

British UFO Research Association

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Thank You Richard

Richard Beet, our editor for the last seven issues has regretfully been unable to continue, due largely to the extreme pressure on time that the position entails. Whilst in office he worked extremely hard to ensure that Bufora's image should be well-projected, both in the eyes of the media and of the scientific community, and it will by no means be an easy task to maintain the highly professional standards and excellence of presentation he has achieved and maintained. A sincere vote of thanks, therefore, to Richard, for his achievements during his term as editor. It is good to know he remains on Bufora's Council where his experienced advice will still be available.

BUFORA JOURNAL

Volume 5 Number 1

May/June 1976

Editorial Address : 95 Taunton Road, London SE12 8PA

Don't shoot the editor!

Hello again! Its good to be back. Strange, though, how things work out. When first I became *Journal* editor in 1973 I was faced with a situation wherein no copy whatsoever was to hand: now, on returning after a break of eighteen months, not only have I ample copy available, but the Journal has become smaller, now standardised to an A5 format—with fewer pages! Naturally, there is a very good reason. Our Research Department is about to launch the new *Investigators Handbook*—possibly the most comprehensive work of its kind yet produced—and they also have several booklets 'on the stocks'. Unfortunately this faces us with a 'chicken and egg' situation. The *Handbook* and booklets, once produced, should rapidly justify our spending on their publication by showing a profit on sales. However, without cutting down in other directions, we will not have the spare cash—I emphasise *spare* cash, since Bufora's financial affairs in the capable hands of Stephen Smith, are on a very sound footing—to publish them at all! So, to enable them to see the light of day, the Bufora Council has decided on a reduction in *Journal* content—for the time being at any rate: the position will be kept under close review and as soon as possible (before, I trust, someone shoots the editor) we will return to normal.

Several articles in this issue are lengthier than I would wish under the circumstances, but are included since they have already been held over for one or two issues, and I would like to apologise to those contributors whose items necessarily have to be held over again or 'put into cold storage' for a while. My present task will be a lot easier, too, if members sending in further articles and letters would be as brief as possible consonant with the subject matter. It is very difficult indeed within the present limited framework to decide what should be published and what should be omitted, but the last thing I want to do is to stop anyone writing in! So—in short—let's hear from you!

Norman Oliver.

On Sunday, 29 Feb 1976, Bufora Research & Investigations Committee met to consider a number of proposals for the future development of UFO reporting and research. One of the requirements studied was a system of classifying reports on a simple initial basis, as a guide for the Investigations Dept. in deciding what resources were needed. A simple system should be used by the NIC as early as possible. The scheme I proposed was

agreed by the Committee with certain modifications. In order that Bufora members can see the basis for the decision, the original contribution considered by the Committee is presented here. I have, however, made the alterations decided upon by the Committee and have consequently brought the system up to date.

Charles F Lockwood,
Research Projects Officer.

Systems of Classifying UFO Reports

There are two main methods of research into the UFO phenomenon. Regular skywatches, with repeated, or even continuous instrumented monitoring and statistical analysis of various aspects of the sighting reports. The former will be developed as Bufora carries out further research as part of Phase 2 of the Research Projects Programme. The latter will go ahead as new projects are produced, but will depend on the study of genuine, well documented sightings. In order to avoid wasting time and effort on less reliable sightings, it is necessary to separate them from more reliable reports. It is difficult to establish the validity of data collected in an individual case unless there is corroborative evidence. Nevertheless, we can group the reports according to one of several classifications. We can classify according to characteristics of the objects reported or according to characteristics of the witness or the process of observation. Most of the systems of classification have been based on the shape or behaviour of the UFOs themselves. For example, Jacques Vallee uses the following system.¹

Type I—They can be seen (or imagined or perceived) as objects situated on the

ground or close to the ground (at tree height).

Type II—They can display the behaviour observed at Vernon or, more generally, appear as huge cylindrical forms surrounded by cloud-like formations, often vertical. The latter behaviour defines a sub-class IIa, when descriptions of actual generation of secondary objects are called IIb.

Type III—They can be described as aerial forms hovering in the atmosphere or following a path interrupted by a stationary point; a precise point will be defined on the ground from this discontinuity.

Type IV—They can be seen as objects crossing the sky without such interruption or discontinuity.

Type V—They can be distant objects seen as lights.

Vallee's approach depends mainly on proximity and shape or behaviour of the UFO and makes no allowance for the mode of observation or witness credibility.

William K Hartman² has a more trivial classification to suggest. He offers: UFO—unidentified flying object: IFO

—identified flying object: EFO—extraordinary flying object: AFO—alien flying object. This is a serious attempt to define the problem by a Condon Report scientist.

