

PHYSICAL ASSAULT BY UNIDENTIFIED OBJECTS AT LIVINGSTON — Part II

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This is a report specially prepared for UFOIN and Flying Saucer Review

IN Part I we related how forestry foreman Bob Taylor, who works for the Livingston Development Corporation Forestry Commission at Livingston, West Lothian, Scotland, claims to have encountered, on November 9, 1979, a domed object in a forest clearing. Two strange spheres with protruding “spikes” shot from the object and struck him, one on each side. He fell unconscious.

On-site investigations

Accompanied by the witness we visited the site of the alleged encounter during the late afternoon of Wednesday, November 14. We were unable to start any real investigations as the light was beginning to fade. The snow still lay heavily on the ground, and we knew that for the traces to be uncovered a complex removal operation would be required.

The following day, with the help of Bob Taylor, his son Walter and a friend, and two of the Forestry Commission employees, the whole area was systematically cleared from the centre outwards. Checks for radiation were carried out with a geiger counter; these proved negative. Precise measurements were taken as each of the indentations became visible, and a check for any magnetic anomalies was also made. This produced no result.

The snow had certainly acted as a protective covering for the marks, as those we could find were only slightly damaged. Our main disappointment was that the track depressions were almost unnoticeable due to trampling by sightseers. After more than two hours of arduous work with spades and trowels the site was clear, and photographs were taken. Soil and grass samples were obtained from various points of the site, notably from the indentations and the tracks. Control samples were also secured from a distance of some 10 metres away. These have since been sent for analysis at Leeds University. The results of this are pending. A survey of the entire area was conducted, but nothing conclusive was found of a mundane nature that may have been connected with the traces.

Site analysis and comments

The traces were almost exactly as described by both the police and the various employees of the Forestry Commission, except that we were not able to locate the two parallel lines of scuffed mud marks supposedly left by the dragging along of Bob Taylor's feet.

The tracks consisted of two parallel lines of rectangular depressions, 2.35 metres apart and 2.66 metres long. Both



Bob Taylor

tracks were composed of seven or eight of these depressions (it was impossible to note exactly how many, as some were not visible on removal of the snow) each having a length of about 40 cms and a width of 10 cms. They were about 18 cms apart. Their appearance could be likened to a depression made in soft grassy soil by a large piece of flat metal. The ground had not been pierced by the weight, although it had clearly been severely depressed and the soil dipped about one centimetre in the more prominent of the marks.

