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Anatomy of a UFO wave

by Jenny Randles

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I do not have a great deal of faith in so-called UFO cycles. Over the years UFO theorists have attempted to correlate sightings with the position of Mars, sunspot activity, earthquakes -- you name it. But nothing consistently works. If there is a periodicity which works, we can mobilize our limited resources and be ready next time.

It is as easy to see UFO waves in the statistical jungle as it is to spot fairies in the embers of a fire. At least so I thought, until I made an apparently successful prediction.

My book *The Pennine UFO Mystery* (Grafton Books, London) was published in July 1983. It is essentially an account of an abduction experience claimed by Yorkshire police officer Alan Godfrey in November 1980 and the (allegedly) associated mystery death of a local miner who had the curious last name of Adamski. In researching the background to this complex inter-related affair, however, I uncovered a surprising wealth of material associated with this moorland area of *Wuthering Heights* fame. In the end I devoted more than half my book to the events in the region before and after the Godfrey and Adamski incidents.

One of the things that leaped out at me from this material was a 21-month cycle in the reports. The starting point was November 1980 (when PC Alan Godfrey had his encounter). There were many other close encounters round this time, especially within a 10-day spell. Working backwards through the data to 1975 (when my files begin), I could easily show that peaks of activity centered on August 1975, May 1977 (Britain's biggest ever month for sightings) and February 1979. The 21-month date after November 1980, July-August 1982, had also been rich in reports.

All of these times showed an upsurge in UFO reports throughout Britain and the rise in the Pennines was simply an associated spin-off. But it is unmistakable. Not only were there more reports then, but the caliber was unusually high, many close encounters crammed into a small space of time. Yet I was still unsure of myself. I know that the only true test was to make a prediction in print and stand or fall by it. The July-August prediction was made in 1982, before it happened; the book had gone to press before then. But obviously I cannot prove that. April 1984 was nine months after the book hit the shops, though, and so it certainly a fair test.

Frankly, UFO reports in 1984 were at an all-time low. The British UFO Research Association (BUFORA) has just 23 cases on file for the entire year even two years later. So the chances of my cycle's being noticeable seemed slim. In fact I quite forgot about it, being totally wrapped up in the Rendlesham Forest saga for much of 1984. Then, when I sat down to work out the statistics for the year a few months ago, I realized what had happened. Somehow (I don't know how) my prediction had come true.

Any typical 10-day period in 1984 ought to contain 1/36th of the total reports for the year. Which, as you can see, would be less than one. But the period April 15 to 25 contains no fewer than five -- around a quarter of the entire year's total! As to my comment about close-encounter status of the cases, you may judge this from the summaries that follow. I can assure you that there are almost no other 1984 reports that come close to these in strangeness.

April 15, 1984 00.00 hrs. (all times are British Standard Time) Location: Llangernyw, North Wales

This village is the main habitation center (of a few hundred persons) in a rural and hilly area of the Snowdonia National Park, about 10 miles inland from the town of Llandrillo. It consists mostly of sheep farms. It is also close to a village

EDITORIAL

UFOs: still here, sort of

From time to time we get letters from readers who complain that we are not publishing material on recent sightings. The writers seem to feel that we have made a conscious editorial decision not to publish new case material.

Not so. All of us involved with *IUR* would be delighted to devote a significant portion of each issue to interesting, well-documented new sightings. The reason we haven't done so is simple. As I wrote in my first *IUR* editorial a year ago, "Since 1947 there has never been a period that has seen so little UFO activity." Those who doubt that are urged, as one easy method of verifying my allegation, to consult Lucius Farish's monthly *UFO Newsclipping Service*, wherein you will see that most newspaper articles these days are about UFO buffs, not UFO sightings.

The strange fact of the matter -- and it may be the most important development on the UFO scene since the early flaps of the late 1940s -- is that UFOs are a lot less with us than they have been in a long time. A respected historian of the UFO phenomenon will argue, in an essay to appear in an upcoming issue, that the age of the great UFO waves is past. That does not mean there is no longer any UFO activity, just that it's noticeably less frequent than anything we were used to prior to the 1980s.

