

SOME SCOTTISH MONSTERS

Janet Bord

Until her recent marriage Mrs. Bord was well known in UFO research circles as Janet Gregory. An article by her husband, Colin, will be found on page 17. Their book *Mysterious Britain* is due for publication by Garnstone Press in October.

ONE of the very few cases on record of a UFO landing and occupants being sighted in Britain took place in November 1958, in Scotland. Briefly, the details are as follows. During a Territorial Army weekend exercise, a few miles outside the village of Tarland (about 60 miles from Aberdeen), two young lads were left guarding a small hilltop for a few hours. At sunrise, they heard a strange gurgling sound coming from behind some trees not far away. They went to investigate, and then they saw two large figures stumbling in their direction. They appeared to be at least 7 to 8 feet tall, and the gurgling sound was caused by them apparently talking to one another in a guttural tongue. They were dressed peculiarly, and seemed to find difficulty in walking across the rough ground. The two lads turned and fled down the hillside, taking refuge in a small hut. As they were running towards this, they heard a swishing noise behind them and, turning back, they saw a huge, brilliant disc-shaped object coming down the road, only a few feet off the ground. It swooped up over their heads, pulsating and leaving a shower of sparks in its wake.*

This case sprang to my mind as I was reading a recent book, *The Big Grey Man of Ben MacDhui* by Affleck Gray¹, which deals with the various legends surrounding this Scottish mountain, legends of huge ghostly figures seen close to the summit, mysterious footsteps and footprints, music and laughter. One witness of the Big Grey Man himself, a mountaineer, was alone at night on the mountain, and saw "a great brown creature . . . swaggering down the hill . . . it rolled slightly from side to side, taking huge measured steps. It looked as though it was covered with shortish brown hair," and he later calculated its height as between 24 and 30 feet. A yeti? Or a ufonaut? Although the creature has not often been seen, many people alone on this mountain have experienced presences, such sensations being powerful enough to cause them to flee in terror.

More people have heard the mystery footsteps: "As we sat there we distinctly heard the sound as of slow footsteps, as when one walks over wet gravel. We looked round, but no one was visible—no sheep, deer or human . . . The sound of the slow footsteps died away in a minute or two." Others have been followed down the mountain by the footsteps. Compare these with the reports of "invisible walkers" heard by skywatchers up on Cradle Hill at Warminster. Although footsteps were heard, no figure could be seen. But as well as steps being heard, footprints 19 inches long (with features similar to those found in the snow in Devon in 1855 and termed the "Devil's Hoofmarks") have been found in the snow on Ben MacDhui and photographed. Although a

natural explanation of this phenomenon, which has also apparently been seen elsewhere, is given in the book, it is nevertheless interesting to bear in mind the ideas of George Lyall whose article "Did a laser create the 'devil's footprints'?" appeared in *Flying Saucer Review* recently.²

Frequently during UFO sightings and incidents of a supernatural nature, animals are aware that something strange is going on.³ The behaviour of a Scotsman's retriever one night on the mountain in 1939 indicates its awareness of something unusual, though his owner experienced nothing. "The dog was ranging about fifteen yards ahead of him when he suddenly whimpered, turned tail, and shot past at full speed. Donald returned to the Lodge perplexed, and found him crouched up against the back door trembling with terror." The dog would never pass the spot again, not even in daylight.

On more than one occasion, people have heard singing up on the mountain, baritone, treble and bass voices have been heard, though often the tunes cannot be recognised. Also orchestral sounds have been heard, and the music of the mountain has been ascribed to wind whistling through cracks in the rocks. However the answer is not so simple, for sometimes the music is heard in still weather away from rocks, and sometimes not all the members of a party have been able to hear the sounds. Talking and laughing by voices of both sexes has also been heard, though no words could be distinguished. This is reminiscent of some of the material picked up on tape by Philip Rodgers several years ago,⁴ and also by Dr. Konstantin Raudive, fully detailed in his book *Breakthrough*.⁵ Philip Rodgers believes his voices come from spacemen; Konstantin Raudive claims he is communicating with the "dead".

Is there any connection between all these strange happenings on Ben MacDhui and UFOs? Tarland, where the two UFO occupants were seen in 1958, is only about 30 miles to the east, not very far as the UFO flies. Not much farther away (approximately 33 miles in a north-westerly direction) is Loch Ness. Everyone knows about Nessie, that fabled and fabulous monster who has been such a cause of frustration to many a sincere researcher. F. W. Holiday, who wrote an important book about the monster,⁶ now feels that that particular phenomenon is not at all what most people think it to be, i.e. a clear-cut case of a prehistoric animal still living in the twentieth century. In his article "Monsters and UFOs,"⁷ he puts forward the idea that "In a general sense there are many parallels between monsters and UFOs," and that these phenomena may be linked.

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