

crawled out from various holes and shelters, and discussed the event. Not one doubted the ET nature of the object.

Dudinsh ran back to his camera, and saw that it was working, but the film was already spent. He wanted to take it back to the studio, but the airfield commander confiscated it. The KGB arrived some time later, and took the film away.

Dudinsh, however, convinced the airfield commander to take witness statements from the hundreds of eyewitnesses. Most signed it with trepidation. The pilot was the first to sign; he also mentioned that it was probably the UFO that caused the strange behaviour of on-board equipment, and the dead engine of his jet.

Dudinsh and his colleagues did find out some time later that the UFO was filmed. Those who witnessed the object had been warned to forget everything and keep silent. Somehow the information about this UFO leaked to the West, and letters of inquiry followed. So did offers to buy the film.

To de-fuse the situation, the Soviet media published a report that the object sighted that night was a meteorological probe. For many long years no further information came from the KGB archives. I tried to get more details, but all my contacts could find out nothing.

S. Boyev pursued this case, too. He published his account in the *NLO* magazine (Issue 13, 1996). *Perestroika* was now in the air, and Boyev was able to get permission to see the film. He was preparing materials for his documentary about UFOs over the USSR.

The KGB, damaged by *glasnost* and changes sweeping the USSR, relented and released everything. A famous Soviet proponent of the UFO phenomenon, a scientist from the Academy of Sciences, V.S. Troitsky, assisted

Boyev. Still, even then the authorities did not recommend them to disseminate the information.

The first public showing of the film took place in somewhat strange circumstances. The giant hall of the Institute of High Temperatures was filled by hundreds of UFO debunkers. Exactly at midnight the light was turned off, and the crowd breathlessly watched a UFO over the airfield. The film lasted thirty seconds. For the next three minutes the audience sat silently, and then discussions literally exploded, and lasted until the morning.

Everyone had a UFO story of his own, and everyone there was tired and disgusted by the silence being maintained about the UFO phenomenon under the Soviet regime. Experts were questioned, and they confirmed that the UFO had nothing to do with weather balloons, probes, or space junk. The object was classified as a cosmic voyager, a phenomenon of extraterrestrial origin, unknown to science.

The psychosis -horrible fear- experienced by eyewitnesses was probably caused by powerful and directed infrasonic radiation. Other measurements based on the film and interviews indicated that the object had hovered at an altitude of 20 kilometres, and its "base" was more than 200 metres wide.

This affair of the 1961 Riga UFO left a mark in the history of Soviet UFO phenomena, a mark that the KGB could not hide. But not everyone agrees that the object actually was a UFO. The well-known Soviet debunker and scientist, Migulin, described it as "a weather balloon". This opinion is also shared by a respected Russian ufologist, Mikhail Gershtein. Hopefully, we will be able to examine the film closely, and find more eyewitnesses who were in Riga at the time, in 1961.■

BIG CAT THOUGHTS, © by TREVOR BEER, FRES, FZS, MBOU, FSR Consultant.

A warm welcome to Trevor Beer, our new Consultant, who lives in Barnstaple, Devon, and, after a career as a writer in the educational field, is now well known as Britain's top expert on the various species of Big Cats which are found in our country and regarding which he writes regularly in the Devonshire newspaper *Western Morning News*.

A great lover of all kinds of wild life, he is a Scientific Fellow of the Zoological Society, a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society, and a member of the British Ornithological Union and founder of the North Devon group of the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds).

His highly popular *Nature Watch* column appears daily in the *Western Morning News* and he has just won the coveted David Bellamy Award issued every year by the British Naturalists' Association, the oldest conservation organisation in our country. FSR readers may have noticed that I have recently expressed some startling views about the possible origin of some (maybe most) of Britain's Big Cats, and I am delighted to find that Mr. Beer shares my belief that there "may be a UFO link" !

His letter in this issue shows the extraordinary range of Mr. Beer's knowledge and talents. -Editor

"Where do they come from?" The most asked question of all from believers and sceptics alike when the subject of British Mystery Cats loose in the wild in the UK and Ireland crops up. Interestingly no one asks where do they go, yet the creatures live on amongst us and we amongst them.

As a cryptozoologist and investigator into the alien big cats for many years, and into folklore and legend since the 1950s, it is the *black cat* phenomenon, of leopard size and sometimes larger, that intrigues me most of all.

Appearing and vanishing as they do with the ease of all felines, it is at times as if they disappear at will even

as one watches them. Many is the time I and others have watched such a cat crossing an open hillside when it has 'vanished' as if into thin air, presumably into a cave or some hidden goyal as we locals call the smaller coombes or unfarmed bits of countryside hereabouts.

