddler).

Page 34: It has been noticed that there are two of these.

Page 1: In the list of contence, there should be an entry: Page 12 LETTERS.

The editor would like to apologise that he has not yet been able to exorcise the gremlin in his typewriter which has caused further waves of spelling and typing errors to flood into this issue!

PRICE INCREASES

We are sorry that it has been necessary to increase the subscription price slightly. Larger increases have been avoided by improving our reproduction and distribution methods, but the implemented increases are necessary. All subscribers are reminded that their subscriptions are due for renewal.

EDITORIALA SPECIAL PLEA FOR SANITY.

I often wonder why it is that ufology generates such a degree of interorganisational, interpersonal and interfactional strife. The sadening thing about it is that the feuds are not about theoretical issues or even practical issues such as how to investigate UFO reports, but about who is going to get this or that worthless sinecure in some high sounding pseudo-official organisation, about which organisation merges (or de-merges) with which and about who has prior publication rights over who.

Jacques Vallee wrote, ten years ago, about the American UFO groups in the following terms:

"There is a tendency among the believers to gather into large, very formal organisations, were they waste all their energy and, sometimes, a great deal of money, with practically no visible result. It is clear that such organisations answer a psychological need rather than a genuine desire to discover the answer to an interesting intellectual problem. Maintaining such a group implies a tremendous overhead- mailing lists, bookkeeping, etc.- and experience shows that research is the last activity it can afford. Instead, these groups generate so much internal bitterness and so many interorganisational feuds that they prove to be serious obstacles to independant researchers who are simply trying to get firsthand data and do not care to support one particular personality or theory against another."

He is talking about the big-league organisations, APRO, NICAP etc. and not the small, fringe organisations. It is striking that Vallee's description so accurately fits the current situation in the UK. The work of serious investigators who are chiefly interested in collecting and publishing first hand reports in a genuinely unbiassed manner is continually hampered- in some cases made impossible- by the hordes of people with ludicrous titles from this organisation or that organisation that descend on the poor, unsuspecting witnesses, by the forms-to-be-filled-in and petty imperative dictates passed down from the higher enchellons of the monolithic national organisations and by the idiotic press activities of the members of said organisations, many of whom seem to have considerably more imagination than intelligence.

Ireland is just opening up ufologically and we have not run into these problems yet. It is my earnest hope that (for once) we can learn from the mistakes of others and develop a rational and sensible investigation system. The initial signs are encouraging- at least we have not fallen into the trap of 'area demarkation' (investigator's territories) yet. If ufologists cannot agree on such a simple thing as cooperating on investigations then there is little hope.

Here, in Northern Ireland, we are in the situation of having a 'foot in both puddles' and we still have to function as part of the tangled mess that is UK ufology, and to my colleagues in British ufology, I would make my special plea: Please, ladies and gentlemen, let us have some sanity, a sense of direction and of perspective and above all, some give and take.

I sometimes think that the chief problem is that ufologists take themselves far, far too seriously.

J.A.H.

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NEWS AND VIEWSA Major Wave in England and Wales.

There are considerable preliminary indications that a major wave of UFO reports is occurring in England and Wales. The most recent issue of Flying Saucer review features an interesting report from several pupils at Broadhaven School in West Wales of a landing with an entity reported. Details are sparse mainly due to the young age of the witnesses but it seems to be a reliable report. Also featured are at least seven other close encounter reports from West Wales, three with occupants, a 'flap' in North Staffordshire with one landing and one landing with occupants and the Bowles case is brought up to date. In addition, preliminary reports from the UFO Investigator's Network (UFOIN) show a major increase in reports of high strangeness (UFOIN deals only with this type of report) and several cases involving close encounters, some with occupants are under investigation.

If this is of an acceptable standard, he/she is admitted.

One of the chief concepts of UFOIN was that we would be able to free ourselves of the inevitably amateurish image of the present organisations and so, hopefully, develop a better relationship with local and national authorities essential to our work. There are initial signs that this is beginning to happen, though we face a credibility gap that can only be closed by practical demonstration. It was also hoped that it would be possible to maintain a good relationship with the local groups since we will always be dependant on them. In most cases problems do not arise here because the UFOIN members tend to be the best investigators in the local groups, but otherwise the relationship is based on the premiss that UFOIN members will cooperate with local groups and that local groups will be acknowledged in any publication.

We feel that UFOIN represents a far better investigation concept than that of the large, structured nationwide systems.

Meeting of Irish UFO Groups - Naas, 19 June 1977.

Present at the meeting in Lawthers Hotel, Naas, Co.Kildare were representatives of Spectrum, the UFO Research Association, Irish UFO Research Centre and BUFORA (Ireland). The conference was organised by Tom Higgins. The main aim was to sort out investigation procedures, since a considerable degree of confusion had been evident during the investigation of the Newbridge case.

The first matter considered was mergers, and eventually it was agreed that UFORA and Spectrum would negotiate a merger since both operate mainly in the Dublin area. It was also agreed that sightings in the Dublin area would be dealt with mainly by Spectrum. Since most of the Spectrum investigators have close links with IUFORC no problems are expected in this area. However, it was agreed that sighting investigations, in the form of initial report forms, would be exchanged on all cases investigated by both organisations and that, in cases where UFOIN would be interested, there would be no objection to UFOIN investigators cooperating with those from Spectrum. In particular, it was agreed that 'raw data', chiefly tape recordings of interviews, would be preserved for inspection should a subsequent investigator require them. This was considered important, since it would cut down on the number of interviews carried out on any particular case. The system has got off to a good start, with one consignment of reports already sent from IUFORC to Mr Owen McQuail of Spectrum.

The package of agreed cooperation may seem very loose, but we are convinced that it will work well in practice, since a very cordial relationship has developed between the groups. Problems in the past seem to have been mainly due to communication difficulties.

TMG Johnston. (RIC, BUFORA)

News From the Final Frontier.

The Enterprise, the first prototype of NASA's space shuttle has completed all of its captive testflights. These flights, to test the aerodynamic properties of the shuttle, were conducted with the Enterprise fixed onto the top of a Boeing 747 jet. The first free flight of the Enterprise, which was to have taken place on June 9, has been delayed due to minor difficulties. The Enterprise is un-powered, and this flight, when it takes place, will be a glide. Enterprise is never intended to go into space, but the powered version, shuttle two, is being prepared for its first space flight in 1979.

NASA is being forced to accept very severe budget restraints by the American Congress (who have just approved a large increase in defense spending), and this may threaten the space telescope project as well as the Jupiter Orbiter probe, scheduled for 1982.

The latest issue of Northern UFO News is packed with UFO reports, with some groups claiming to have over 100 reports already.

Since, under normal conditions, close encounter and occupant reports come in at a rate of three or four per year from this area, this activity represents a very major increase, and when all the reports are investigated we can expect a large body of interesting data.

Ufologists At War.