Dr Hynek's classification does not involve a rigid grouping, but contains some overlap of types. He classifies:

- A 1—*Nocturnal lights. Any objects associated with these not clearly visible.*
- 2—*Daylight discs. Not always disc-shaped, but clearly discernible as not being an aircraft or other identifiable object.*
- 3—*Radar-visual. Hynek omits radar-only reports because of technical anomalies.*
- B 4—*Close Encounters of the First Kind. I. No interaction with witness or environment.*
- 5—*Close Encounters of the Second Kind. II. Physical effects on animals, vegetation and other aspects of the environment of the witness. Traces, vehicle interference.*
- 6—*Close Encounters of the Third Kind. III. Occupants or entities reported. Contactee cases are to be screened out by credibility tests if they make extraordinary claims for their personal powers.*

This classification³ resembles Vallee's in depending on proximity and shape. For his own use, Hynek further modifies the reports by an evaluation system, based on two characteristics, which he calls the Strangeness and Probability Rating. It seems to me that such an evaluation system is very useful, but it cannot be employed until a thorough investigation has been completed. I still feel we need a classification system

which is simple, quick and not likely to involve reclassifying many reports after investigation.

Bufora National Investigation Coordinators have felt the need to produce a classification or evaluation system for objective study purposes. I know of two used by Tim O'Brien and Ken Phillips in the past four years, both quoted in *Bufora Journal*.⁴

My approach has been to consider those factors in an initial report which would lead me to examine the sighting in more detail because the probability of error is less, allowing for such factors in other non-UFO situations. I suggest:

Bufora UFO Report Classification

- | <i>Category</i> | <i>Number of qualified or trained observers</i> |
|-----------------|---|
| A | <i>1 or more official observers, pilot, professional astronomer, who was using his expertise when making the observation.</i> |
| B | <i>1 or more experienced observers, not necessarily professional, but of good standing, police, trained UFO students.</i> |
| C | <i>No experienced observers. Most reporters of UFOs are in this category.</i> |

Class Class of observation

- 1 Permanent record made—such as physical or physiological traces left, photograph taken, measurements made with instruments and recorded.*
- 2 Temporary physical or physiological effects reported. Occupants or entities. Vehicle interference. EM effects. Time inconsistency.*

continued overleaf

- 3 Object seen nearby, with features not likely to be observed in a known man-made or natural phenomenon. No effects noted, locally.
- 4 Distant object, or point of light. Shape not clearly distinguishable.

Group Total number of witnesses

- a 2 or more independent witnesses at different locations.
- b 2 or more witnesses at one location.
- c 1 witness only.

Classifying a few well known reports using this system, we find:—Lakenheath—A1a, Wildman Car Case—C2c, ATV Film Case—A1a, Villas Boas Kidnapping—C1c.

A suitable weighting system is:—

Category:	Class:	Group:
A—2 points	1—6 points	a—2 points
B—1 „	2—5 „	b—1 point
C—0 „	3—3 „	c—0 points
	4—1 point	

On this basis a report rated at between 5 and 10 points is likely to merit a higher priority investigation than one rated at 4 points or less.

A further modification, not agreed to by the Committee, could utilise a prefixed letter for subsequently identified objects.

We must make it clear that the initial data available on a sighting may not permit the NIC or any investigator or

Bufora member to be sure of all the characteristics to enable a full classification immediately. However, if an RIC telephones the NIC or asks for help because he has to deal with a Class 1 sighting report, then we shall know that speed is important. This does not mean we shall neglect the C4c reports. Most reports made to local groups, however, are of this type, and a great deal of time, energy and financial resources could be wasted in these investigations. We hope that by using this new classification system, we shall be able to streamline our procedures.

References: 1—*J and J Vallee, Challenge to Science, The UFO Enigma, Chap. 3 and Append IV.* 2—*W K Hartman, UFOs—A Scientific Debate, ed Sagan and Page, p12.* 3—*J Allen Hynek, The UFO Experience, p28.* 4—*C A E O'Brien, Bufora Journal Vol 3, No 6, 1972. K Phillips, Bufora Journal Vol 4, No 2, 1974.*

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MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

If you know anyone interested in UFOs but not already a Bufora member, we would welcome them to the Association on your introduction. Just pass them the application form enclosed with this issue.

(All applications subject to ratification by Council).

THE BRITISH UFO RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

Bufora Limited (by guarantee). Founded 1964. Registered Office: Old Brook Cottage, White Cross, Haughton, Stafford. Registered in London: No. 1234924. Incorporating the London UFO Research Organisation, founded 1959, and the British UFO Association, founded 1962.

Aims: To encourage and promote unbiased scientific investigation and research into UFO phenomena. To collect and disseminate evidence and data relating to UFOs. To co-ordinate UFO research on a nationwide scale and to co-operate with people and organisations engaged on similar research in all parts of the World.