The indentations left by the supposed “spikes” on the

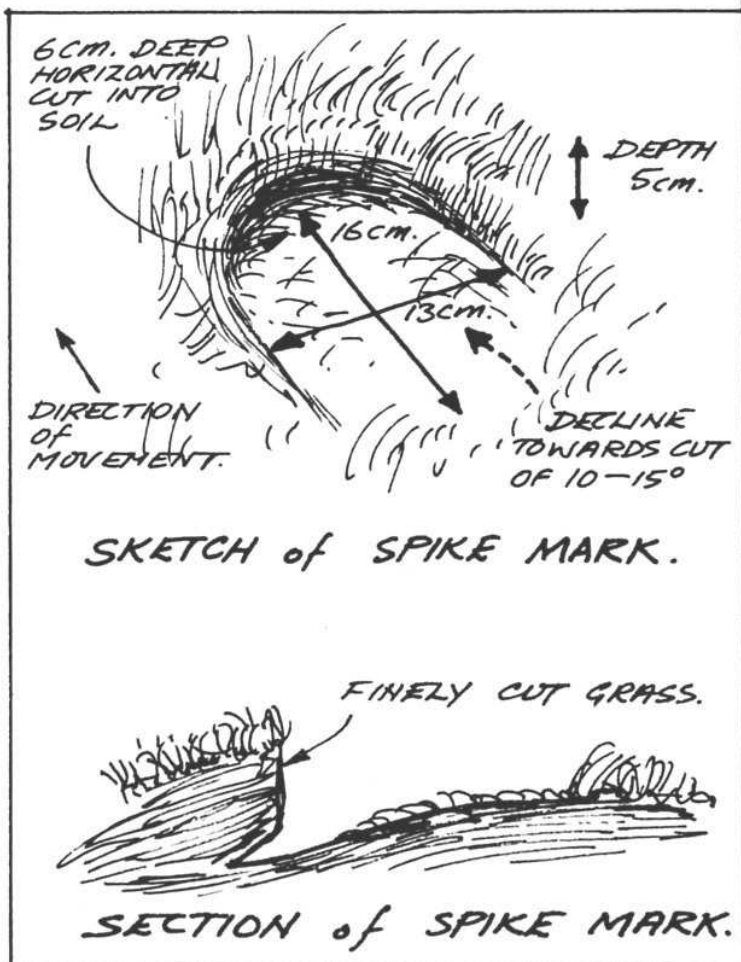


Figure 6.

spheres are extremely baffling. A number of these could plainly be seen between the two tracks, in lines round the rear and sides, and leading up to where the percipient allegedly came into contact with the spheres. Not all were uniform in depth and shape, a couple of strange marks were nearly twice the size of the rest. The distance between each also seemed to vary, with one line having a distance of 60 cms between the first and second, 91 cms between the second and third, and 76 cms between the third and fourth.

In general, however, they were all the same: a mark like that of a hoof cutting the grass and soil in a horseshoe shape, with a slope down towards the back of the mark. In some cases this was as deep as 7-9 cms. It was as if something had slit the soil under the hemisphere of the horseshoe as far back as 6 cms (see fig. 6). The total length of an indentation was around 16 cm, with a total width of about 13 cms.

If, temporarily, we ignore the percipient's account, we may consider the possible causes of both "tracks" and indentations. First, the tracks. The initial view would be that some kind of plant machinery had produced the depressions. The path that crosses from left to right, when viewing the site from the position where Bob was attacked, is approximately 2.50 metres wide. According to the Forestry Commission it is used occasionally for the movement of plant machinery. But it was confirmed that none had been along that path for at least two weeks prior to the encounter. Several months previously, however, the gas board had been laying pipes in the area but none of their machinery had been near the site.

Several of the forestry workers were approached and asked if the tracks they saw could have been left by any such machinery. Their answers were negative for the following reasons:—

- (1). Because the rectangular marks forming the tracks were too far apart. All such machinery have their "links" closer together.
- (2). The markings were in one place, suggesting a stationary object only. No further tracks were found anywhere else in the area.
- (3). The depressions were rectangular. Most mechanical plant links are the shape of an arrow-head.

The suggestion that a helicopter was the cause was also considered, but it appears that only two types of landing gear are used: large round floats or metal runners.

The hoof-like indentations were considered very carefully. Since our return from Scotland we have tried to reproduce the marks, attempting to ascertain the shape of the object which created them. Also the movements it made. Since, at first glance, the indentations looked as though the heel of a large boot had hit the ground with great force, we spent some time trying to re-create similar indentations. We found, however, that in no way could the grass and soil be so cleanly cut. Neither could the deep horizontal slit at the bottom of each mark be reproduced. Shovels and trowels were also tried without success.

We realised that the marks could not have been made by a spike as simple (a rounded, or a flat cylinder-like end)



One of the large track marks.

as that described by Bob Taylor. After careful consideration of the supposed sphere and "spikes," their angles of movement and the ground involved, we have concluded that the only object which could have made the marks would have required a 5 cm blade to be attached to it. This would have been similar to a low-angled dome cut in half, and would have had to plunge backwards into the soil then retract into the spike.

Police involvement and interviews

No fewer than seven policemen were at the site of Bob Taylor's encounter within hours of it occurring. Some may have been there for curiosity, but most, according to Mr. Drummond, were studying the marks, taking photographs, or making notes. A photographer obtained a set of site photographs.