The current discord in UK ufology has already been dealt with in an editorial, however I thought that perhaps readers, particularly those in Ireland, might like to be given some more specific information about what is going on. It seems that it started when Jenny Randles (secretary of the Northern UFO Network, and then a committee member of BUFORA—the British UFO Research Association) had several articles published in UFO journals which were highly critical of BUFORA. She was only voicing what had been painfully obvious to many of us for a long time, but many of those who had doubts about the criticisms lost those doubts when BUFORA ventured not a word in reply. Basically the criticism was that it was futile to try 'to be scientific' in the investigation and research sense while so much time and effort and cash was being put into the essential public and member relations aspect of a mass membership organisation. This was diagnosed as being the root cause of the symptoms of over bureaucracy, inefficiency, lack of moral and shortage of achievement for which BUFORA has been noted. Frustrated by the lack of response from BUFORA, Miss Randles' criticism became stronger and eventually the chairman of BUFORA, Lionel Beer, with the backing of the council wrote to Miss Randles. Copies of this letter fluttered by various devious routes onto the desks of virtually every ufologist in the UK (Irish UFO Research Centre now has on file no less than five copies!) The gist of the letter was that she was asked to resign from the BUFORA council for 'activities detrimental to BUFORA'. Unfortunately, with monumental lack of tact, Mr Beer also managed to insult virtually every ufologist who had been associated with Miss Randles, and, in a later communication, every ufologist associated with NUFON. Also unfortunately, at the same time Miss Randles was launching her important new UFOIN idea and Bufora then refused to cooperate with UFOIN except on impossible terms. At that point quite a few of BUFORA's investigators were forced to switch allegiance to UFOIN instead of, as would otherwise have been possible, working with both.

The net result of all this has been a polarisation into two main blocs in the investigative and public organisation fields, NUFON/UFOIN and BUFORA. Increasingly petty 'agro' between the two is making it harder to work for both at the same time. I, myself, and most of my active colleagues in Ireland have considerably more sympathy for NUFON/UFOIN's position. We do, however, have some reservations, the chief being that both NUFON and UFOIN seem to be much too dependant on the charismatic leadership of Jenny Randles. While Miss Randles is doing an excellent job, there is a strong possibility that, were she to withdraw that leadership, the whole system would collapse.

I wonder if it is too much to hope for that after a 'cooling off period' the situation will improve.

The UFO Investigator's Network.

A new and exciting concept in UK ufology is the UFO investigators Network (UFOIN). The idea was to set up a very informal grouping of independent investigators who had displayed an ability to produce good investigation reports. The group would offer several essential collective functions without the disadvantages entailed by the present national organisations. From the start it was intended to concentrate on high strangeness cases, the others already being covered quite adequately by existing organisations.

The facilities now offered by UFOIN are financial support, a close link with FSR for publication purposes, some expert back-up facilities, publication of detailed reports and liaison with the authorities on a national level.

The initial membership of UFOIN, which now covers most of the UK was selected by personal recommendation and expansion of the membership is by a kind of test procedure. A prospective new member is asked to investigate a case and submit a full report on it.

THE VOYAGER DEEP SPACE PROBES

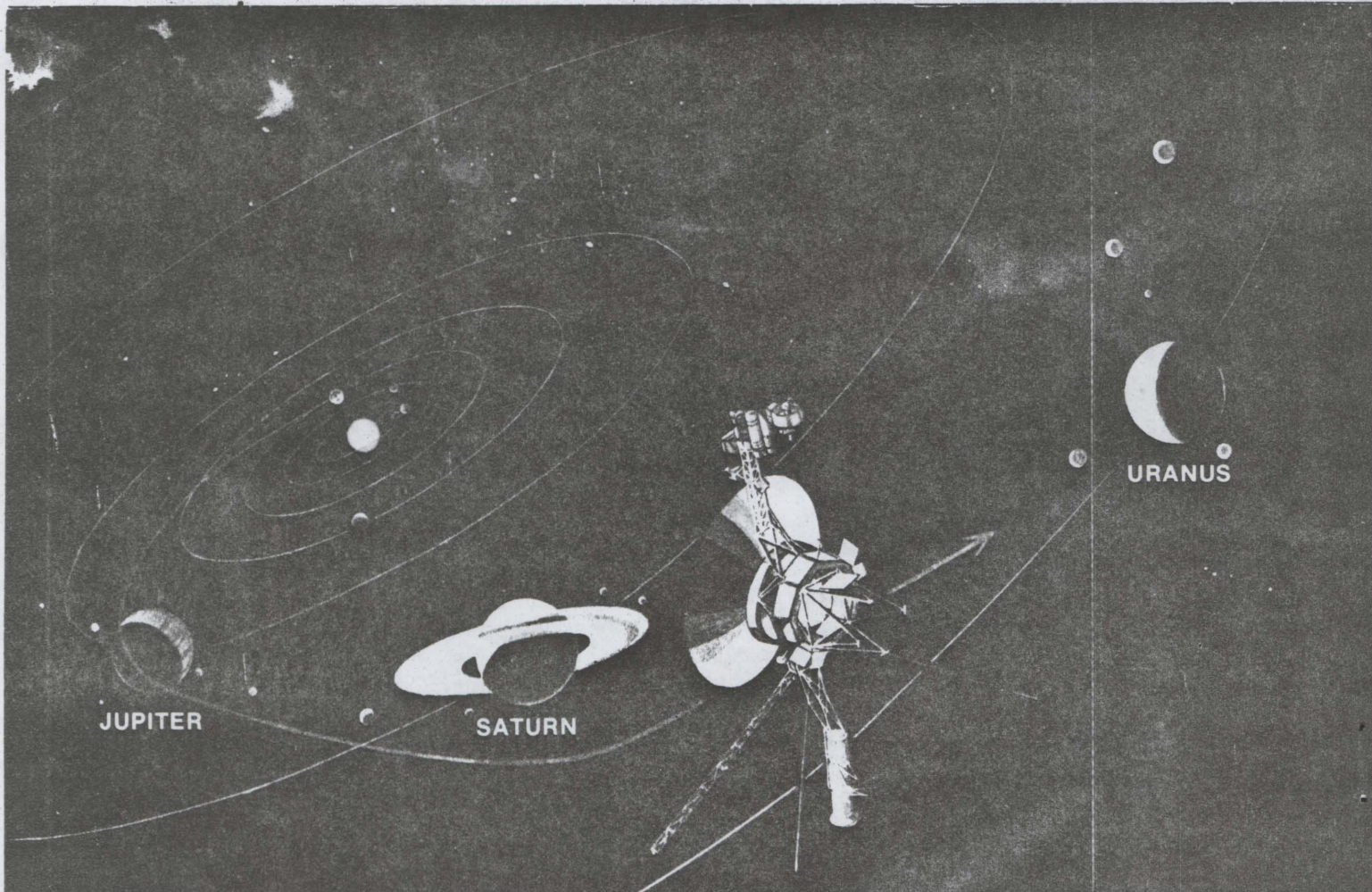
Miles Johnston.

NASA has been planning a mission to make a 'grand tour' of the outer planets of our system using the planetary 'sling-shot' effect for a long time. The 'grand tour' will include very close fly-bys of three planetary systems, those of Jupiter, Saturn and Uranus. This is only possible due to a particular relative positioning of the planets which will not occur again for 400 years. The plan is to use the immense gravitational field of Jupiter to 'sling' the spacecraft out to either Saturn or Uranus. Neptune was also considered, but after a number of cancellations of the project this was scrapped.

