

# RESEARCH REPORT-1

*Jenny Randles*

THE idea behind this section is that it should be an up-to-the-minute review of the latest ideas, projects and developments in the world of UFO research. Its success, or otherwise, as a regular feature naturally depends upon how you, the researcher and interested UFO reader, react to it. It stands or falls on the submissions of suggestions, news and progress reports on serious and well-planned research projects.

There is a dividing line in ufology, albeit a hazy one, where on the one side there are those who investigate and collect sighting report information, while on the other side there are those who try to do something with this mass of data. Obviously there are some who have a foot in both camps, but primarily one has to make a choice as to which direction one's own interests will go.

Now there is little doubt that both are intermixed and cannot survive without one another. The research needs a constant supply of raw data, which inevitably needs to have been reliably investigated. Similarly it is a rather forlorn hope to expect that collecting reports will ever "solve" the problems that the UFOs throw up. So we need a healthy promotion of both aspects if we wish to avoid utter stagnation. It might be nice for some *not* to find the answers because the mystery (and presumably their "hobby") is proliferated. However, to the majority of ufologists the answers, hopefully are there to be found, and we must make more effort to do so.

*Flying Saucer Review* has concentrated on the publication of significant sighting reports from many parts of the world. In so doing it builds a permanent record and so fulfils a vital function. Furthermore, it has also carried, over the years, much important speculation and research results, from workers such as Michel, Vallée Saunders and Poher, not to mention its own editorial team and consultants. However, with a growing world trend towards specialisation in some aspect of the phenomenon there is now a need for a new regular function of this journal — to keep interested parties aware of what is being done with the data and how.

RESEARCH REPORT hopes to plug this gap.

Of course, FSR will still be more than happy, the Editor tells me, to

consider completed articles on research results, but these often take years to achieve and there is need to note developments and aid interaction of several ongoing research projects. This column can achieve this and also help to give you the outlet to announce your plans and receive support from like-minded readers.

To begin with I would like to describe a research project that I have been involved with since the Autumn of 1976. It is something that could be repeated in other parts of the world with similar effectiveness. Since publication of the first results is imminent (possibly by the time you read this) the time seems ripe to describe the methodology involved.

The idea sprang from the minds of independent researcher Ian Cresswell and ufologist Bernard Delair, editor of the CONTACT (UK) publications and director of their research. They got together with me and we devised the project. We have also received substantial help along the way from NUFON workers Peter Warrington and Rosalind Parsons.

We decided that it was important to provide a comprehensive reference source for UFO sighting data within a certain region. Inevitably this was scattered in a large number of places and the task of collating these was enormous. Yet we felt it could be of great benefit to ufology to do this, so we set about the mammoth undertaking.

The first steps were to decide which sources were to be handled by whom, and at the same time to begin to card index the relevant data to a co-ordinated plan. The area agreed for this first "catalogue" was Northern England. This we defined clearly (basically to cover counties north of a line through the Shropshire/West Midlands southern borders to the Wash). The major sources were the three main UK organisations, BUFORA, CONTACT and NUFON (UFOIN being virtually synonymous in this respect with NUFON). There were also all issues of FSR, old copies of defunct group journals (such as *Orbit*, the publication of the Tyneside group), and a fantastically rich source at the Newcastle Central Library (which is the UK library and has UFOs as its specialist subject and therefore stocks copies of all UFO-related books published in this country).

The long process of card indexing quickly uncovered how many reports we would be handling (many thousands) and meant that a cut-off point was required. We finally decided upon December 31, 1975 (later years being added as an appendix at some future date). It also necessitated the development of meaningful classification systems for the data and investigation levels (see FSR Vol. 24, No. 2) which help to facilitate the amount of data that could be transferred to ufologists from published material without becoming too complex.

There were also long debates about the data that should be specifically included. One could not put in every minute scrap of information or the catalogue would stretch into thousands of pages and be as confusing and useless as the infamous Condon report. So eventually it was decided to include date, time, specific location, object description and colour, plus factors such as witness data, object height, duration, direction of motion and peculiarities of the phenomena. Alongside the classifications outlined in FSR Vol. 24, No. 2, and information about identifications that had been discovered by investigators (*all* recorded activity is included in the catalogue but some means of judging potentiality of identification was vital) a fairly comprehensive set of data is made available to the researcher.

The catalogue is intended primarily as a research tool. Its function is not to propose results, but it is hoped it will lead to some. Already many interesting avenues of research using the catalogue have made themselves obvious. There will no doubt be hundreds more.

To add to the value of the work we decided to append three indexes, with each of us specialising on the production of one. This is an index of all the many reference sources (e.g. file numbers, books, magazine articles, newspaper cuttings etc.) to give total back reference to the origin data. Secondly there is an index of all the special features of a case (e.g. photographs, landings, car stops, physical traces etc.) so that specialists in one field or another could have rapid reference within the main body of the catalogue to relevant cases. Finally, there is an index by specific location (i.e. any small localised area named in the report) to facilitate study of such things as Ufocals (window areas) or any factors relevant to the spatial and temporal location of UFO phenomena.