Things, in short, are quiet. If we were paranoids, we would say (as they used to say in B movies) they're *too* quiet. Not being paranoids, we have concluded that, if UFO activity is not undergoing a temporary (though already unusually long) lull, then the UFO phenomenon is changing in some way. If there are UFOs, the intelligences operating them are doing something different from what they did between the 1940s and the late 1970s. If there are no UFOs, then whatever social forces caused people to believe they were there have changed, or at least are being manifested in other ways.



Jerome Clark

All that said, however, we are pleased to have an issue devoted almost entirely to case material, as a way of compensating for the relative scarcity of same in recent issues. And as we were putting this issue together, we received manuscripts (courtesy of Bob Boyd, head of CUFOS' investigative network) detailing incidents reported and documented in late 1985 and early 1986. These are scheduled for publication as soon as space permits.

This issue contains Jenny Randles' examination of a small British flap in April 1984, with, Randles suggests, implications for the future -- among other things a major European wave in 1987. (If it happens, remember you read it here first.) Bronislaw Rzepecki reviews the Polish UFO and ufological scene, showing that both UFOs and ufologists are much the same everywhere.

The most unusual case, however, is the one detailed by longtime California ufologist Ann Druffel, who (like me) is interested in the contactee phenomenon. (Contactees, as distinct from abductees, are persons who believe they are in continuing contact with benevolent "Space Brothers.") Druffel does not believe that contactees are *really* talking with extraterrestrials; as she points out, there is no especially compelling need to go beyond psychological explanations (albeit very *interesting* psychological explanations) in these cases.

Nonetheless, from time to time sober investigators have had unusual experiences in the company of contactees and Druffel, with all appropriate caution, reports one of these. She does not conclude, and neither do we, that the experience validates the empirical existence of long-winded New Age philosophers from the outer galaxies. But what the experience *does* mean is a question that for the moment can only be raised, not answered. -- Jerome Clark

called Llandrillo where a peculiar "UFO crash" occurred in January 1974, leading to an entire mountain's being cordoned off while search operations proceeded under military supervision.

Several local farm workers observed the events, just before midnight, because it was lambing season and they were out late in their fields. Investigator Margaret Fry tracked down quite a number and obtained statements and drawings. Many others would not talk. Of the 20 or so witnesses she found, almost all of those who were closest (including a police officer, nine venture scouts and a government worker who said he "feared for his job" if he gave an interview) have remained silent.

Those who have described the events speak of a pink-orange ball which drifted toward the ground and exploded in a shower of purple sparks. Out of the shower came a white disc which appeared to land, out of sight, behind a ridge. The similarity with the controversial Larry Warren ("Art Wallace") story connected with Rendlesham Forest is certainly interesting. There is no doubt that most of these farmers had no knowledge of UFOs at all.

Superficially, it sounds like some sort of flare related to activity (the area is used for low-flying jet exercises). Indeed, at 6:26 A.M. the same night (Margaret Fry -- who lives four miles from the site -- knows full well; it woke her up!) a large army helicopter landed almost outside the front door of the police station and continued to ferry back and forth all morning to the remote hillside location. A couple of trucks also arrived that Sunday morning and dispatched a dozen troops south, toward the landing site, carrying backpacks.

Anyone who asked was told that the search operation was to find "something" that had been lost. Those more persistent were told it was "just flares." One farmer who lived by the site and lent a hand chatted with one soldier and asked what was really going on. He received the above answers, before pointing out that nobody mounts an operation like that for just a few spent flares. Why all the fuss? "It's what we've been asked to say" was the best response he got.

April 18, 1984 21.30 hrs.
Location: Lakenheath, Suffolk

Ninety-three hours later the military figured once again in a strange encounter. This happened on a road which passes right through the outer perimeter of the USAF/RAF base at Lakenheath in East Anglia. Lakenheath is famous in UFO annals as the host to the classic August 1956 radar-visual encounter which the Condon team failed to crack.

Mrs. SB was driving with her husband from their home (many miles away) to an Easter weekend visit with relatives. Mrs. SB, who is not interested in UFOs, is an intelligent young woman, aged 23, with a science degree. The couple were baffled by the strange thing they observed above the dark country lane.

It straddled the road and was the size of a football field. It was rectangular in shape and a mass of lights in long lines. She said that although she tried to count them it was impossible. There were at least 60. Red and green were at the edges but most were white. It was like a scene out of the movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, she said.