Two spacecraft, designated Voyager 1 and 2, will be launched between August, 20 and September, 9 1977. For various complex reasons this launch window is very critical. The Voyagers are updated Mariner spacecraft; they have a back-up system for nearly everything, and are controlled by a very sophisticated computer. Communication is a major difficulty, and much higher frequencies have had to be used on this spacecraft than were used on Viking so that a fast enough data transfer rate is possible.

The two craft will arrive at Jupiter around March, 5 1979 and July, 9 1979. Saturn will be reached by November, 19 and August, 27 1980. Uranus will not be encountered until sometime in 1986. This means that the spacecraft must be very robust, and the communication delay due to the huge distances means that they must be largely self controlled - they are robots in the literal sense of the word. Mariner 10 was lost when analysing Mercury, but due to in-built programming it was able to be found again, and the valuable data stored on its tapes recovered.

The distances involved will be in the order of 1350 million Km to Saturn, 600 million Km to Jupiter, 2.7 Billion (Thousand Million) Km to Uranus and 4.3 billion Km to Neptune. These distances will cause severe communication problems, with respect to diffraction of the beam, noise and acquisition problems and time lag.



One of two Mariner spacecraft launched in 1977 may be directed to fly past Jupiter and Saturn, the two largest planets in the solar system, and continue on to Uranus, almost 3,000 million kilometers from Earth.

Objectives:

The Jovian System.

This system was visited in 1973 and in 74/5 by Pioneers 10 and 11. Therefore, we are in a position to look in more detail at selected areas of interest. The system contains, at present, 14 satellites, varying from the planet-sized Galilean satellites, to what are essentially asteroids on 'temporary loan'. The moons of primary interest will be Io and Ganymede. Io has the property that it acts as a kind of switch for the shortwaves emitted by Jupiter. While Io can be one of the most reflective objects in the solar system after being in Jupiter's shadow, while in sunlight this property diminishes, the moon becoming very red. It's atmosphere, which is very thin, consists of hydrogen, nitrogen and sodium. It is one of the objectives of this mission to find out more about the moons and their atmospheres.

Jupiter can be considered a very low power sun since it is radiating more heat than it is absorbing. The energy of the radioactive particles trapped in the Jovian magnetic field, is millions of times higher than those encountered near Earth, and this may lead to additional problems.

The Saturnian System.

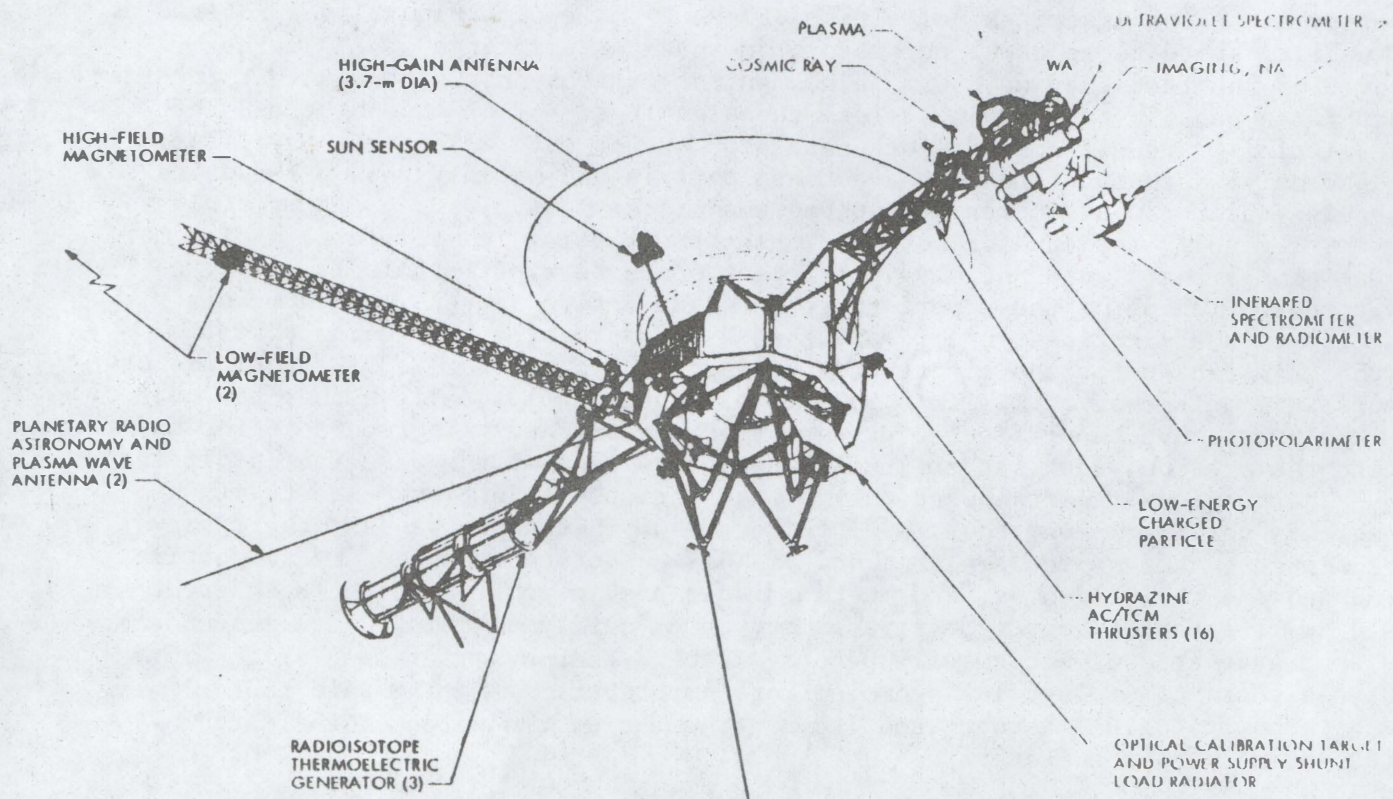
The system of Saturn has ten satellites, the most interesting of which is Titan. This has an atmosphere, consisting mainly of methane and ammonia and a solid surface. There could easily be highly organized organic molecules on the surface and in the atmosphere. Investigation of the moon, Titan, shares equal priority with studying the famous ring system. One of the spacecraft will estimate the sizes of the particles which make up the system and try to discover their composition and age. It is interesting to note that Uranus may have a similar ring system.

Uranus and Neptune.

Very little is known about these planets, though there has been some speculation that Neptune may be covered by a sea. It will be a bit touch-and-go whether the spacecraft reach these planets within their lifetimes, but it would be extremely interesting if they did.

Spacecraft Description.

Both spacecraft are identical, and of the Mariner class. The launch vehicle is



a Titan-Centaur (similar to the launch vehicle for Viking). The launch will be from Air Force launch complex 41 at the Eastern Test Range, Cape Canaveral. Although this is the fastest launch vehicle that the Air Force has, it will still not be able to launch its 800 Kg payload to the specific energy requirement of 111 Km/s^2 , needed to achieve the ballistic trajectory to reach Jupiter. For this reason a small additional upper stage is required. This is a solid fuel motor in the spacecraft which will give a velocity increment of 2 Km/s .