Membership: The annual subscription is £4.00, \$10 in the USA and Canada. Membership is open to all who support the aims of the Association and whose application is approved by the Executive Council. Application/information forms can be obtained from any officer.

MEMO TO ALL AREA INVESTIGATORS

Ken Phillips, NIC

Re: Lack of co-operation of AIs with RICs.

It has been mentioned to the NIC on a number of occasions by various RICs that certain AIs are somewhat reluctant to carry out case investigations when notified; this is an unfortunate state of affairs and mars the team effort of the active AIs. To be fair, it is realised that certain AIs do experience times when it is not convenient to carry out an investigation, e.g. problems over finance, health, other commitments, etc. Therefore I do urge all AIs to keep in regular contact with their RIC and inform him in the event of their *not* being able to follow up a report. I.E.—(i) Notify the RIC straight away (a brief phone call is preferred). (ii) Notify the RIC *and* NIC if your inability to investigate is of an indefinite nature.

The ATV Film Case

Introduction

Although the sighting and film made by the ATV camera crew on 26 October 1971 was the best documented, it was by no means the only activity to be reported in the Banbury area around that time. Indeed, the whole South Midlands was the scene of a fairly substantial flap, which built up slowly during September and seemed to reach its peak about the date of the ATV case. This could well be significant evidence for its inherent strangeness.

One of the earliest interesting reports was made on 28 September, when three schoolboys who were returning home to the Ruscote housing estate in Banbury at 16.50, claimed to have seen a large silver cigar-shaped object moving slowly eastwards. It was accompanied by four or five smaller silver objects of indeterminate shape. On 17 October, a former RAF pilot living close to Banbury made a careful observation of a yellow-white object at 23.45. At first it was stationary: then it began to move, but stopped every now and again and made abrupt directional changes: it pulsed. Two days later at Daventry a young man photographed a reddish disc which flipped over and over continually as it passed overhead. The time was 02.30.

There was more photographic evidence collected on 26 and 27 October, when the number of observations was very large indeed—many of them corroborating one another. The vast majority were around noon on 26 October, almost certainly of the object filmed by the ATV crew. At 07.30 to 08.00 the next morning there were several reports of an orange/red glowing object and a witness at Banbury took a colour slide of an object leaving a peculiar vapour trail. The greatest concentration of sightings on this day, however, was around 18.00, when two flaming orange cigar-shaped objects were seen from various points to the north of Banbury. A colour print—of poor quality—was taken by a man and his wife at Charlton. Very similar objects were described at the same time in the area north-west of Oxford. Reports continued to filter in for the next few days, but with this burst of activity the flap seemed to die.

Follow-up Investigation

Bufora is continuing to investigate this case, following procedures recommended at the end of the original report published in May 1975, namely:

1. The film is being analysed in greater depth: a copy has been sent to Dr Hynek and the Center for UFO Studies and ATV are also assisting in this area.

2. Mark Rodriquez, of the Center for UFO Studies, is assisting with calculation work from bearings and elevations recorded from the statements of all the witnesses.
3. Investigators Richard Colborne and Julien Hennessey, who were involved in the original work, are re-interviewing all prominent witnesses in the hope of gaining further data. They are working with John Roylance, Bufora's RIC and John Sear, Contact UK's area investigator.
4. Witnesses who reported sightings during this period—for example to

ATV after the showing of the film—were numerous: some have never been interviewed and preliminary forms have been distributed as a first step towards gaining more data from them.

Bufora's Research Department would be most interested to receive suggestions for any other work which might prove fruitful in the development of this intriguing case. Please write to Bufora Research Co-ordinator, Jenny Randles, 23 Sunningdale Drive, Irlam, Greater Manchester, M30 6NJ.

Jenny Randles

Overseas Sightings

Brownstown UFO

On 5 January 1976, David Mahon, 14, of Brownstown, Illinois, USA, claimed to have taken five pictures of a black saucer-shaped object with a glowing haze round the edge: one of these is reproduced on p8. He alleged it hovered low some 1500 feet away from him, appearing to be about 100 feet in diameter with a dome on top and circular markings underneath. It was in view for about three quarters of a minute, making a sound like an electric motor. The sighting, photos and a further claim by David of being 'drawn up' into the object for a few seconds are under investigation.

Belgian Beams

On 4 July 1972 at Ellezelles in Belgium, a young farmer was in a field adjoining his farm when his attention was captured by short projections of bluish light coming from a luminous 'cloud' in the sky: the time was 22.45. These beams in the form of an arc descended to the ground and touched it at three points round the witness in the form

of a triangle, then went back up into the 'cloud'. A curious thing was that they widened up to roughly 3 feet above the field to narrow down to a comparatively small point before touching the soil, performing the reverse manoeuvre when returning upwards. These extraordinary 'flashers' recurred every 30 seconds and were confirmed by a neighbour who was not many yards away. See p8.