Yet, as often as not, on going to what seems the exact spot, we find that the animal has disappeared, with the terrain showing no obvious hiding places. At such moments the air feels charged with electricity as one's own 'hackles' rise at the back of the neck and one feels as if one is in the presence of unseen, watching eyes, which is probably the case.

In recent years sightings of adults with cubs have been made which adds to the speculation surrounding these superb creatures. I have actually sat at a wood edge to suddenly feel watching eyes boring into me, have turned and there has been a black big cat just standing observing, as if it has sensed my presence and come to see what I'm up to. There has never been an obvious threat, yet the feeling is always one of awe at their power. At those moments, if it does not leave then *I do* - quite quickly.

Once two of us watched a black leopard coming towards us along a disused green lane, from a vantage point looking down along its length. The lane was bordered with trees and bushes with steepish fields on either side and leading to a waterway below.

Suddenly this cat came to a gorse patch but instead of appearing out the other side it, too, vanished. I say 'vanished' because though it might simply have lain down to rest up amongst the gorse, when we went down to look, it had gone, yet I feel sure that at no time as we walked down to the lane did I lose sight of the spot.

A friend who studies the phenomenon along with the Cadborosaurus situation in British Columbia, living in puma country, took 20 years before he saw one in the wild. So yes, such cats can appear and disappear virtually at will, their senses much more acute than ours.

My own view is that the black alien big cats (ABCs) are leopards, the melanistic form of the more usual spotted

leopard. I do not accept that a large number of black pumas are about, and in any case the ones we are observing are leopard-like in every way.

Intriguingly I have had a variety of stories from people as to their origin including the obvious releases and escapes from captive situations such as 'pets', menageries and so on, over many years, which makes some sense of sightings going back to Roman times for example, and of the strange beasts, black dogs, Wisht hounds and such which have always roamed the countryside of reality and legend.

I have received suggestions that a foreign power was dropping them off here to destroy our livestock and farming, and another that, bored with the mundanity of pheasant and other game-shooting, some people have released various animals including large cat species to better enjoy the thrill of hunting them in the wilds of 'Britain!

That the cats, some of them, are dropped from UFOs is not an uncommon theory. Interestingly, UFO activity, crop circles and ABCs often occur at the same time in many areas, and I've witnessed this myself many a time. I am not saying the three are part and parcel of one situation, but the links are there in terms of timing.

Of course, there are also links between all three and, say, local buses or the Royal Mail vans or whatever! One can easily make out a case for linked phenomena, but equally the links cannot be refuted and should therefore be examined both separately and in the context of possibly being related.

Hauntings by 'ghost' cats also comes into the picture, and rightly so. As a dowser, who also studies leys, I have my views on this aspect of the big-cat presence, but that will have to be for another time.

What is certain is that alien or mystery cats of large size definitely exist in the wild in this country and abroad, countries where they are not naturally found in the wild. Have no doubt about that, dear readers. I have no doubt there are a number of reasons for their presence, and if space permits I will keep you informed.■

HUM, THROB AND GROINKLE DEPARTMENT.

I. To the Editor,FSR, August 14,2000.

Dear Mr. Creighton

Thank you for FSR 45/2. As regards the spread of AIDS as mentioned in this issue, I read similar statistics in *NEXUS MAGAZINE*. I attempted to discuss these frightening aspects with several friends and acquaintances, but no interest was shown whatsoever. *Perhaps they are all asleep?* (YES! - G.C.)

The article on the 'mystery whine', on page 22, reminded me that I have found a similar article in one of my scrap-books. It was in the (now long defunct) periodical 'TIT-BITS', of either the late 1940s or early 1950s, most likely the latter. Here is the article if you are interested.

Regards, David J. Hampton, 21 the Ridings,
Bishopstoke, Hants. SO50 9PN

HAVE YOU HEARD THE MYSTERY THROBBING? UNTRACEABLE SOUND BAFFLES BRITAIN.

Have you heard the mystery noise? It's the British equivalent of America's flying saucers, and it's just as mysterious. Hundreds of people now claim to hear it - a whirring, throbbing, or roaring sound, a noise similar to the humming of the wind in roadside telephone wires or akin to the roar of 'planes flying high.

ARE FLYING SAUCERS INVOLVED?

Ear-witness reports differ, as with eyewitness accounts of flying saucers, but the facts are on official file at the B.B.C. Some people complain of the noise only at infrequent intervals. Others insist that they can hear it day and night.... and they claim that it's getting louder.

One investigator, a retired London barrister, has asked sufferers to get in touch with him in order that scientific observations can be made, and reports have flooded in