The spacecraft systems are powered by three plutonium oxide radioisotope generators. The heat produced by the particles released by the decay of the plutonium oxide is converted to electricity by a thermopile. Together the generators produce 390 Watts. 16 Hydrazine gas thrusters are used to direct and stabilise the spacecraft under the control of the on board tracking system. The photography scanning platform can be stabilised either by a star tracking system or by gyroscopes. Most of the systems have to be shielded from the heavy radiation fields near Jupiter. The data transfer rate by radio to Earth is about 115k Bits/sec from Jupiter, slowing to 45k Bits/sec from Saturn. The radio system uses an X band 3.7 metre diameter parabolic ariel. During periods of bad weather and when the craft is low in the sky relative to the tracking station, the data transfer rate will be slower.

The spacecraft scientific package weighs 113kg and consumes a total of about 100W of electricity. Included are medium and high resolution TV cameras, spectrometers, and photometric instruments for atmospheric analysis. Also, there are other goodies, such as; radio receivers for planetary emissions and plasma waves and numerous sensors for magnetic fields and charged particles.

Conclusion.

Project Voyager promises to be the astronomer's dream of the 20th century and it cannot be repeated for another 400 years. It seems unlikely that there will be any manned trips to the planets at least until the end of the century and so we will have to rely on data from increasingly sophisticated (and more intelligent) robot probes until then.

SOME SUBJECTIVE ASPECTS OF THE NAAS SIGHTINGS

John Hind.

Shortly after the last issue of 'Irish UFO News' came out, Miss Olivia Robertson, a spiritualist, wrote to me about our report on the Naas sightings. She disapproved of the fact that we had made no mention of a 'psychic sitting' that the four of us had taken part in the morning before the sightings. I should stress that 'psychic sittings' are not a normal occurrence for any of us. This was the first, and to date only, such event that I have taken part in and my only reason for doing so was a genuine desire to understand the phenomena (if any) involved. In my reply to her letter, I gave my reasons for not mentioning the sitting in my report. The main reason was simply that I did not have sufficient space to explain this fully. As I hinted at the beginning of the report there were subjective aspects, to do mainly with our reaction to the sightings, and I said that I was not going to mention these. Indeed the main reason for the report was to describe a whole series of sightings, of which ours were only two. I firmly, and, I think reasonably, believe that the objective details would not have been effected by the other factors and this report is not an effort to rewrite the previous one, rather it is intended to look at the case from a different angle. The previous report looked only at the strictly objective aspects of the sightings, however I believed then, as I believe now, that there was another, very distinct aspect that required explanation. This aspect encompassed the subjective phenomena and the co-incidences, and in this sense the 'psychic sitting' has direct relevance. I intend to describe this aspect here, partly to remove some misunderstandings that have arisen, but chiefly because I think that consideration of the more subjective aspects of ufology is becoming more important. Having said that, I have adopted a phenomenological approach and leave judgement of the value of the data presented entirely to the reader.

We had spent the Saturday of that weekend investigating the other sightings mentioned in the report, and early on the Sunday morning (31st of October, the choice of Halloween for the trip was unintentional on our part!) we traveled down to Huntingdon Castle near Enniscorthy, to visit Miss Robertson. Huntingdon Castle, itself is seventeenth century and is built as an imitation of a medieval castle, with ramparts and towers, but it's situation and the presence of large windows show that it was never really intended to be defensive. It is built close to the ruins of a very obviously Norman (11th-12th century) building, probably a church or abbey. It is difficult to describe the atmosphere of the place, but a combination of the lack of light (there is no electricity), the fact that the building is not in good repair, and the style of decoration combine to give an impression of a rather stereotype haunted castle in the best Hollywood tradition.

During the morning we had a brief discussion on psychic and associated phenomena with Miss Robertson, followed by the sitting already mentioned. I will quote from Miss Robertson's report on the sitting or 'rite' which was published in Isian News, a psychic magazine:

"..... I said that what we could do was to sit in meditation and offer receptive minds to 'UFO' contact. This, I said, was as reasonable a way as any to contact possible 'space people'. The possibility of telepathy had not been ruled out by contemporary science. I asked for their concurrence in a short Rite. I lit two candles on my small altar in the drawing room, lit an incense stick and then invoked Deity. I expressed our intention, which was to contact 'space people'. I then put Holy water from our Brigids Well on the brow of each of the young men.

I asked them to shut their eyes, and to follow visually my words. I told them that we were climbing up a hill. At the crest of the hill was a mist. We past through the mist and stood on the top of the hill. We looked around; the mist had covered the surrounding landscape. Now I said we looked up into the sky. We came aware of a bright light. We watched this light. It became larger and larger as it approached us. It became a golden disc. In silence, we watched this disc.

I waited for a quarter of an hour approximately. Then I reversed the procedure. I described the golden disc retreating until it became a point of light and finally disappeared. I described our climb down the hill and our return to the drawing room. I then asked for reports.

Each young man had been able to visualise the scene I had described, including the light. But in the silence, though they had felt peaceful, they had experienced nothing visual, and no ideas at all. I found this strange. But they said they had no thoughts and no mental pictures. But they had felt at ease. So I gave my report. I said that I had the impression that we had been contacted by a UFO occupant. My feeling was that he was a young man with longish fair hair and dark clothes. He was looking after them."

I fully agree with her description of what happened, and my own impression of what was going on was that she was trying to induce a state or perception of 'non-ordinary reality' in us, firstly by very carefully arranging a suitable environment, and then by a process of suggestion, somewhat similar to hypnotism. I do not think that the fact that it produced no significant effect in any of us indicates that such attempts must inherently fail, and I have no doubt that Miss Robertson really believes that the experience she related herself actually happened. One important point that she left out was that she claimed to have been informed that we would soon be 'rewarded' for our work in ufology. At the time, we took that to mean that we would have a sighting of a UFO, though none of us took the prediction very seriously.

During the afternoon, we were given a guided tour of the castle. I would like to describe this tour because it was a very interesting experience, but it is not really relevant. We made the trip back to Naas in the late afternoon. We had arranged to interview one of the witnesses in the 'flap' series that evening, and the first sighting took place as we awaited the return of this witness outside his country shop. The objective details of our own sightings have been reported in the previous report, so it is my intention to deal only with our reactions to the sightings here. It is difficult to judge the reactions of the other witnesses so I will deal mainly with my own. In the first sighting, I think I can say that my reaction was entirely rational and comiserate with the only slight strangeness of the event. I arrived at the opinion that it was a flare or a firework very shortly after the sighting, though this theory has proven difficult to tie down subsequently. However, despite this, I must admit that I was mildly effected by the same unobjective sense of strangeness that I experienced with the second sighting. I should point out at this stage that I am a fairly experienced observer of the night sky, and that, on several occasions I have observed temporarily

inexplicable objects. I point this out to show that I am quite familiar with the intrinsic strangeness of a silent, bright moving object in the night sky and that this was something different. I find it very difficult to accurately describe this sensation; the nearest that I can come is that it was a feeling that I was witnessing a phenomenon that was specifically organised for my, personal benefit, to teach or demonstrate something to me. However, in the first case, this sensation or impression quickly gave way to the objective, commonsense interpretation. It seems to me, though I cannot be sure, that my three colleagues had a similar, perhaps stronger reaction. As described in the initial report, we carried out a detailed de-briefing session shortly after the sighting, and all reports were made out without collusion. The reports were very similar as regards factual detail, but when I stated my opinion that the object was a firework or flare, all the other witnesses reacted incredulously. My response to this was to ask them exactly why they thought it could not have been a flare, and no-one was able to pin down a specific reason for this opinion.