With acknowledgements to SOBEPS—Societe Belge D'etude Des Phenomenes Spatiaux.

Personal Column

Books wanted: Out of print books and small libraries purchased including FSR back numbers. Send offers to Lionel Beer, 15 Freshwater Court, Crawford St., London W1.

Caravan: Warminster Skywatch Caravan will be available from Easter until the end of September, details from Mrs M Carey, 61 Corton, Nr Warminster, Wilts, or Mr A West, 16 Southway, Burgess Hill, Sussex. (SAE essential, thanks).

Cassette tape-recordings (some including personal interviews) of British contact and other interesting reports now available. Send for list to: Norman Oliver, 95 Taunton Road, London SE12 8PA.

Conference 1976

Following the success of last year's regional conference at Hanley, another such event will be held in the autumn of 1976, provisionally during October. The venue chosen on this occasion is in the centre of Birmingham, affording excellent facilities and access for all. The conference is planned to run from Saturday morning through to Sunday evening, with more accent on the very popular discussion groups of 1975, but with several well known speakers also invited. It is hoped, however, that as many people as possible will meet on the Friday evening to allow for an informal social gathering to put the conference in the right atmosphere. Content will be aimed specifically at the ufologist and consequently no endeavour will be made to teach basics to the general public. It is hoped to improve upon the tremendous respect created for scientific methodology at Hanley and that this conference will prove to be another milestone in the development of ufology in this country.

Conference proceedings are to be published, and all papers should be submitted *as soon as possible* to the *Research Projects Officer, Charles Lockwood, Newchapel Observatory, Newchapel, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs.* These will then be considered for presentation during the conference, though anyone unable to present a paper may still submit one for possible publication in the proceedings. Registration cost of the conference is envisaged to be in the region of £4. For the moment, in order to plan facilities, it would be appreciated if all those who MAY eventually wish to attend indicate this NOW to the *Research Co-ordinator, Miss Jenny Randles, 23 Sunningdale Drive, Irlam, Gtr Manchester M30*

6N7. Full details will be circulated as soon as they are available.

Research Appeals

In order to initiate two important new schemes as soon as possible, the Research Department would like to appeal for contributions.

We need approx £100 to sponsor RESEARCH GRANTS directly.

When this system is operational anyone who feels they have a research idea worthy of development, may approach Bufora for financial assistance. This will be on the understanding that full results are made available for publication by Bufora. This policy is in line with Bufora's aim to act as a research co-ordination centre for British Ufology.

We also require approx £30 to cover prizes for a RESEARCH ARTICLE COMPETITION. This will be organised in several categories with prizes for the most positive and practical contributions within each. Winners will be published in a special issue.

All contributions will be gratefully received by the Research Department.

BRYAN JEFFERY

It has become necessary to point out that Bryan Jeffery, currently a student at Cambridge University, is not an officer of Bufora, and does not hold any official position in the Association. Views expressed by Bryan Jeffery are his own and he is not empowered to speak on behalf of Bufora.

