

# MORE ABOUT THE ADVENTURES OF A VERY PECULIAR LIGHTHOUSE

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As the Editor of FSR pointed out in his introductory remarks (Editorial, FSR Vol. 29, No. 2) the whole world now knows about the UFO encounter in Rendlesham Forest/Tangham Woods, first reported in these pages by myself in 1981.<sup>1</sup> A very great deal has happened in this affair since I last summarized matters for FSR, and whilst I cannot possibly give a comprehensive up-to-date account, for many reasons, I do feel that we owe readers some indication as to what has led to this case suddenly acquiring such importance.

I will add that the evidence is now so overwhelming and so significant that nothing less than a book can do justice to it. This book (provisional title: *The Rendlesham Forest Mystery*) is being concluded as I write this account. The authors of the book are Brenda Butler and Dot Street, the two ladies who have battled with this case since it first came to light in the early days of 1981. British publishers Neville Spearman have taken the initiative in offering to publish it, and their edition is scheduled for release in the summer of 1984, with overseas editions no doubt to follow, so important is the story going to be.

## How the Story emerged

As readers know from my earlier two reports, the case originally consisted simply of a series of rumours which trickled out independently. As they gradually coalesced, the other investigators and I (as BUFORA Director of Investigations) were convinced that *something* lay behind it all. One rumour that reached me told of an alleged radar-tracking of an unknown object, and the subsequent confiscation of the tapes by the U.S. authorities from a *British* radar establishment. The other stories came from Security Officers at the Base (U.S.A.F. Bentwaters/Woodbridge, some fifty miles south of the establishment that had tracked the target).<sup>2</sup> These other stories concerned a landed UFO and supposed direct communication between the Base Commander and alien entities suspended in beams of light beneath their craft.

These tales reached us *within days* (in one case in under a week) of the events which had allegedly taken place. Yet subsequent stories filtering around in the rural Suffolk community referred to an 'air crash' of unspecified nature, which effectively stopped the villagers from taking too much further notice. This was, after all, an area which normally swarms with military activity. Two U.S.A.F. Bases (leased of course from the

R.A.F.); constant air exercises; and a top-secret radar establishment on the fringes of the woods . . . a rather interesting little side-light to the whole matter.

When I wrote my first account for FSR, Brenda and Dot had collated a number of stories from airmen, villagers, and farmers, which offered nothing probative, but at the very least they indicated that something big must have happened. The radar establishment had of course officially denied any knowledge of the affair, and the Ministry of Defence were giving me the run-around (again no surprise). But I think all of us were shocked by subsequent events and revelations. For we did not realize — indeed, even now are only beginning to realize — just how potentially significant was this little case upon which we had stumbled.

I have never ceased to be amazed by the phenomenal amount of work put in on this investigation by Brenda Butler and Dot Street. Over three years (and they are still at it, flat out!) they have spent week after week visiting the remote area, finding witnesses, wringing the truth out of them, wheedling their way into the Base, and so on.

What they have discovered, in these many thousands of woman-hours of work, must be left for them to discuss in their book. All I can say is that it was very worthwhile, and may go a long way towards smashing the cover-up. This is a big claim to make, I know, but I feel that the investigation — as this book will show — fully justifies it. This is certainly unquestionably the most important case in which I have ever taken part. And the effect on the lives of all of us has been deep — both on personal levels and in terms of our views on Ufology.<sup>3</sup>

For my own part, apart from keeping a finger on the pulse of the highly complex follow-up investigation, I have concentrated on hammering away at Officialdom. This finally reaped its reward on April 13, 1983, when the Ministry of Defence wrote to me and admitted — in perhaps the most significant letter that they have ever sent to a Ufologist — the following:—

- (a) The case did occur. Brief details. The date (December 27, 1980) being given.
- (b) U.S.A.F. personnel were witnesses.
- (c) It was *not* an air crash (as the villagers had been told at the time).
- (d) It was *not* the testing of a secret device of any kind (as we had ourselves speculated, as the only obvious alternative to the UFO theory).
- (e) The M.O.D. had no explanation for the incident.