The second sighting mirrored the first, both objectively and subjectively. The sighted object had the same objective similarity to a bright parachute flare, though on subsequent investigation it proved even harder to pin down. It would have been necessary for it to have been launched well inland, and thus illegally and also directly over a busy dual carriageway, a very foolish and dangerous thing to do. These factors make the objective strangeness a little higher. This time, my own personal feeling of the strangeness of the event was very much stronger. When we first noticed the phenomenon, we were speeding along the Naas-Dublin road at about 95 KPH. This time it was not a case of someone noticing it and pointing it out to the rest; you could not miss it, it was very bright and dead centre of the windscreen. My initial reaction was one of a kind of resigned calmness: 'Oh no, not again!'. I remember that a thought struck me, I do not remember whether I vocalised it: "They're playing games with us! They're having fun at our expense!" Thus again I had the very strong impression that the phenomenon was centred around me personally; organised for my personal benefit. Once I had brought the car to a halt on the hard shoulder, there was a rather excited reaction by the other two occupants of the car. The only reaction that I remember clearly was a kind of detached tranquility and having a very clear mind; no conscious mental processes whatsoever. I was not acting as I consider a good observer should act: Making estimates and timings, running through possible explanations. However, I must have been subconsciously recording the facts because I was able to note these very clearly later. Post-sighting, my reaction was largely emotional, I felt that I had had a personal and slightly mystical experience, however the peaceful feeling went with the disappearance of the object and my condition for the remainder of the journey back to Dublin could only be described as mild shock. Looking back on it, my driving must have been abysmal. The impression of extreme strangeness was definitely shared by the other two witnesses, and I think there was something of the mystical or spiritual in their reactions too. I certainly remember one of them asking me if I believed in God- and being very impatient when I framed my usual answer to that question; 'it depends what you mean by God!'. We were all definitely subject to a very intense and intangible impression of strangeness: There was no possibility of any 'normal' explanation in my mind for at least twenty-four hours after the sighting. I also remember that that night, for the first time in my life, I had nightmares about UFOs.

As well as the subjective reaction- which for me was very real- there is some rather more objective evidence that something stranger than is indicated by the objective details of the phenomena themselves was at work. I refer to a number of 'co-incidences' about the sightings which I will try to itemise:

- 1.) Shortly before the sightings we had taken part in a 'psychic sitting' at which it had been hinted that we would soon have a personal UFO sighting.
- 2.) That we were investigating a series of sightings of phenomena almost identical in description to the ones perceived, shortly before the sightings and in the same geographical locality.
- 3.) That Chris Gaffney clearly and unambiguously predicted that the second sighting would take place.
- 4.) That at the second sighting, we were ideally positioned for observation of the phenomenon.

The reader is entitled to take the above as he sees fit. He may decide that the

sequence of impressions and events is adequately explained by the 'normal' world picture, perhaps as a combination of co-incidence, sightings of 'normal' phenomena and a psychological reaction; or he may decide, as is my feeling, that there is an intangible something about this aspect of the UFO phenomenon that is very real and that requires explanation.

* * *

REVIEW

Exploring Mysticism - Frits Staal (Penguin, 1975)

I read this book hoping that it could throw light on a certain class of UFO report which I considered had more to do with that vague generalisation, 'mystical experience', than with a report of a physical reality. It did not, but what it did do was to give me some very firm ideas on how the investigator should approach these cases.

The object of the book is to develop guidelines for a method of rational enquiry into mysticism and the first section of the book is spent dispelling the common western preconception that mysticism is not amenable to rational enquiry. I referred to the term 'mystical experience' as a 'vague generalisation', and perhaps the first thing one might expect from a book on the subject is an exact definition of what is meant by mysticism. However Professor Staal makes the very valid point that one cannot really define the boundaries of what one is studying before one has studied it, and therefore, at this stage, precise definition is not possible. In general, the topics discussed in the book include all kinds of religious experience, meditation and other occult practices and even 'trips' induced by the use of hallucinogenic drugs. As I was saying, it is a common western preconception that mysticism cannot be studied rationally, and the professor explodes this myth both by the use of logic and by his acid wit. The problem seems apparent mainly in western culture; in the east they have a long tradition of 'rational' mysticism. The mysticism that is mainly encountered by westerners is the mysticism of the Christian religion, and the Christian religion, unlike most of the eastern religions, is basically non-rational. This is possibly why westerners consider mysticism irrational, simply because they have little contact with rational mysticism. However the question of whether mysticism is, or is not, rational is not relevant to the methodology of the study of mysticism. The question is whether it can be studied rationally and the answer is that there is no reason why it cannot, provided that the student does not fall into any of the many pitfalls. For example, one cannot meaningfully say that a plant is rational, but that does not preclude a rational study of botany; it may be that a mental patient is clearly irrational yet that does not prevent the rational study of mental illness.

The second section of the book is titled 'how not to study mysticism' and deals with the shortcomings of methods that have been used in the past: the dogmatic; the historical; the phenomenological and the physiological/ psychological. Most mystical systems have their associated religions and religions are, by their nature, dogmatic. It would be meaningful, for example, for a convinced Christian to study Buddhist mysticism in relation to the dogma of Christianity, but it would not be rational since it presupposes the validity of the Christian dogma. Dogmatic approaches are not rational. The other three approaches deal, in one way or another with the effects of mysticism on people rather than with mysticism itself. They have their place, but without direct experience of mystical states their usefulness is severely limited.

The third section of the book is mainly taken up with further developing this idea of studying mysticism by direct experience. The first problem is the idea that in order to experience the mystical states one must accept the dogma. This, again seems to stem from our experience with Christianity where the mysticism and the dogma are very difficult, perhaps impossible, to separate. However in the ancient eastern religio-mystical systems and in their modern western offshoots such as Yoga and Transcendental Meditation it is very much easier to separate mysticism from dogma and it is quite possible to experience the former without accepting the latter. The next problem is how one actually goes about attaining mystical experience. Staal discusses two methods: the use of a 'guru' or teacher and the use of hallucinogenic drugs. He argues that while the states of mind reached using each of the methods are similar, there is much evidence that they are not identical, and he suggests that this may be to do with the method used. For example, a

man who has climbed a tall mountain and one who has been set on top by a helicopter may experience a whole range of similar feelings, but the man who has climbed may experience something extra due solely to the fact that he has come up the hard way. Since it has happened in progressive steps he may also be more prepared for what he finds.

The problem with the use of a guru is that one must constantly be prepared to distinguish between what is method i.e. part of attaining the desired state, and what is dogma or the 'guru's' explanatory system for the state or for the methods used. The problems with the use of hallucinogenic drugs, medical, social and psychological, are very considerable and the use of these would only be advised for those with a very thorough knowledge of these problems and under expert medical supervision.