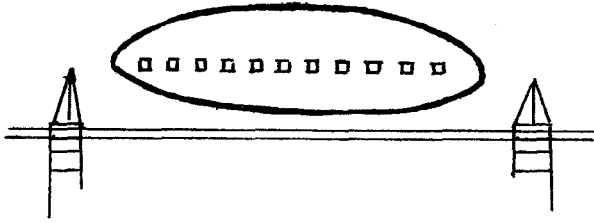


FIG. A

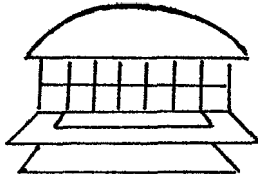


FIG. D

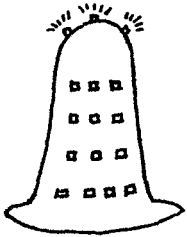


FIG. B

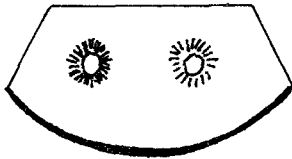


FIG. C

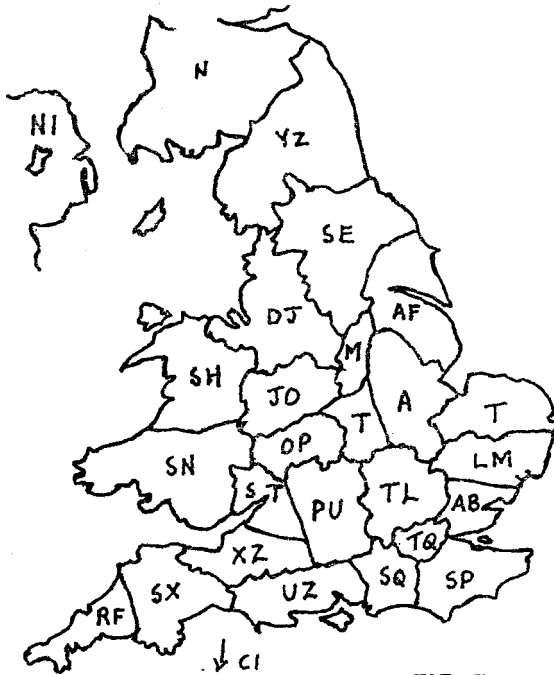
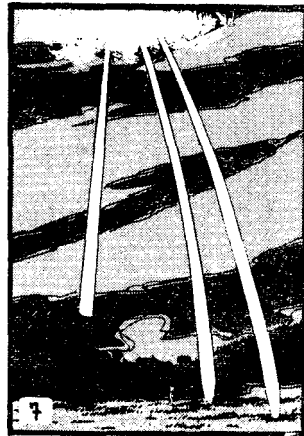


FIG. E



FIGS A B C D

See SIGHTING SUMMARIES

FIG E

See SYNOPSIS OF INVESTIGATIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS : UPPER—BROWNSTOWN UFO. LOWER—BELGIAN BEAMS

Sighting summaries

Uncoded January 1968

Diss, Norfolk (Fig A)

This is a close encounter case, reported to the police at the time, which seemingly also interested the Ministry of Defence who made enquiries of the witnesses almost immediately. Mr and Mrs Barren were driving along the A1066 at Garboldisham, near Diss. Suddenly an unexpected gust of wind blew their car onto a grass verge. To the side of them, low in the north-west, was a large cigar-shaped object with a row of portholes. It was the apparent size of a bus and was hovering over electric pylon lines. It seemed to try to get closer to the car but could not do so because of the cables. The object then followed the car alongside the road for about 20 minutes before suddenly speeding away 'like a shooting star'. It was a nondescript orange colour — 'like looking inside a volcano' — and seemed to illuminate the car with beams of light.

Inv. Barry King

Uncoded June/July 1969. 21.15

Paul, near Hull

Mr and Mrs Binnington were driving along the road to Paul when they saw a spinning, glowing bright disc shape. Spinning all the time it went in and out of clouds then disappeared into them. The witnesses had stopped their car and sat staring at the spectacle. The object re-emerged, a little to the south-east of its initial position and moved back to where it had first been seen. Here it hovered for several seconds then split into two parts which moved off into cloud in opposite directions. It was in view for 5-10 minutes and the witnesses were surprised it was not reported by everyone in Hull!

Inv. Derick Shelton

75-206 27 August 1975. 22.30

Wokingham, Berks (Fig B)

Witness was out driving with her husband and when she first saw the object she thought it was a helicopter, but was amazed when she realised it was shaped like a grey metallic bell covered with indentations, and that it was flashing green and white lights on top. It seemed to be hovering over houses, but when her husband turned to look it just vanished.

Inv. John Roylance

76-014 23 January 1976. 18.05

Bolton, Lancs (Fig C)

Miss Shelley Barnes, a 17 year old receptionist, was walking home when she saw a red light hovering over a reservoir to the south-west. It suddenly streaked towards her at incredible speed, stopping over rooftops only yards away. It was now clearly visible as a flat-topped diagonal object with a rounded underside. In the centre were red and deep amber lights. The object tilted away at an angle and began to spin very fast. Up to this point she had heard no sound, but now Shelley felt a strange 'grinding' sensation in her teeth. Very frightened, she ran home and called the police, convincing them of her sincerity. When Granada TV carried a report on this and other local sightings, she refused to appear because 'they were not treating her seriously enough'.

Inv. Digap

76-021 30 January 1976. 19.55

Shadsworth, Blackburn, Lancs

(Fig D)

One of three young women aged between 18 and 23 called the attention of the other two to a strange oval object in the sky. This resolved itself into two rounded portions with a rectangular area in the middle. This area seemed to consist of two rows of windows which revolved and threw out lights coloured red, orange, green, blue and silver. The object moved very slowly, at times seeming just to 'hang' in the sky. It flew around in a circle and then moved off to the south. The girls followed it for several minutes, shouting at each other in excited fashion. The investigators found some discrepancy in a later interview and feel that the state of mind of the witnesses at the time could be conducive to misinterpretation.

Inv. Digap & Rigap

INVESTIGATORS!