All that in one letter — and very surprising too — after the years of frustration in which my letters had just been ignored or, when not ignored, replied to with answers to questions other than those I had actually asked.

### Developments in America

At the same time as this break-through was taking place here in Britain, Larry Fawcett (a U.S. Police-Lieutenant and a researcher with C.A.U.S.)<sup>4</sup> and Barry Greenwood (a regular U.S. contributor to FSR) had been working on parallel lines to us and had made progress on this same case. And when we put our data together over the weeks following, it was clear that official channels had now admitted the reality of an event that Brenda and Dot had been trying to prove for more than two years.

Fawcett and Greenwood, in the U.S.A., had been approached by "Art Wallace" (pseudonym), a U.S. service man who claimed that he had been stationed in Britain, and at the Base in question, during December 1980. He proceeded to tell Fawcett and Greenwood about an incident in which, allegedly, he had been sent out into the forest to confront a UFO on the ground, and added various other details which basically confirmed what we in Britain had learned from our own witnesses. But "Art Wallace's" story went a great deal further than anything we had yet heard, for he spoke of having been rendered unconscious and having then awakened in an underground room where a secret liaison between the U.S.A.F. and the aliens was explained. *This was taking place underneath the Base.*

The December 1980 encounter in Rendlesham Forest was, so it seemed, *not* the first to have happened. (FSR readers will recall that we had been advised to that effect by British sources.) The full nature of the alien/U.S.A.F. relationship, as it has subsequently become known to us through a number of channels (including the hypnotic regression of "Art Wallace") is — to say the least — incredible and — if true — of the utmost importance.

"Art Wallace" is of course a pseudonym; although his real name is known to those of us who are involved in the case.<sup>5</sup> He claims to fear that his life is endangered, and threats have also been proffered to investigators involved with the case.

Barry Greenwood recalled the articles in FSR on the Rendlesham case, and connected this story that he and his colleagues had been told by "Art Wallace" with my published accounts. ("Art Wallace", however, seemingly did not know that the affair had already leaked out in Britain via other channels.)

### Documents Released under Freedom of Information Act

Meanwhile, using the whole of the data now at their disposal, C.A.U.S. initiated an action for the release of all documents relating to the Rendlesham Forest case under the terms of the *Freedom of Information Act*. And in due course they received, firstly a letter from the U.S. Air Force admitting that the events at Rendlesham *had* happened (similar in terms to the letter that I had received from the British M.O.D. but less specific), and finally, to everyone's great surprise, they received the text of a Memorandum, dated January 13, 1981, written by Lt. Col. Charles Halt, then U.S. Air Force Deputy Base Commander at R.A.F. Base Woodbridge. This Memo had been sent (on instructions of the British Base Commander as 'landlord') to our own M.O.D. in London . . . *and was a document that the M.O.D. had not merely failed to admit to having in their possession, but (according to Dot Street) which they had quite categorically DENIED having in their possession.*

Quite how or why the Memo was thus released is not known. Lt.-Col. Halt (who is still in Britain) insists that he was promised by the M.O.D. that the Memo would be kept secret. And, in the covering letter released with it, the U.S. Government thanks our Ministry of Defence, whereas when Brenda, Dot and I actually went to the M.O.D. with the document, and demanded an audience, we were told unequivocally that the M.O.D. had no idea how a copy had got to the U.S.A., and they had not been responsible for its release!

This 'pass the buck' attitude has been much in evidence throughout the case. For instance, the M.O.D. told us that they had not investigated the case, because the witnesses involved in it were U.S.A.F. officers. And the U.S.A.F. told us that they had not investigated it because it had taken place on British soil (outside the perimeter fence of the U.S. Base.)

Lt.-Col. Halt's Memo is deeply significant, not least because his involvement in this affair had been known to none of us — despite all our efforts — prior to the sudden release of the Memo in June 1983.

