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BORDERLAND SCIENCES RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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Borderland Sciences Research Foundation was founded by N. Meade Layne in February 1945, almost 2½ years before the term "flying saucers" and general awareness of unidentified flying objects entered public consciousness. The organization, then known as Borderland Sciences Research Associates, published a periodical, *Round Robin*, which reported on Layne's theories about the etheric world. These in turn were based in large part on the mediumship of Mark Probert, who channeled the teachings of four spiritual masters. One of them, the Yada Di'Shi'ite, lived 500,000 years ago in an advanced civilization in the Himalayas. The etheric world, which exists in another dimension where matter is denser, is the source of paranormal and anomalous manifestations such as UFOs.

The organization was incorporated on May 21, 1951. Riley Hansard Crabb succeeded Layne as director in 1959. In 1985 Thomas Joseph Brown became president. Peter A. Lindemann is vice-president and Alison Davidson serves as secretary-treasurer. BSRF's periodical *Journal of Borderland Research* appears bimonthly. Its coverage includes, a formal statement says, "Archetypal Forms and Forces of Nature and the Use of the Imagination and intuition to Perceive Them, Ether Physics, Light and Color, Radionics and Radiesthesia, Orgone Energy, Nikola Tesla & The True

Wireless, Viktor Schauberger's Water Technology, Electricity & The Evolving Soul, Initiation Science, Dowsing, Hollow Earth Mysteries, Anomalies and Fortean Phenomenon [sic]. Hypnosis, Photography of the Invisible, and Unidentified Flying Objects" (*Journal of Borderland Research*, 1989).

Despite its long existence BSRF's ideas have been mostly ignored by mainstream ufologists, although they have made an impact on those interested in flying saucers with an occult or contactee perspective. Contactee chroniclers Bryant and Helen Reeve complained, "Not too many saucer enthusiasts we have met are familiar with these researches. What a pity—or maybe it is not a pity—because possibly they are just a little too advanced for the average 'fan'" (Reeve, 1957). One of the few major ufologists to comment on Layne's theories was Richard Hall, who once wrote, "Mr. Layne refers to UFO's as 'etheric ships.' That would be a perfectly acceptable nametag, if it were not soon apparent that 'etheric' is supposed to actually refer to a real place from which the UFO's come. A name, however, does not endow a concept with physical reality by virtue of being spoken or written" (Hall, 1958).

Sources:

Hall, Richard. "Rationalism in Ufology." *Saucer News* 5, 4 (June/July 1958): 7-8.

UFOs in the 1980s

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"The Journal of Borderland Research." The Journal of Borderland Research 45, 3 (May/June 1989): ii.

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BRITISH UFOLOGY

British society is deeply conservative. No new idea is easily accepted, and tradition, bureaucracy and a stiff-upper-lip mentality act as brakes on the pace of social change. Consequently the British were unusually slow to accept the idea of UFOs. Among many who have in the UFO-research community, there is a stubborn but thoroughly British tendency to reject what is perceived elsewhere to be the fashion of the moment.

The First UFOs: In the early days, in the late 1940s, newspapers reported on the UFO subject only occasionally, as if it were an American craziness—a manifestation of either peace euphoria or Cold War jitters. The British, in fact, had much else to think about: a country that had been devastated by German bombers and in which food and other rationing continued well into the 1950s. Austerity ruled amid a new social upheaval which brought the socialists into power with a promise of a "fair deal" for all society.

Even so, a British author nearly produced the first UFO book. Gerald Heard's *The Riddle of the Flying Saucers* (published in the United States as *Is Another World Watching?*) appeared in 1950 only weeks after Donald E. Keyhoe's groundbreaking *The Flying Saucers Are Real*. Heard's little-remembered book anticipated much of what was to follow: it rehashed much-publicized cases and subjected them to the author's outside evaluation. In other words, Heard was more observer than investigator, making him a pioneer of what would become known as "armchair

ufology"—a practice that still dominates much of British ufology.

Heard's book was mostly ignored and the turning point in British attitudes was reached only in the fall of 1952, in the aftermath of the spectacular Washington, D.C., radar/visual sightings. During a British NATO exercise, Operation Mainbrace, in mid-September, witnesses on the ground, in the air and at sea saw wobbling silvery objects maneuvering in the daylight. A Royal Air Force Meteor jet was sent after one target seen above Topcliffe Air Base in Yorkshire, but the UFO outmaneuvered the state-of-the-art aircraft.

These dramatic events were followed by other cases in which RAF aircraft came into close proximity with UFOs. Within a few months of the Mainbrace sightings a top-secret experimental Canberra, stripped bare and equipped with electronic monitoring gear, had a close encounter with a daylight disc above RAF Boscombe Down in Sussex.

Reports of the caliber of this one (which was made by Flight Lt. Cyril George Townsend-Withers, who was later to become a wing commander and a leading scientific specialist with the Ministry of Defense [MoD]) had a substantial impact. MoD sent advisers to the Pentagon to find out what the Americans were doing. Ralph Noyes, now active as a ufologist and retired from the government (where he had some involvement in UFO studies), says he was on the staff of Air Chief Marshall Cochran at the time and sat in on Cabinet-level debates about the issue.

The British government had apparently believed Gen. Hoyt Vandenberg's rejection of the U.S. Air Force Project Sign report which argued for the extraterrestrial origin of the flying discs. Now, suddenly faced with UFO sightings so worrying they were impossible to ignore, British officials wanted to know how these squared with such a rejection. We know from documents obtained in recent years through the Public Records Office (where they became available only after the passage of 30 years) that even Prime Minister