As the experience had been reported to them as a "physical assault" it had to be treated as such. Constable F. 29 of the Livingston station drew the objects with Bob Taylor and took a statement. This was later typed at Bathgate, Livingston's head office, and the drawings were photocopied. All the clothes worn by Bob at the time, apart from his wellington boots, were removed in a plastic bag to the Edinburgh H.Q.

On Thursday, November 15, we interviewed Superintendent David Scott at Bathgate station; also Pc. F. 29, the constable primarily involved with the case. On Friday we were able to study the damaged trousers and other clothes with the civilian forensic scientist, Mr. Lester Knibb; this was at the Edinburgh H.Q.

Superintendent Scott was very helpful, providing us with photocopies of the original notes and drawings made by Pc. F. 29 in his notebook. We also obtained the original types statement of the incident. Mr. Scott stated that as far as the police were concerned the case was closed unless further evidence was forthcoming. One odd remark was that the photographs taken by the professional police photographer "did not show anything." Replying to our request to see them anyway, he said they had been sent to Edinburgh H.Q. This seems rather strange for photographs which show nothing. We asked if a report had been lodged with the Ministry of Defence, to which the answer was "no."

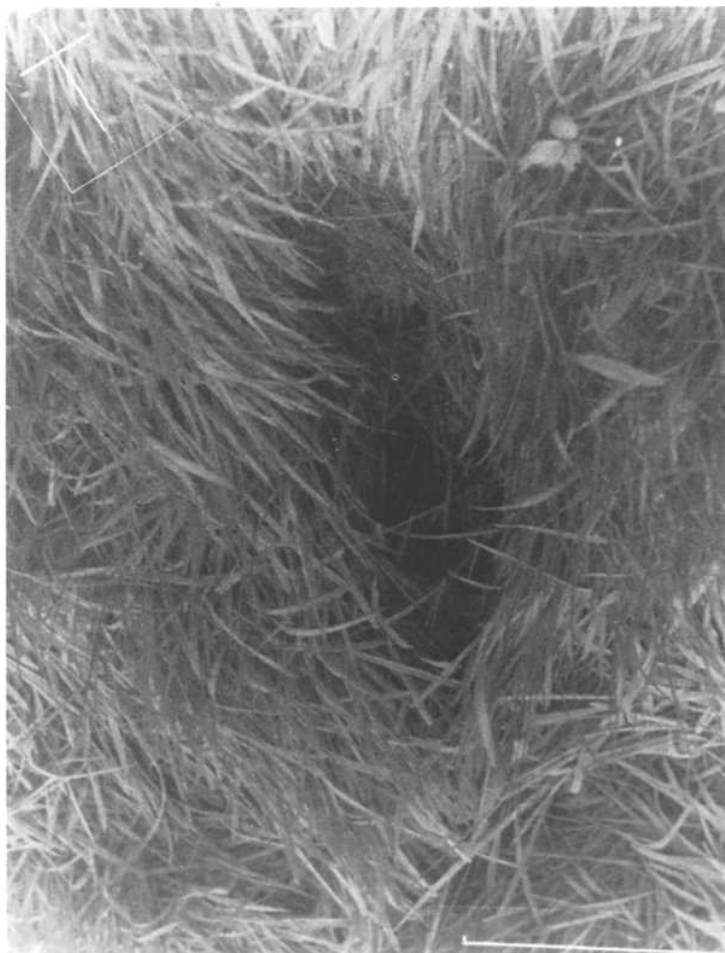
It was clear that Superintendent Scott believed the physical reality of Bob Taylor's experience, but he was not prepared to stretch this belief to "visitors from outer space." He suggested various hypothesis to explain away the traces, most of which did not link with the known facts. The most likely of these have already been considered and discussed.