The Memo refers to *two* UFO incidents:—

- (1) In the early hours of December 27, 1980 (when the alleged landing took place, as witnessed by three Security Officers). This is the case to which most of the data in my two earlier articles relates.
- (2) *A sighting made by Lt.-Col. Halt himself and by many other witnesses on the Base.* This occurred on December 30, 1980 (again in the early

hours) and involved a small UFO which was observed moving in and out among the trees. This previously unsuspected incident is supported by some quite amazing evidence which I am unfortunately not at present at liberty to discuss.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, Lt.-Col. Halt referred in his Memo to the physical evidence which resulted from the first sighting: including a triangular set of inprints and radiation traces. We had been told about these by our own sources as well as about other evidence that is not discussed in Lt.-Col. Halt's Memo. (Indeed, the Halt Memo is extremely interesting because of the many things that it *fails* to include, such as the damage to the base of the trees. Halt admits that there is a great deal that he left out of his Memo.) All of which is rather interesting, because the Memo is dated two weeks after the events. Yet we know that the British M.O.D. knew of the case before their receipt of what (officially) is the *only* document that they possess on it. The radar tapes could only have been taken away with M.O.D. knowledge of why they were being taken. And they had been removed from the radar establishment *before* Halt's Memo was sent.

Officially, the Rendlesham Forest case remains "unexplained", despite the great attention paid to it recently in the media and all the consequent need to "explain" it away. Indeed, it is evident from what has been published that this case is already a strong one, and what has been collected by the investigators from many sources (including other high-ranking officers as well as Lt.-Col. Halt himself)<sup>7</sup> makes it much, much stronger. We now know, for example, that the two sightings about which we have been told are but "the tip of the iceberg". Something quite amazing was going on, again and again, around the turn of the year 1980-1981.

### **The Story Reaches *The News of The World***

The *News of the World* story about Rendlesham (October 2-9-16-23 of 1983) appeared after whispers of the case had seeped out at the BUFORA International Congress in August 1983. Our investigators, having no other option, decided thereupon to throw in their lot with the newspaper, who in turn promised a proper investigation and treatment of the story. *News of the World* reporter Keith Beabey spent two weeks in the Rendlesham area examining all the evidence with Brenda and Dot, and maintains extensive contact with all of us.

To their credit be it said that the *News of the World* did a marvellous job of presenting the raw essence of the case, and the repercussions (leading to questions

in the House of Commons by Sir Patrick Wall, a Conservative M.P. whom we must thank especially for his help and his support, and who has been a close ally of FSR for the past twenty-five years) have been most favourable. The pressure is now on the British Government, not to mention the American Government (who, in addition, have the *Freedom of Information Act* to cope with). If ever there was a chance to get to the truth, then surely it may be now.

### **The Useful "Lighthouse"**

In the meantime, however, the famous "lighthouse" theory has been gaining support, thanks to the intervention of science writer Ian Ridpath. Following a TV feature in which he filmed the lighthouse (and edited out its five-second rotation to make it look a whole lot stranger than it is!) Mr Ridpath has continued to search for evidence to prove his case.

On December 10, 1983, I chaired a BUFORA debate in London at which Ridpath gave his version of the events and Brenda Butler, Dot Street and the lawyer Harry Harris gave theirs. Needless to say, none of them are persuaded that the Orford Ness Lighthouse (which has sat peacefully on the coast five miles from Rendlesham Forest for many a year) could suddenly have decided to take off on a little adventure and cavort around in the woods and bamboozle half the U.S. Air Force.

The Ridpath arguments must be challenged with facts. And this can be done. Essentially, he is claiming that in "event No. 1" the patrolman saw a meteor and then, happening to go into the woods, he saw the lighthouse beacon and mistook it for a UFO. "Event No. 2", in which Lt.-Col. Halt was directly involved, is, according to Ridpath, a combination of excitability after the first sighting and some stars seen twinkling through trees.