The thing remained absolutely still, about 100 feet in the air, beside the road and adjacent (but not over) the base. At their closest approach there was not a trace of sound. A deer from the woodland beside the road seemed to be running away from where the object was.

When Mrs. SB contacted me (after picking up one of my books in an attempt to figure it out) we looked at possibilities. She is sure it could not have been a helicopter, because of its silence. Her husband, concentrating on driving and wanting to get to their destination after a long day, was less interested. They did not see it go. There was some talk of a giant floodlight, but when they returned in the light a few days later there was nothing but trees in the area, and no sign of anything that had recently been worked on. Lakenheath, of course, had no comment.

April 19, 1984 16.00 hrs.
Location: Eastern Airport, East Anglia

"Eastern Airport" is a pseudonym I am forced to use for the place in question, for reasons to be explained in a moment. It is a major civilian airport with full radar facilities. Its traffic load

is relatively light. The events (only hours after those referred to above) are geographically very close. Unfortunately, I cannot be more specific.

The witnesses are the three air traffic controllers who were on duty in the tower that day. They include A (senior controller who has been at the field since 1970), B (deputy controller, working the traffic at the time, a man with eight years' service at the airport), and Mrs. R (an assistant ATC with 12 years' service experience). The incident was reported by A to Peter Johnson, a veteran East Anglia-based BUFORA investigator who has often spoken with the control staff in the line of his work. Despite its being Easter weekend Johnson heard of the case almost immediately and was able to tape-record a detailed interview with A. The other witnesses preferred not to get involved but acknowledged the truth of the story.

It was a bright sunny day with no clouds below 5000 feet, a 15 kmph wind from the southwest and a visibility of 10 km. No major traffic was inbound or outbound, only a single light plane. In view of this and the good weather, the radar was temporarily switched off as it turned out, a most unfortunate circumstance.

A was sitting in on the proceedings, simply watching his two controllers at work. He heard the plane report turning onto "base leg," which meant it was lining up with the runway and just a few miles out. Idly looking across the patchy blue sky, he saw a brilliant white glow which he assumed was the aircraft reflecting the sun. It seemed to be lining up with the runway not in use. As he was puzzling this out, the aircraft radioed again to confirm he was lined up on the other runway, the one that was in use.

A informed his deputy controller that he had another plane coming in on the second runway. Both B and Mrs. R assured him, however, that this was not the case and got on with their work. A, wondering if he was watching a military plane from a nearby base, continued to look closely. But nothing was visible behind the glow.

Several seconds had passed since he first alerted B and Mrs. R and the object had now made a perfect approach to the cross runway. A grabbed his binoculars and quickly scanned the craft, which seemed to be landing. It was an

absolutely spherical object, which he describes as like "masses of silvery paper crinkled up." The amount of light reflected (or emitted) seemed out of proportion with the muted sun of the day. Now certain that it was displaying controlled flight, despite its small size (several feet in diameter only) and weird shape, A immediately called the attention of his colleagues. They had little time to worry about the possible conflict situation. The two runways intersected!

The UFO seemed to make a brief touchdown before "bouncing" off at a steep angle (at least 80 degrees) and rocketing skywards at considerable speed and in a maneuver thought impossible for an aircraft by all three observers. In less than a minute it had climbed to at least 3000 feet and was virtually out of sight.

Meanwhile the shaken controllers talked down the light plane, whose pilot made no reference to seeing the object. They thought it prudent not to enlighten the pilot while he was still off the ground!

As Mrs. R and B calmed each other down (the stress had particularly gotten to B) A made a routine call to the regional military command center to see if it had anything airborne. It confirmed not, adding that the normal radar surveillance by the base that covered the region was shut down 30 minutes before the sighting, because all traffic had landed and none was scheduled over the Easter weekend. A decided not to say anything about the reason for his inquiry.

After much discussion B and Mrs. R said they did not want to make a report. A scanned the Civil Aviation Log Book about the report of UFOs. There is a standard procedure to report to the Ministry of Defense (via West Drayton control near London). But they thought they spotted a loophole. As A later explained, "The manual said we were to report any UFOs that were reported to us. It did not say we should tell them about ones we saw ourselves!" Of course, they all realize this is a fairly liberal interpretation of the rules and technically they should have filed some kind of report. For this reason details of the names and the location cannot be published although BUFORA has them on file.