Professor Staal's book is tough going, but due to his incisive and sarcastic witt and very good writing style, quite readable. It will provide useful and thought-provoking reading for those interested in the study of religions, the occult and the non-nuts and bolts side of ufology. Highly recommended.

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Magazines: MAPIT's 'Skywatch'.

Another new exchange magazine, this time from the Manchester Ariel Phenomena Investigation Team, 'Skywatch' is bi-monthly and generally very well produced. 'Skywatch' seems to attract a very international readership, and this is reflected in the contributions which are generally of high quality. I can't resist quoting one sentence from an article by Mr. R. Markwick on contactee cases :

"The more advanced they (the 'aliens') were, the more would be the likelihood of us having to forget we'd ever been born, and start afresh tomorrow- that would'nt be very easy for a start!"

Quite , Mr. Markwick, quite!

UFO Research Review.

Dispite it's rather portentious title, the Nottingham UFO Investigation Society's magazine comes a close third (after Flying Saucer Review and MUFOP) in my league of British UFO publications. In the latest issue, Jenny Randles, fresh from tilting with BUFORA (a persuit about as rewarding as tilting with windmills) has a go at that other sacred cow of ufology, the extraterrestrial theory.

UFORUM' Commentry'.

The first issue of this monthly (I wonder how long that will last!) magazine from UFORUM (UFOs and Related Unexplained Mysteries) consists mainly of extracts from other UFO magazines, though I expect that when it gets better established we can expect more original content.

Pulse's 'Pulsar'.

'Pulsar' is not a UFO magazine in the traditional sence being devoted mainly to 'leyography'- the study of the alignment of ancient sites. Over the years leyography has become associated with ufology for reasons on which I am not entirely clear. The association seems to originate back in the fifties when a French worker, Aimee Michelle, developed a system of alignments of the positions of UFO witnesses during the French 'flap' of that time. I suppose that with others making connections between UFOs and folklore, it was natural- well, inevitable- that the alignment systems of both would become connected. Once the connection was made, it was soon noticed that, on some occasions, the nodal points of ley networks turned out to also have UFO connections- the most famous example being Warminster, which, it is said, is at the intersection of five leys. The problem is that, though it would be a relatively simple matter to use correct statistical procededures to verify the alignments in both leyography and orthoteny(the name given to the science of the alignment of UFO sightings), this is rarely done. This, combined with the lack of useful theoretical explanations(there are several 'theories' involving various types of energy, known and unknown, but these remain strangely un-measured) for just why such alignments should occur, has ment that these studies have remained extreemly subjective. It seems likley that, unless there is some improvement in the methodology used by the ley-hunters, leyography will continue to consist nearly of a loosely connected collection of empirical observations on the boaderline of coincidence. Having said that, I would like to take a more positive attitude. I think that most leyographers would be prepared to accept that there is a need for more refined techniques, and there is certainly sufficient material which seems

beyond the bounds of chance to warrant an advanced study.

Pulsar is not entirely devoted to leyography, consisting in about equal measure of ufology and 'off beat archaeology'. To those interested in practical and empirical studies in the latter field, 'Pulsar' can be recommended as one of the better publications in the area.

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REVIEW SPECIAL: NEW SCIENTIST ON PARASCIENCE

The 14th of July issue of New Scientist is largely devoted to a look at 'parascience'. The section contains three major articles and one minor one. The first three articles deal with the Bermuda Triangle, UFOs and 'spoon-bending', and the fourth is a review of a new Fortean-style 'source book'.

The article on the Bermuda Triangle is by Graham Massey, who produced the BBC-TV Horizon programme on the Triangle. Unlike the articles on spoon-bending and UFOs it is distinguished by the fact that the author has actually done some original research on the subject himself. The major portion of the article takes a close look at the individual incidents upon which the triangle myth is based. Careful research reveals that most of the 'strange disappearances' are only made strange by the sensational and frequently inaccurate reporting of the authors of Triangle books, chiefly Charles Berlitz. Most of the major cases are dealt with in some detail, based on first hand research by the author. The other main tenet of the myth is that the Triangle area has a disproportionate number of 'without trace' losses of shipping and aircraft. This is simply not borne out by the figures. Massey then takes a look at the techniques used by Triangle writers, and it becomes clear that none of the writers has done much original research since each copies (usually with some magnification and distortion) from the others, and more often than not the reports can be traced back to some sensational newspaper article.

Massey's article shows clearly how those scientists who wish to counter the irrationalist tendencies caused by the triangle and similar myths can effectively do so: By honestly studying the individual events on which the myths are based, by 'doing science'.

The UFO article, by Ian Ridpath, is the most superficial article on the subject I have read for a long time. The title-'Flying Saucers Thirty Years On'- gives one fair warning of what to expect. The aim seems to be to give a historical resume of the UFO story over the past thirty years. The article is negative in outlook the whole way through- rather ridiculously so in places- and the author shows an incredible ignorance of the subject matter of ufology, it's history and it's modern trends. The history of UFOs is restricted to the United States, as are all the sightings mentioned and the phenomenon is looked at from a wholly 'extraterrestrial' viewpoint. The few cases that are dealt with are treated very inadequately and are greatly over-simplified. For example the Hill case is dismissed as follows:

"The truth of the matter, revealed by investigator, Robert Sheaffer, is that much of the detail of the story was imaginative gloss added after the UFO sighting which, from Betty Hill's description was nothing more than a misidentification of the planet, Jupiter near the moon."

It is a well known part of the story, and was never claimed otherwise, that the 'abduction' part of the report was only revealed sometime after the original report using hypnotic techniques, and to call this a 'revelation' is misleading. To dismiss hypnotically revealed aspects as 'imaginative gloss' is a biased over-simplification. The Pascagoula case is dismissed because a lie detector test was carried out by an unqualified operator.

After 'proving' that UFOs are not extraterrestrial using one of the old, hoary, statistical arguments (which, juggling the precepts and re-guessing the estimates could just as easily 'prove' that they are extraterrestrial), Ridpath concludes that:

"After a generation of Flying Saucer (sic) stories with no concrete results, the burden of proof remains squarely on the ufologist."

I cannot speak for other ufologists, but I, personally, am not interested in 'proving' anything to anyone. It seems to me self-evident that, when literally thousands of people are reporting quite fantastic experiences every year we have a really promising area for study. It is only of secondary importance whether that study tells us something about what makes human beings tick, about extra-human intelligence or about the natural universe.

Parapsychological research is gradually attaining respectability and the third of the

New Scientist articles deals with that intensely researched but still unproven para-psychological phenomenon, 'spoonbending' or the 'Gellar effect'. The researches being carried out by Taylor and Collins in the UK, Crussard in France and Puthoff and Targ in the US seem to have run into fundamental problems. It seems that, while the subjects seem to be sincere, the tighter the experimental controls the less repeatable the results become so that, even now, none of the researchers can definitely say that the 'spoonbending' phenomenon really exists.

At Surrey University, Prof. Thakur is developing a philosophy of parapsychology- an indication of just how fundamental some of the research is becoming- and work is being carried out on telepathy and psychokinesis. However, despite the interest in the field, all the projects are running into problems with finance and unless research begins to make a larger impact it could fail to take off.