One of the cornerstones of the "opposition's" theory is the date of "Event No. 1", which Ian Ridpath claims was *not* December 27 at all. He says, instead, that it was the day before (which it would have to be, as this is the only date when a bright meteor was around) He is supported in this by a local Police note which claims that the Base alerted the Police at 4.11 a.m. on December 26. However, this note (found by the Police *after* the *News of the World* articles . . . they seemingly did *not* have it when in 1981 and 1982 they told Brenda and Dot that they had *not* been called) flatly contradicts the position of the M.O.D. and Lt.-Col. Halt's Memo (which he insists is based on immediate interviews with all the witnesses). Quite why the date of December 27 should be held to be wrong is not clear. And *ALL* previous witnesses had given either December 27 or December 30 as the date. December

26 had never been mentioned by anyone until this "coincidental" Police note was produced.

This is, of course, but one of the problems with the "meteor-plus-lighthouse" theory. There are many other difficulties too. For instance, Lt.-Col. Halt had been at the Woodbridge Base *for two years already*, prior to the sightings, and several others among the witnesses were not newcomers either by any possible stretch of the imagination. As I can attest, from visits to the gate of the Base and to the landing site, the lighthouse is one of the most obvious features of the terrain. It is immediately visible to everybody in the area. To suppose that anybody remotely familiar with Rendlesham Forest would find the lighthouse puzzling, or fail to recognize it as a lighthouse, is rather like Parisians phoning up to report that a tower-shaped UFO has landed in their midst!

To be sure there are many, many questions yet to be resolved about this case. But as the book will make clear, it is without doubt already one of the best researched and most significant close-encounter cases in the history of our subject.

### "All Done By Rabbits"

Should readers perchance still be wondering how a lighthouse could manage to leave holes in the ground, and also leave radiation, I have a valuable submission for the forthcoming "*Album of UFO Explanations*". For the origin of these holes and this radioactivity, as befitting Ian Ridpath's theories, is simple:— *They were caused by rabbits. The intensely radioactive rabbits of Rendlesham Forest are, of course, one of the wonders of the natural world. Or, rather, they would be . . . if they existed.*

#### REFERENCES

1. Rendlesham Forest is the correct location. Tangham Woods (the name used by *The News of the World*) is a little-used local name for only a small part of the Forest. But, as the case involves *two* locations, one of which is not in this wood, the name Rendlesham Forest is preferred.
2. These same Air Force Bases were involved in the famous Lakenheath radar/visual encounter in 1956 (one of the cases that Condon admitted he was unable to crack). *Incidentally, I recently discovered from Philip Klass that the Orford Ness Lighthouse was used as part of the explanation for that one too! It must be some lighthouse!*
3. To put it briefly I can say here that this case has totally persuaded me that "*the Powers that be*" know a lot more than they are saying about UFOs. This conclusion is unavoidable when you confront the facts of this case.
4. C.A.U.S. (CITIZENS AGAINST UFO SECRECY), P.O. Box 4743, Arlington, Virginia 22204, U.S.A.
5. We have proved that "Art Wallace" was indeed at the Base at the time. Dot Street has interviewed him at length, and recently she and I spent a month in the U.S.A., where we worked on the case.

Dot was able to meet him there personally. Whilst I have some reservations about *some* of his testimony, I would add that the brief version of an interview conducted with "Wallace" by Bob Smith of the B.B.C. and satellite-transmitted from New York for B.B.C. Breakfast TV on October 4, 1983, *was a misrepresentation of the truth*. Having obtained a copy of the full 15-minute interview, I find that "Art Wallace" comes across in it as a much more plausible witness than viewers of the B.B.C might conclude.

6. I am sorry about this, but certain investigators have been placed in a legal stranglehold, in terms of secrecy concerning this evidence, which prevents me from being more specific. But it is impressive evidence, and certainly strongly supports the case. It is hoped that more information can be offered in the book itself when it comes out.
7. Readers of FSR might be interested to know that Lt.-Col. Halt (who was U.S.A.F. *Acting* Base Commander at the time of the events in 1980) was — for a reason which I choose not to reveal here but which is highly intriguing — promoted to be *full Colonel* immediately after the story broke in the *News of the World*. His term of duty at the Base will, however, have been concluded by the time that the readers see this.