We are very proud of this work and feel that it has not only contributed to the growing science of ufology but, incidentally, has shown how it is possible for the rivalries of UFO groups to be superceded. The

catalogue, when published, will be an achievement for the whole of British ufology.

Already other similar projects are in various stages of preparation. Cata-

logues for Eastern England and for Wales are in course of preparation. The aim is to build up towards a complete series to cover the UK, and each one would have to be regularly updated. It would be nice to see this

extended, on a comparable basis, to other parts of the world and we would certainly like to hear from anyone who might have the inclination and resources to contribute to this aim.

## A VERY UNUSUAL FIREWORK

*Bryan Hartley*

Bryan is perhaps better known overseas than he is in Britain. Invalided by a road accident some years ago he devotes enormous amounts of time to the subject, and has built up a formidable system of world-wide contacts. He fulfills the function of overseas liaison for BUFORA, NUFON and UFOIN. Owing to his circumstances investigation is naturally difficult, but he is able to handle some cases for UFOIN of the West coast of Lancashire and Merseyside.

**Classification: November 5 1958 or 1959 Norris Green, Merseyside MED Level B**

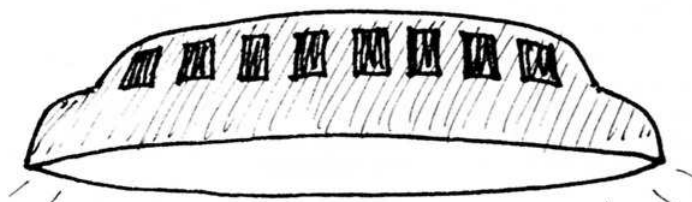
**KENNETH DOYLE**, aged 28 and an ambulance control officer, recalls an event that took place when he was only 8. It was so long ago, in fact, that he is not sure of the year. He is positive that it was November 5th because of the peculiar ritual performed by people in this country on "Guy Fawkes Night" involving the making of wood bonfires on a large scale, and the letting off of fireworks into the skies, all in celebration of the thwarting of a plot in 1605 to blow up King and parliament.

Given these circumstances, Ken realises one might be tempted to pass off his sighting as just an unusual pyrotechnic, or a misinterpretation caused by the excitement of the evening. However, he feels that the encounter itself was strange enough to rule out this possibility. It has certainly ingrained itself into his memory, and the story was only related when the *Daily Express* requested genuine UFO sightings early in 1978.

So far as he can recall the weather had been dull, with a little rain, but by 7.30 p.m. there was just scattered cloud with a light breeze and it was dry. Ken's attention was drawn towards the sky over Norris Green, where he lived (he thinks that he may have been looking up at a rocket or some other firework). Above him at elevation 75° in the north western sky he caught sight of a round object that gleamed brightly. Within a matter of seconds it was hidden by scudding cloud.

Ken's immediate reaction was that he had seen the moon, but when the object again came in view a few seconds afterwards he quickly realised that this was not the case. The object was very clear and most peculiar.

He estimates the size as larger than a tennis ball held at arm's length and says it looked spherical in shape, with the perimeter curved slightly down. Indeed he describes it as "...something like a saucer turned upside down. It had what appeared to me to be windows, but they looked black in colour — especially against the glowing silver of the object. The windows were shaped like those of a jet aircraft.



**Kenneth Doyle's sketch of the object**

Underneath the object there was a brighter glow of white, in comparison with the silver of the object."

The object seemed to be hovering above a nearby church in the Norris Green suburb of Liverpool. He estimates its altitude as about 1000 feet and the diameter as about 90 feet, although he recognises that after twenty years it is difficult to do so accurately — especially as the object seemed to be tilted slightly away from him, revealing some of the underside.

As clouds passed below it only the glow of the light shone through them. When the clouds passed the outline was sharp.

Ken stood watching for about two minutes as the object simply hovered. It was not possible to tell if there was any sound from the UFO, although he heard none. There was quite a lot of background noise. At the time he was with his elder brother, and he tried to make him look up, but he showed no interest. So, in desperation, Ken ran home. This was only 200 yards or so away, and he hoped that he could convince his mother to come back with him and watch the object. However, she refused to do this, insisting that he had only seen a firework of some kind. In disgust he went back outside, but the object had gone.

It was now some ten minutes after the initial sighting. As he reached the front gate there was a flash and suddenly he was surrounded by a bright blue glow. This bathed him totally, but he felt no effects. It lasted for several seconds, long enough for him to realise it was something abnormal. In fear he ran back into the house and remained there.