'Finding a Home for a Stray Fact' is the title of the fourth article which reviews a series of books by American scientist, William Corliss. Termed 'source books', these collect together and cross-reference various anomalistic observations made and recorded over the years and then forgotten about because they did not neatly fit into any scientific pigeon hole. Corliss' stated aim is to 'rock the scientific boat' by collecting together material which tends to contradict current scientific hypotheses and he concludes that either the information that he has collected is false, or that science has much fundamental work to do. The 'source books' have already proved useful in work on ball lightning, though another obvious field of application is ufology.

J.A.H.

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LETTERS

Psychic Phenomena.....

A growing interest in psychism would seem to be markedly apparant of late, both in Ireland and abroad. While it might be argued- reasonably, I think- that rather than degenerate into the awning recesses of the 'fringe sciences', we ufologists should plant our feet more solidly on the ground, acquire a sence of impeccable logic to the entire UFO problem, bore everyone to the funnyfarm with concrete facts and nice, straightfoward science and get something accomplished towards establishing a greater understanding of the subject in general. The proposal is a solid one; or so it would seem, but in practice it is about as watertight as a sieve. To study a phenomenon objectively dictates that we undertake a comprehensive analysis of the tools available for the work. As a physicist utilises mathematics as an indispensable piece of his equipment, so ufologists too should examine all avenues of potential if these efforts are to achieve meritorious results.

While it is not my desire to criticise the work of our own investigative staff, it is my opinion that we are neglecting, perhaps out of an innate orthodoxism, various methods of investigation which might yield more, but could certainly yield no less, than our present system of basing our investigations entirely on the material evidence available. I was recently reprimanded, rather harshly I thought, by a particular BUFORA official, for making unsubstantiated appraisals of certain cases. While I agreed with the strict, literal phraseology, I did not agree with the salient implications which accompanied it. The general opinion of ufologists seems to be that psychism should be left to the fanatics and that we should get on with our note taking.

I know that I am not alone in my perhaps unorthodox views and blasphemous ideas, and that is why I would like to take this opportunity to ask those who may be interested in psychism to write to the address below with a view to establishing an appendage to the Irish UFO Research Association in the form of a wholly psychical investigation department. This is a formal challenge to those ufologists who claim to operate an unbiassed, open-minded approach to the subject.

While I have kept my letter brief, I hope I have conveyed to the officials of our conglomeration of societies the present state of mind of certain of it's membership.

Thomas Higgins.

65 Sarto Road, Naas, Co.Kildare.

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INVESTIGATIONS REPORT

What ever may be happening in England and Wales, the current level of monitored UFO activity in Ireland is very low. Only two full-scale investigations were carried out during the period; on the Newbridge photo case and on a lower strangeness case from Donaghadee in Co. Down. Even the normal background level of readily explicable reports is considerably down on normal. IUFORC investigators have been using this slack period to clarify the data presentation system. The following is what we have come up with:

1. Code numbers

For internal use, the 'N' codes will continue to be used with all reports published in IUFON. Periodically these codes will be cross-referenced with codes used by other organisations.

2. Sighting Type.

After several false starts, we have decided on the Hynek system as the simplest and least ambiguous of the ones in general use. The following is adapted from Hynek, J.A., 'The UFO Experience':

NL:- Nocturnal Light; distant anomalous lights seen in the night sky.

DD:- Daylight Disc; distant defined or diffuse objects seen during the day.

RV:- Radar/Visual; objects seen by radar and vision simultaneously.

CE I:- Close Encounter of the First Kind; objects seen within 150m. (metres).

CE II:- Close Encounter of the Second Kind; CE Is that leave physical traces.

CE III:- Close Encounters of the Third Kind; CE Is with occupants seen.

NB: Modifications have been made to the definitions of DD, CE I and CE III. In two cases this was to make the definitions more generally applicable and in one case to comply with our policy (and the scientific convention) of using metric units.

3. Reliability of Investigation.

It is clearly important to have an idea of how reliable the investigation of a particular sighting is. For this purpose, in line with several other organisations, we have adopted a system suggested by NUFON. The following listing is taken from the June issue of 'Northern UFO News':

Level A:- An on-site investigation by experienced investigators.

Level B:- Interview with witnesses by experienced investigators.

Level C:- No interview, but the witness fills out a special form of some type.

Level D:- Letter or written account from witness, but no special follow-up.

Level E:- Unconfirmed report- e.g. Newspaper cutting, verbal only.

4. Probability.

Probability is a measure of the reliability of the observer's report. This has always been impossible to quantify accurately. We have decided that to try to define more than three categories is over optimistic, and therefore we define High, Mid and Low probability. Factors that are taken into account when assessing probability are as follows:

1. The individual reliability of each of the observers under normal conditions.

2. The number of observers.

3. The conditions under which the sighting took place.

Probability estimates usually apply only to lower strangeness (below) events. To try to estimate the 'probability' in a case such as the Hill case or the Pascagoula case, or even our own 'Mrs H' case would be futile since the phenomenon seems to be far too complex. In general, it is possible to distinguish 'observations' and 'experiences' on the basis of whether the observer interacts, or appears to interact, with the phenomenon. The concept of probability is really limited to 'observations'.

5. Strangeness.

Strangeness is one of the most important concepts in ufology and has been defined in a number of different ways. Basically, strangeness is a measure of how 'out of the ordinary' a sighting is, but a full discussion of strangeness would take a full article. We assign strangeness on the basis of ideas by Jacques Vallee (J. Vallee, 'The Invisible College'). This seems to be as near as possible to an objective system. Table 1 should help to decode the strangeness figures used. This is not complete, it would require a lengthy exposition with examples to fully define each category.

TABLE ONE	
Vallee Strangeness category	Type of phenomena.
1	Transient observation of a phenomenon only slightly strange. E.G. object like a firefly only at the wrong time of year.
2	Strange lights in the sky, burning masses, strange luminous clouds, diffuse daytime objects.
3	Defined objects in the sky; strange craft etc.
4	Landings and near landings (generally, Hynek CE I & II and aspects of CE III).
5	Occupants, strange beings etc.
6	'Personal illumination', contacts psychic or physical, religious visions, out of the body type UFO experiences etc.
7	'Reality Gap' cases where there is an implied event which is not remembered or which is only released after special treatment.

A single case may have aspects or phases which fit into different strangeness categories, for example, the Hill case has aspects in categories 3, 5 and 7. Our own Naas sightings have aspects in categories 2 and 6.

Figure 2, on the outside back cover, shows results of work done by Vallee on the estimated likelihood of events, or aspects of events, in the different categories being reported.

Case Reports.

Statistics:

Satellites: 1
 Aircraft : 3
 Astronomical: 1
 Hoaxes : 1 (High probability.)