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# 1. A "SMOKING GUN" AT THE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY (NSA)

*James A. Harder, Ph.D.*

A distinguished member of the large team of American Ph.D.s and M.D.s whose names appear in the Consulting Panels of APRO (Aerial Phenomena Research Organization, Inc. of Tucson, Arizona) the world's oldest UFO investigation organization, Dr. James A. Harder is the Professor of Civil Engineering in the University of California at Berkeley, and he has played a prominent role in American Ufology, giving testimony before the Condon Commission and Congressional Committees, specializing in the study and use of hypnotic time-regression of UFO percipients, etc.

He was here on a visit to Britain last year, when we had the great pleasure of meeting him, and he has given us his special authorization to reproduce the following two articles and the rest of the series as they appear in due course. Our thanks go also to Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzen and APRO. This instalment comes from APRO Bulletin Vol. 32, Nos. 1 and 2.

To avoid confusion, British and foreign readers should bear in mind that this article is not about NASA (America's Space Exploration body) but NSA, America's top-secret Intelligence agency — said to be even more powerful and more secret than the CIA. — EDITOR

WHEN Peter Gersten and "Citizens Against UFO Secrecy" (CAUS) filed suit against the NSA in 1979 under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) few thought that anything could come of it. CAUS was seeking about 120 documents concerning reports of UFO sightings; but when the NSA representative, Mr. Eugene F. Yeates, appeared before Judge Gerhard Gessel in late 1980 he admitted that they had found 239 documents of the sort sought in their files. Some of them had originated with the CIA and other agencies. Yeates did not produce any of these documents so that the judge could read them, as is customary when there is a dispute about whether material is properly classified, but instead handed Gessel a 21 page memo classified above TOP SECRET at a level that was itself classified. He could read it in his chambers "in camera" without any witnesses and without making any copies. The plaintiffs plainly could not see it. The usual explanation for withholding NSA reports is that they may include classified information about how the NSA goes about finding information and what they have been able to learn from listening in on foreign radio and radar transmissions. Thus, as of 1980, very little had been extracted from the NSA.

However, within the past several months, a "sanitized" version of the memo has been released. It is mostly blacked out, but there are enough bits here and there to be most intriguing. For example, on the third line from the bottom of page two is the statement: "One document . . . was erroneously treated as a part of the subject matter of plaintiff's FOIA request. It is an account by a person assigned to NSA of his attendance at a UFO symposium and it cannot fairly be said to be a record of the kind sought by the plaintiff."

We are left to wonder how many other documents concerning the activities of the NSA in sending operatives to UFO meetings and symposia were not included because they did not meet the specificity requirements of the FOIA. Why is the NSA so secretive about such reports? Apparently the reason is that they do not wish anyone to know of their UFO investigations. Contained in the memo is an explanation of why certain parts of selected reports that do not relate to intelligence gathering activities could not be released, even though they may have related principally to UFOs.

One document had been released to the plaintiffs, but with certain deletions that were explained: it was entitled *UFO Hypothesis and Survival Questions* with the name of the author and his "NSA component" deleted. What is his "NSA component"? A second document was partially released according to the memo with all of the title after *UFO* blanked out. There are deletions concerning Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) operations blanked out, which can be made plausible. Other deletions concern information about material that "concerns the organization and operational activities and functions of NSA" (one third line covered over) . . . a reasonable interpretation of the blacked out area are the following words, supplied by William E. Moore: "the organizational and operations activities and functions of NSA with respect to the UFO phenomena". The Smoking Gun! The reason for this blackout was explained: "this material is exempt from disclosure under 5 U.S.C. para 552(b)(3) which exempts from release under the FOIA matters specifically exempted from disclosure by another statute" . . . (there follows a reference to public law 86-36