Superintendent McDonald could add nothing further, but Pc. F. 29 was willing to co-operate and went through the sequence of events that occurred on the day of the encounter. The police had acted responsibly and swiftly on a case that most people would have considered unbelievable.

Forensic study of the damaged trousers

We were allowed to study the damaged pair of trousers and long johns at the Edinburgh H.Q. forensic laboratories, under the supervision and guidance of Mr. Lester Knibb.

The trousers, a standard police issue, are tailored to



One of the "Horseshoe-type" depressions.

stand considerable wear. When Bob Taylor left home on the morning concerned they were clean and undamaged. After the encounter they were torn on both thighs, and were covered in mud and a white powdery substance which was of immediate interest in the laboratory. This turned out to be maize starch, which is strange in itself, for Mrs. Taylor had not used starch on the trousers. Bob also said that he would not have passed through any fields, or maize, on his way home that day.

The tears on the trousers intrigued both the scientist and the authors, as it appeared that a considerable force would have been necessary to cause such damage.

On both sides the damage is in an area about 26 cms from the waistline on the outer thigh. The damage to the left leg corresponds to the mark on the percipient's thigh. When viewing the trousers, the damage on the left leg was seen to be a vertical tear 5 cm long, at the bottom of which is a horizontal tear (2.5 cms) to the right. Leading vertically upwards from the right-hand side of this is a 6.34 cms tear, of which the first 2.54 cms is straight and cleanly torn. This is opposed to the rest of the line, which is in a rougher state.

On the right-hand side the damage consists of a 2.61 angled tear 25° upwards from a left hand centre point. About midway along this is another small tear vertically upwards.

The police are accustomed to examining damaged apparel, and from studying the trousers Mr. Knibb's conclusions were very useful. They seem in many ways to support Bob Taylor's claims. The horizontal tear, and the

first 2.54 cms of each of the vertical tears, is more cleanly ripped than the rest. Because of this, plus the position and shape of the damage in general, it would appear that the trousers had been gripped by something with a possible width of 2.50 cms which then lifted, causing the horizontal tear then the two vertical tears either side.

On the right-hand side a similarly clean rip appears on the right upright tear and the side of the angled tear, thus suggesting a similar gripping motion. His deduction from this was that the gripping motion caused the initial tear, which, followed by an upward lift, caused the rest to rip.

Because the damage on either side was different, no symmetrical movement of either the percipient or the exterior force can be clearly defined. We can merely say that an upward lift seemingly occurred on both sides, this following an initial grip by a presumably sharp object of approximate width (and possibly height) of 2.60 cms. This resulted in an initial clean cut rip followed by a rough tear along the weakest point.

The percipient's claim that he was (a) "tugged" on his trousers before loss of consciousness and (b) that he was dragged a short distance (by the appearance of the drag marks at the site), would quite adequately correspond to these findings.

Witness details

Bob Taylor is a straightforward, down-to-earth man; a typical Scotsman if ever there was one. His lack of interest in the subject (and apparent nonchalant reaction to the encounter) have meant that his bizarre story has been accepted by nearly all who come into contact with him. The experience has left him unmoved, and he has treated it in so "matter of fact" a way that it is as if such a thing took place every day. He is a typical father figure, having brought up five well-educated children. His family, from what we have seen, are warm and pleasant folk.

Bob has been involved in manual work of one sort or another throughout his life, the last fifteen years of which he has spent at Livingston with the LDC Forestry Commission. He is a responsible man and very well respected by all who know him. Character references from all disinterested parties cite Bob as a man not prone to fantasy, certainly not the sort of person to fabricate a story of such a complex encounter.

His stable occupation and happy family situation suggest that he would not gain by being party to a hoax for any purpose.

He is psychologically stable, the only problem in his life being a period of kidney complaints some years ago.