April 22, 1984 22.10 hrs.
Location: Saltfleet, Lincolnshire

As with the two previous sightings, this one occurred on the east coast of England. It has been subject to an intensive, ongoing investigation by the West Yorkshire UFO Group. I can present only a brief summary here.

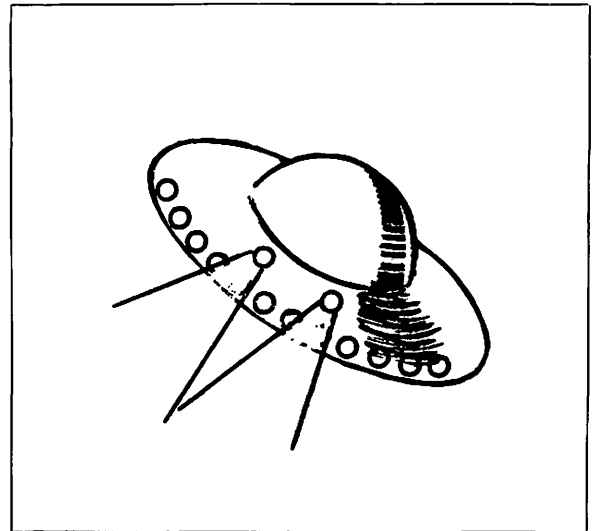
At a caravan site on this fairly remote part of the coast, 33-year-old Mrs. M (name on file) was watching television with her mother. Her two young boys were asleep in an adjacent trailer, but she heard them talking so she got up to settle them. On the way back to her film she saw a circle of white lights, a formation of smaller red lights above and a brilliant white light on top -- apparently on some dome-shaped object not far away.

She called out her mother and, by 22.17, both boys (aged 13 and 7). There was a definite oval shape with white, red green and blue lights in a circle, hovering about 500 feet up and near to the site. Then more lights came on and the entire thing began to revolve.

Lights once steady were now flashing, although this could have been an effect of the rotation. As the speed increased the colors blended into one another. The object now moved away due south.

Over the course of the next hour the object circled the caravan site in wide loops that took it several miles out to sea, before returning back right over their heads. As it flew toward the witnesses, it would switch on (and later switch off) a searchlight beam, which lit up the water, then the land below. As soon as it came on, several dogs in the area (previously undisturbed) began to bark madly. Also during the sighting Mrs. M went indoors to collect a coat because it was growing chilly. Her two dogs, trembling in fear, sat on the seat staring out through the closed curtains toward the object.

Back outside Mrs. M was looking at the object through binoculars when it came at them from the sea. It switched on the spotlight at this moment and she was blinded sufficiently to drop the field glasses. By the time she had recovered her sight, the object was almost on top of them. "Come on, you bastard, come closer and let us have a good



The Saltfleet UFO

look!" she was yelling up at it. It dropped to about 100 feet and hovered in absolute silence right over the heads of the four witnesses.

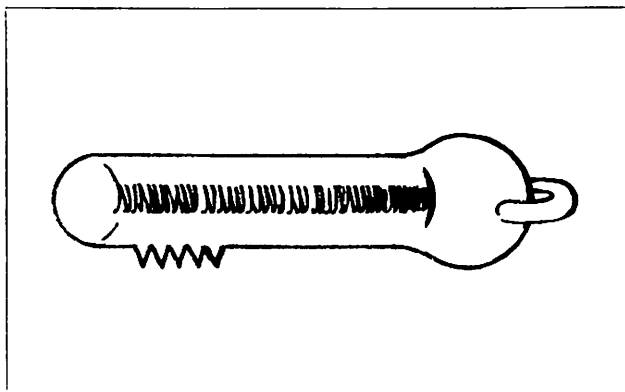
They could now see that the searchlight came from two "headlight" beams projecting forward. The craft had now tilted down slightly and the beam was illuminating the witnesses. After a few seconds it dimmed, giving them a spectacular view of the classic UFO shape, with a "smokey glass" dome on top. The rotating lights glowed with a fluorescent hazy appearance and as the object hovered for two minutes at a 45-degree tilt, the utter silence was in remarkable contrast to the howling of what seemed like every dog for miles about.