If you feel the case you are investigating has meteoric/atmospheric characteristics, please check your data with the following person: Dr S Hindley (BAA). Tel: 0904-64471. Dr Hindley keeps a record of all meteoric fireballs reported in the UK. *Ken Phillips, NIC.*

Due to lack of space, readers' letters have been omitted from this issue. Please keep writing, though, Uforum, or a similar feature will re-appear in the next Journal.

Synopsis of the State of Investigations

Ken Phillips

Since I took office there have been a number of small changes within the structure of Bufora's investigations network and also one major addition to its sphere of operations. First the major factor.

Co-operation with other associations and groups in the investigations field

This has been one of Bufora's major achievements over the last year or so, and is due mainly to the efforts of Alan Fossey, Tony Pace and Charles Lockwood. Contact UK has agreed to investigate reports on behalf of Bufora in the event of our not being able to get to a site due to lack of manpower: Bufora, of course, will reciprocate. Nufon is doing an excellent job in managing the area DJ: so too is Muro in looking after affairs in M. BFSB under the guidance of Graham Knewstub are willing to co-operate with Bufora in area ST and Ufosis is actively helping Ian Sanderson in OP. Watsup are collaborating with Richard Nash of area UZ and Nnufos with Peter Johnson of area T. All this sounds rather idealistic, but I'm happy to say that, in the main, it's working and it's to be hoped that all the societies involved will begin to get paydirt!

Provisional map of Bufora regions

This map, compiled by my predecessor, Richard Colborne, has undergone few changes since he left office: in fact, the map is looking just as provisional as it was when it was first conceived—3 Nov 1972*. Many coordinators still have a greater area than is humanly possible to manage: Randall Jones-Pugh's SN area stretches from the Pembroke peninsula to the borders of Shropshire! As for Stuart Campbell in Scotland—I just don't

know how he copes with such a wide coverage!

I am anticipating the emergence of further groups and co-ordinators by the end of this year, and with assistance I hope to be able to break down these larger areas into smaller, more manageable units. Therefore, if there are any members or groups who feel they could take on the responsibility of co-ordinating investigations in their area, I would like to hear from them, particularly if they reside in the following areas:—

England:

N Devon, Dorset, W Sussex, E Sussex, Bucks, Wilts, Gloucs, S Wales, Mid Wales, Hereford, Shropshire, Staffs, Northants, Cambs, N Lincs, N Yorks, Durham, Northumberland, Cumbria.

Scotland:

Lowlands, Highlands, Islands, Ross & Cromarty, Eastern Seaboard. The following areas are vacant: YZ, JO and the Isle of Man.

Barry King has recently retired as co-ordinator for area AB in order to become President of SUFON, the Southern UFO Network. I wish him every success.

Universal UFO sighting account form R1

This new and vastly improved questionnaire is the product of the research and projects team and lends itself well to the policy of group and inter-association co-operation. There are spaces provided for group/investigator references as well as for the Bufora numbering system. These forms can be purchased by any interested party

continued on opposite page

Controversy—1

Role of the disabled

I would like to bring to the attention of all Bufora members the role the disabled researcher has in UFO research. Like myself, many are confined to wheelchairs and so find it very difficult to get from the scene of one UFO sighting to another, because wherever we go, the wheelchair comes too! Also, when anyone wheelchair bound arrives at their destination, someone has to be there—if they have driven on their own—to get the wheelchair out of the car.

I have been very interested in UFO research for some years now, doing most of my research work from home, and I get good results by correspondence. But there seems to be an 'I don't wish to know' attitude towards the disabled researcher and they are pushed aside, even though he or she can play a full role in UFO research and Bufora activities. In no magazine or paper I have read has there ever been a mention of what the disabled person can do towards helping the UFO society of which they are a member. So far as research is concerned, I know of only one man confined to a wheelchair who has written any books on the subject of UFOs. It is about time UFO research associations recognised what disabled researchers can do, and I would like to see some kind of information brought out to help them start off on the right foot—in a manner of speaking!

There is also the disabled researcher who has no society or club near him, so he starts off on his own—like me, which sometimes can be a little hard until you get your lines of communication open to research sources: then you can start building your own research programme and help others. I would

like to see and hear more about help being given to the disabled researcher: because you are in a wheelchair it doesn't mean you're unable to join in—so come on all you people on two legs, how about some help? I noticed at a Nufon meeting that I was the only person there physically disabled: I don't believe myself to be the only disabled member of Bufora and Nufon, so I think that Bufora are keeping their disabled members in the background.

Bryan Hartley

Editor's Note—Mr Hartley clearly will have everyone's sympathy in coping with the difficulties he faces. It is a fact though, that Bufora (and I imagine Nufon), will be completely unaware that any member is disabled unless they tell us so—there is certainly no deliberate policy of ignoring the proffered assistance of those not so fortunate as others.