He has not had any previous UFO or paranormal experiences, and he possesses few of the usual psychical traits. The only point of interest in this area is that Bob, his son and daughter (Anne and Walter who were present during our stay), possess a number of physiological and psychological traits normally present with hereditary physics — psygenics.* Of the three it is the daughter who

has the most, and has herself experienced a few low key paranormal events. Of these the most prominent seems to have been a large black car with tinted windows, which followed her as she was driving home one night. It eventually cruised past their house before disappearing round the corner.

Both Anne and Walter believed that UFOs could exist before their father's encounter. They are certain of it now.

Medical considerations

As described, the percipient suffered from intense thirst after the incident, and this lasted for two days. It is known that shock symptoms often include an intense thirst, although never for more than a few hours. So it seems the reason could be something other than, or additional to, shock.

The apparent loss of the use of the legs can only be described as a type of flaccid paralysis. The speech problem also seemed to stem from the loss of use of lower facial muscles. Yet it is interesting to note that both affected areas were normally functional within 35 minutes of that episode, which is highly unusual for normal cases of temporary paralysis. Whether the effects stemmed directly from the contact with the witness we do not know, but certainly neither trauma nor shock can result in paralysis of the nature noted.

The possibility of apoplexy being the cause of both the paralysis and unconsciousness must be considered. This is a stroke brought about by a blood clot entering the brain, resulting in unconsciousness and varying degrees of paralysis. The fact that apoplexy mostly occurs in people over 40 and has similar effects, may at first suggest a logical explanation for the experience. Unfortunately, the paralysis in this instance will almost certainly last for a couple of days, and the patient would not feel physically well within three hours of the stroke. It does not explain the percipient's visual account of the phenomena, or the physical traces.

For some five days after the incident Mr. Taylor lost his appetite, as did his dog Lara. Often this is due to what is known as nervous debility, stemming from worry or nerves. This could indeed be the case with both the percipient and the dog, although he showed no notable signs of being at all worried about the experience; in fact quite the opposite. It is well-known for dogs to act out of context in times when their master is in a nervous or worried state, so we must consider the possibility that Mr. Taylor was subconsciously worried about the encounter. It was not until we had been with him for a day that his normal appetite returned.

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This report will be concluded in the next issue of *Flying Saucer Review*.

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*[The meaning of this word is not to be found in my 1972 Concise Oxford Dictionary, and is not known to me. Perhaps the authors — or a reader — can help — EDITOR]

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MYSTERY OBJECT OVER THE MOON

Gordon Barraclough & John Parker

**These two investigators work for the Lancashire and Cumbria Investigation group NLUFOIG, and Gordon Barraclough is also a UFOIN representative.
June 11, 1978 Lancaster, Lancashire. 20.00 BST MED Level A**

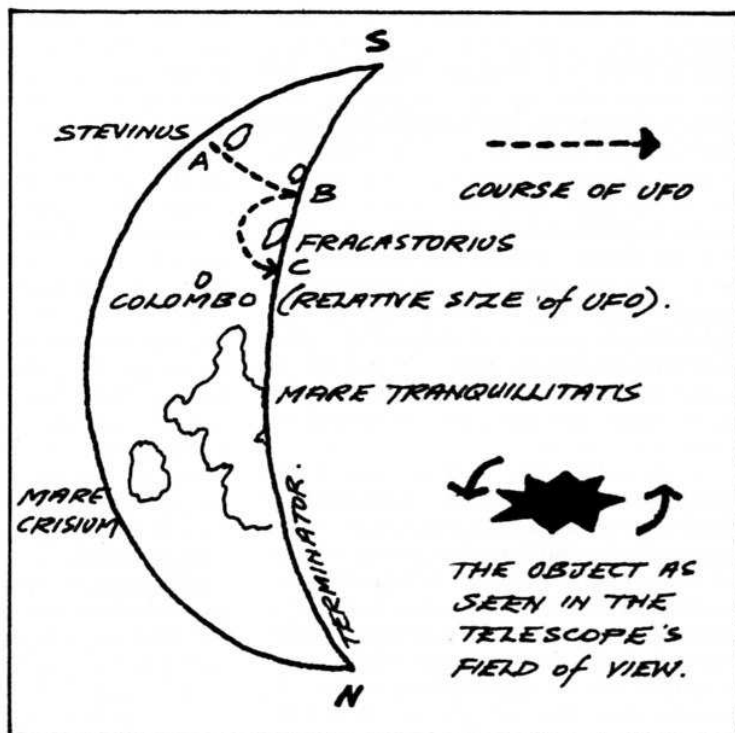
DAVID STORY is aged 16 and a member of the Junior Astronomical Society. While he only contacted us more than a year after his sighting — following a letter of ours which he saw in a local newspaper — he had realised that he had seen something unusual, and made notes about it the same night. The following, it is suggested, is therefore a reasonably accurate record of what transpired.