Brief Details:

N. 42

TIME AND DATE: 13.40, 13.2.1976 WITNESS:(one) Name and address on file.
 LOCATION: Whitehall, Dublin. INVESTIGATION LEVEL: D
 INVESTIGATION BY: Alan Lawler (IUFORA)

WITNESSES ACCOUNT (EXTRACTS):

"I was walking to a bus stop near my home when I noticed a three-jet military plane. It was very high up, and about the size of a thumb (?). I continued to watch it when, to my astonishment, a UFO appeared underneath the jet and travelling from west to east keeping neatly under the streams left by the jet. As the UFO came level with, but about 30 or so thumb sizes under the jet, the jet veered off to starboard, as if the pilot took instinctive evasive action to avoid colliding (which could not happen due to the different levels of the craft's flights). Of course, the shock waves of the UFO could have sent the jet off course. As the UFO approached, the faint outlines of two ovals surrounded by a darkish blur could be seen. The jet quickly recovered its course and continued eastwards, and when it reached a point about 20° west (?) it took a curved path downward. The UFOs flight path could easily have taken it far out to sea.

Additional Details.

The above was abstracted from a copy of a long letter written to Eric Von Daniken, supplied by the witness to Alan Lawler. While superficially precise, the letter unfortunately gives no description of the object itself which is merely referred to as 'the UFO'. Further investigation would be required before it would be possible to come to any definite conclusion.

PROBABILITY: Insuf. data.

STRANGENESS: Category 2 or 3.

Note on the Newbridge Case.

The Newbridge photo case was introduced briefly in the last issue. It has been concluded, after a thorough investigation by Spectrum and IUFORC that the case is probably a hoax. This conclusion is based on a technical report made by BUFORA's photographic analysis department which concludes that the pictures are almost certainly a physical fabrication (produced by throwing an object into the air and photographing it). A second analysis is currently being carried out by DPRG (Dagenham Paranormal Research Group.). A full report of the detailed investigation is on file, but unless further analysis turns up something new, we do not intend to publish this.

N. 43

TIME AND DATE: 24.00 (aprox.) Unknown, estimate late 1975.

LOCATION: Nr. Donaghadee Co. Down. WITNESS: Jo Anne Oliver.

INVESTIGATION LEVEL: A INVESTIGATION BY: Miles Johnston and John Hind.

INVESTIGATION REPORT:

It was considered worth investigating this case in some detail, though it is not of particularly high strangeness, because of the possible tie-in with a localised flap in the area (IUFORC SI Report No.1). As it turned out, the witness did not remember the reports of the flap in the press at the time, and did not remember the date of the sighting with sufficient accuracy to enable positive correlation.

The sighting took place about 50 metres from the witness's home which is situated in a small cluster of three houses in the country about five KM south of Donaghadee. According to Miss Oliver, her father was also witness at the sighting, but no longer recalls it.

The witness was baby-sitting at the house of a neighbour about 200 metres up the small country lane on which both houses are situated. When the neighbours returned home, she started to walk the short distance home. The night was calm, frosty and very clear. There was no moon. After walking 50-100 metres down the hill, she observed the object, stationary, at an elevation a little less than 15° and at a bearing of about 245° . The object is described as being sharply defined, oval in shape, milky or pearly white in colour and about twice the apparent size of the full moon across its major axis, the minor axis being about half this dimension. The major axis was parallel to the horizon. The object was not bright, and was nearly perfectly oval: "like a searchlight beam cut obliquely". In total, the observation lasted about 30 minutes, after which the witness retired. She did not see it disappear.

It was obvious that the sighting had made a considerable impression on Miss Oliver and she said that the memory of it was still very vivid. That the observation was of the moon or of a moon based illusion seems a possible explanation. It has not been possible to check position and phase data due to the vagueness of the date. Though it is difficult to conceive that a full or partial moon could be described as such a defined oval, the illusion theory is a remote possibility. The only other possibility seems to be noctilucent cloud. It is very unlikely that we should get such a cloud so clearly defined so long after sunset, though the direction is correct for such a phenomenon. While such clouds are usually red, it is possible, if we assume that the witness has mistaken either the season or the time, that this could be the explanation.

It may, or may not be valid to note that the area is rich in folk-lore connections. The witness's house is called 'Fairy Hill', due, she speculates, to the proximity of a 'Fairy knoll' (a natural stony outcrop which local folk-lore ascribes to the activities of the fairy people). The area is also rich in Bronze Age settlement sites as well as Norman defensive works, a fact of possible interest to 'leyographers'.

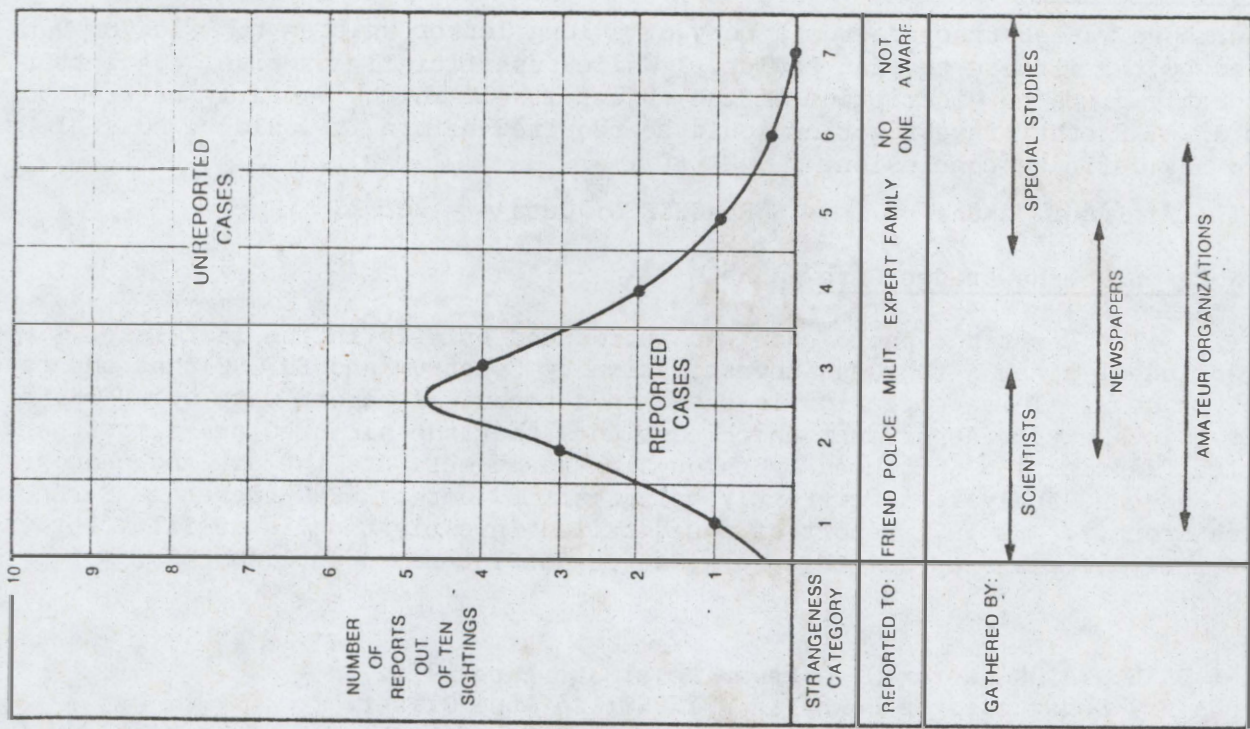
PROBABILITY: Mid.

STRANGENESS: Category 2.

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IF UNDELIVERED RETURN TO:
 19 Cairnshill Avenue,
 Belfast BT8 4NR,
 N. Ireland.