Official UFO—A new 68-page illustrated magazine from the USA is now available from Lionel Beer. 1976 Nos. 5, 6, 7 & 8. £1.90 inc of postage.

SYNOPSIS

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from research HQ—they are non-Bufora headed.

I hope to be able to publish another bulletin on the state of investigations in July. Meanwhile, I would like to welcome those who have recently joined the investigation co-ordinator's team and thank you all for your endeavours 'in the field' in the past and hopefully in the future.

*—*The map—with apologies to Ken—although showing the regions with passable accuracy, is not the one he submitted: space regrettably did not permit.—p8.*

Controversy—2

The assumption by many ufologists that 'a certain percentage of unidentified objects are controlled, or piloted by intelligent thinking beings' (John E Scurry in this column, Nov/Dec 75) is, in my opinion, quite unjustified. Not only has no objective evidence been produced in favour of this theory, but competent investigation invariably dissipates features which might support such a conclusion. The only evidence we have is that UFOs are an anomalous phenomenon and not, as some scientists believe, misperceptions of commonplace objects, or imaginary. I do not believe that Earth is being watched by beings from other planets or dimensions. For one thing, Galactic distances and chronology militate against inter-stellar communication.

It is believed that the nearest advanced technological civilisation is at least 100 light-years away, and no more able to reach us than we are to reach them. Those who believe that more advanced races are visiting us ignore Occam's Razor; there is no justification for the further assumption that other races in the Galaxy are so much more advanced than us, nor that they would visit us covertly.

Apart from the lack of evidence for extra terrestrial visitation, either in the past or present, the most perplexing authenticated cases can be explained by terrestrial phenomena. Many UFOs are in fact ball lightning, a natural phenomenon which investigators would do well to study. That ball lightning is itself improperly monitored or understood by science makes it a candidate for many UFO sightings, and this very lack of understanding precludes the exclusion of ball lightning as an explanation under circumstances which do not seem favourable for it. When no-one knows what ball lightning is, or

how it behaves, who can reject it as an explanation?

Further, as Klass has observed—*UFOs Identified 1968*—other electrical phenomena exist in the atmosphere. He proposes that ball lightning is a plasma of ionised air, and that such plasmas can be generated artificially by modern high voltage equipment, or even aircraft. A typical plasma is about the size of a car, usually the colour of aluminium, discoid in shape and hovering. It can glow, or show openings like sun spots, which may be dark, or, more often, very bright. Sometimes the plasma or the openings will show colours, often red, orange or green. Occasionally a plasma will discharge to the ground leaving a hole, or it will follow power lines or vehicles, influenced by the magnetic fields, or move independently but still influenced by natural magnetic fields. That they move rapidly or turn instantaneously should be no surprise; having little mass and being driven by electrical fields they have no difficulty in executing manoeuvres which to the untrained observer seem to be under intelligent control.

Some believe that ball lightning involves standing microwaves and this could account, not only for very distinct radar echoes, despite the lack of mass, but the often reported thermal effects, and perhaps even the radio and vehicle ignition interference. Many cases can be explained by these mysterious, but terrestrial phenomena, and I propose that the Plasma Hypothesis has replaced the ETH as the most likely explanation for UFOs.

Stuart Campbell

Ed—Thank you Stuart—some very controversial points there—comments please. (Klass, incidentally, despite coming under that heading in our current UFO guide, is not actually a scientist).

History of Bufora

Lionel Beer

Part Two—Birth

I first came onto the UFO scene in 1960, and you can blame the religiously-orientated Aetherius Society for that. I was given tickets for what was billed as 'The First British Flying Saucer Convention'. Tickets cost seven shillings and sixpence, which I thought was a little expensive at the time. It was in fact a two-day event, held at the Russell Hotel, Bloomsbury, although I doubt if it was a 'first'. Speakers included John Dale of the Manchester UFO Research Society and Douglas Baker from South Africa, together with George King's extraordinary 'This is Mars Sector Six calling from Magnetisation Orbit Five . . . ' monologues. The programme was certainly a curious mix, but among the delegates I met Nigel and Susanne, and was invited to attend Luforo's meetings, which were usually held in Caxton Hall. I joined officially in January 1961 and was formally elected to the committee at the AGM in 1961. I was soon appointed Publicity Officer and have been doing this job off and on ever since. In 1962 I was living in some luxury in a flat just off Baker Street and the committee had duly assembled in the lounge. Nigel was again pursuing his proposals for a federation and after some discussion, we gave him the go-ahead.

I told Nigel that if we were going to launch a federation, we should do it properly, with a little style. I said, "You organise the platform (the speakers) and I'll organise the floor." I produced two leaflets announcing: "You are invited to attend the British UFO Association Convention to be held at the Kensington Central Library, on Saturday, 22 September 1962 at 2.30 p.m."