David was observing the Moon through his small telescope. This has a 40 mm lens and was set on a magnification of 50 times. He first sighted the object near the crater Stevinus. It seemed to be stationary at first, but then started to move slowly eastwards towards the Moon's terminator (it was in quarter phase — see diagram). This motion took 25 seconds before the object was lost to view when it entered the shadow.

The object itself was estimated as being of a similar size to the nearby crater Colombo — although this is of course a meaningless factor without knowing anything about the actual distance from the telescope of the object under observation. It was black in colour (which is why it could not be seen against the Moon's night side) and looked rather like a cog-wheel, although irregular in outline. It was seemingly rotating in an anti-clockwise direction about twice a second.

David removed his eyes from the telescope and looked up but could see nothing. He also took the opportunity to wipe his eyes in case there was something in them which was causing him to see an illusory object. He found nothing. He then returned to the telescope, but at first did not see the object again.

After a period which must have been about 20 seconds over-all since he had last seen the object, it reappeared more or less in the position where it had vanished. It was now moving southwards on a curving path, and at a similar speed to that previously. It then curved to the east and was lost again in the terminator below the crater Fracastorius. It had been in view again for about 25 seconds, making the total duration of the observation



about 1 minute 10 seconds. Despite David's watching for some time after this the object was not seen again.

David is convinced that there was nothing within the optics of the telescope that could account for what he observed. This is the only strange thing he has seen during his three years of interest in astronomy, and he possesses an open mind on the question of UFOs. In this instance, however, he believes that he saw the shadow of an object that was very close to the Moon's surface (and if this were so — as is highly unlikely — it would have been a huge object several miles in diameter). The sighting is of interest, however, and compares with some of the early astronomical observations from the latter part of the nineteenth century when mysterious objects were seen in the vicinity of either the Moon's or the Sun's disc.

FSR BOOKSHELF *(Continued from page 24)*

The U.F.O. Story (Harrap 'Reporters' series, 65p). The illustrations are black and white photographs, and these give the book a more factual feel. The author describes several cases in simple language, and deals with close encounters of the first, second and third kinds. Unfortunately, his ending is a negative one and will tend to leave the young reader doubting the factuality of UFOs.

The fourth offering is for older children and so has much more text than the other three: Brian Ball's **A Young Person's Guide to UFOs** — subtitled rather superfluously, as if he could not decide which title to use:

"A UFO Spotters' Guide" (Dragon Books, 60p). In fact neither title accurately describes the book. It is a history of ufology from Kenneth Arnold onwards, omitting all entity sighting reports (except Father Gill's, and that is 'explained' as defective vision — the "waving entities" were Father Gill's eyelashes!). The 1897 Hamilton calf-napping case, now known to be a hoax, is dragged in, the plots of several fictional UFO films are described, but we are not told much about what UFOs might be. We are left to assume that they are of extra-terrestrial origin (if they exist at all). We owe it to children to tell them the truth, and it is irresponsible to present them with such an inaccurate account of ufology.