The UFO switched off all but four of its lights and climbed steeply in a vertical manner before heading out to sea to circle for a few more minutes. Meanwhile a couple who owned a beach bungalow arrived home with their baby. The infant was staring up at the UFO as if transfixed by it!

As you can see this is a potentially classic case and it is possible that much more will emerge as time goes by.

April 25, 1984 18.00 hrs.
Location: Blairgowrie, Scotland

A 59-year-old woman was in her garden doing a tapestry of the Madonna and child with her collie dog Shep by her side. The day had been warm but the evening air was cooling as the sun set. Her son was around the front of the house gardening. Suddenly Shep leaped up and fled indoors. A ball of light appeared in the air and



Key-shaped object over Blairgowrie

seemed to "enter" her body. She was blinded for a few seconds but felt calm and peaceful. A "white cloud" then rose up from her head and hovered over some bushes, where its light illuminated them. It "blinked" twice and climbed into the sky pointing out a large silvery object shaped like a house key. The cloud moved along the length of the key flashing and lighting up bits in turn.

After a few minutes the woman yelled to her son to come and look. He arrived just as the UFO swayed from side to side and vanished in a sudden pink flash. (Much like the pink flash at Llangernyw that began the wave 10 days before.) The son confirms this and says his mother was gazing at the sky "transfixed" when he approached. But he saw only the pink flash.

Summoned immediately, the police inspected the garden, took reports and filed these with the RAF base at Leuchars, on the east coast north of Edinburgh (not far from Blairgowrie). The police reported back to the family next day that neither they nor the RAF base had found any other witnesses and so they could do nothing further.

About a month later, according to both witnesses, an unmarked helicopter circled the garden five times at extremely low altitude. As it passed the trees where the silver-key UFO had been, it "tilted." Both side doors were open, and although no occupants were seen a "red glow" came from within. The son is convinced this glow was infrared and the result of RAF investigations of the landing site. He reported it to the local paper, but when reporters asked the police, they refused to comment. The paper did not pursue the story further, but two days later the helicopter flew over again, once and very briefly.

Steuart Campbell, who investigated the case for BUFORA, is no fan of "contact stories." In concluding, he asked simply "Hallucination?" A

fair point--were it not for the preceding cases in this extraordinary 10 days.

Conclusion

It should be evident that cases like these five do not happen every day. I am aware of no other reports, not even of lights in the sky, from the same time period. None of these made the newspapers at the time. Consequently they are certainly independent of one another.

One is tempted to wonder if the sightings were caused by massive military exercises. With no Freedom of Information Act in Britain, there is little chance of our ever proving that. (All my letters to the MOD on these and other cases, post Rendlesham Forest, have not even produced the courtesy of a reply, indicating that I am "persona non grata" in Whitehall.)

It is interesting that on at least two of the other five cycle dates there *were* military exercises. In the February 1979 events we have a statement, in response to parliamentary pressure, because one UFO nearly wrecked a caravan site that time. This statement admits that a "special" USAF exercise was in force during this period. But since some of the cases those 10 days include daylight landings of a nature very similar to the "Eastern airport" case, I am fairly confident that we *cannot* account for all these things as military activity.

Exercises surely do not follow 21-month cycles, in any case--unless, of course, the "special exercises" are responses to something else that does!

What next? I have noticed that not all of the cycle dates produce the same big number of reports. There tends to be a rise, but only every other cycle seems to be a real wave. January 1986 was the next prediction date (although as the cycle seems to waver between 21 and 22 months a one-month leeway is always needed). On December 28, 1985, there was a spectacular multiple encounter in the Pennines and Margaret Fry in Wales reported more sightings in January 1986 than for the whole of 1985. It is too early to tell yet, of course, but if the alternating pattern holds I would not expect anything like April 1984 to repeat this time.

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After that, however, we move to September and October 1987. The alleged "10 year cycle" has produced major British waves in 1957, 1967 and 1977. So ufologists in Europe have long predicted a 1987 wave. That my cycle coincides and offers a more precise dating is most interesting.

The shadow

A great modern poet has written of the gap between our
conception and the reality falls

We moderns understand that what is
reported regularly as observed fact is
fulfillment fantasies or "miracles" that
could not have been. Most of us, like
scientists, relegate such affairs to the realm of
"mythology." The sense of reality that we
differs essentially from that of the ancients.
We no longer accept revelation as a
interpretation of reality, our sense of