Tickets for the Convention were sold at four shillings and the buffet tea at three shillings. These days three shillings would just cover the price of a British Rail cup of coffee and you would be lucky to get $\frac{1}{2}$ p change! The response was overwhelming—I had to return several dozen ticket applications. More people were turned away at the doors, even though it was clearly advertised as a ticket-only event. Even so, the aisles were packed with people and many were standing—something the Library authorities would never permit these days! Leonard Cramp gave a lecture on his theories and Geoffrey Doel showed his UFO slides. Star of the show—sorry, convention—was 12 year old Alex Birch from Sheffield. Alex gave a detailed account of how, while playing in the back garden of his home with two friends, he took a picture of a group of UFOs in February 1962. He was interviewed by reporters, UFO investigators and escorted to London by a young reporter from the *Yorkshire Post*. He was interviewed by officials at the Ministry of Defence, who incidentally refused to admit the *Yorkshire Post* man. The officials eventually issued an unlikely explanation about ice particles in clouds. It is hard to believe that he hoaxed everyone, including his parents, as he now claims. The programme also included two colour films by the twins, Ray and Rex Stanford of a UFO in flight in the USA. Without question, we gave Bufoa a warm and highly successful launching.

Luforo, The Anglo-Polish UFO Research Club (London), the British Flying Saucer Bureau (Bristol), the Cheltenham Flying Saucer Group, the Direct Investigation Group on Aerial Phenomena (Manchester), the Stratford-on-Avon UFO Group, the Tyneside UFO Society and the Scottish UFO Research Society (Edinburgh)—eight in all—came together as corporate members of Bufora.

The Anglo-Polish Club was run through correspondence by Antoni Szachnowski. Antoni is still active in the UFO field, although dogged by ill-health, a reminder of World-War Two. He originated the controversial UN petition, which took the form of a questionnaire. It was the intention to send 20000 or more completed questionnaires to the United Nations asking for their support. The British Flying Saucer Bureau provided Bufoa's first president in Graham Knewstubb, who had been president of Luforo since 1960, and went on to be first president of Bufora in 1964. Members of Digap still meet in the Manchester area and Joan Nelstrop was their secretary for many years. The Scottish UFO Society was run by Sheila Walker for many years, but she eventually gave up due to lack of support. The Tyneside Society had a long innings, and Lesley Otley published *Orbit* for many years. I can still remember reading about the 'green men of Leam Lane' in *Orbit* in the mid-sixties. The society's archives were donated to the Newcastle Central Library, who made an effort to keep up to date with the latest UFO books, so possibly have the best public library UFO archives in the country.

Bufoa was run mainly by its secretary, Nigel Stephenson, in conjunction with a Council made up of representatives from the corporate member societies. It was intended that each member society should administer its own area, particularly for investigating reports. Owing to the geographical separation of the groups, it was difficult to convene Council meetings, and it fell to

continued overleaf

Luforo, with Nigel as its Chairman, as the central group, to act as the main co-ordinating body. I would have preferred Luforo to have become Bufoa from the start. However, Luforo was not to lose its identity until Bufoa was founded from an amalgamation of Luforo and Bufoa on 25 January 1964. John Cleary-Baker prepared a detailed constitution and what he termed his 'eight-point programme' for Bufoa's inauguration. The 1964 inauguration produced little of the original euphoria, although the Luforo committee was glad to rationalise its position. During the interim period I took on the ambiguous task of Hon. Secretary for Luforo and was not sorry to pass on the job to vivacious 'Lee' Lloyd (unfortunately deceased) as we were operating a dual subscription system.

Charles Stickland was last editor of *Luforo Bulletin* and consequently became the first editor of *Bufoa Journal and Bulletin* in summer 1964. Lawrence Moore anonymously edited the first issue of *Bufoa Journal* in summer 1963. This included a map of the UK, divided up into a dozen investigation areas loosely relating to the, by then, 11 member groups. Lawrence's cover design included a sombre and ragged drawing of a disc, manifesting two giant eyes in adjacent portholes. Malcolm Bull from Halifax, edited the second and final *Bufoa Journal*, although it had originally been advertised as a quarterly magazine. He also produced two handbooks for the Association, and there was to have been a third, but there was some mystery about the whereabouts of his text. The first *Bufoa Journal* mentions that Luforo were developing a punch card system to aid comparative research. It is hard to admit this, but Bufoa is still without its own card index after all these years! A set of index cards was printed in recent years, but abandoned for technical reasons. Funds have been voted for a further set and hopefully the research section will have all worthwhile UK reports coded onto these during the next two years.

I have said little about sightings. Much has happened since those shoe-string days in the early sixties, and perhaps it will be possible to go on to the mid-sixties in a future issue.

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