

FSR BOOKSHELF — 7

New UFO books reviewed. . .

Janet & Colin Bord

ALLAN HENDRY'S definitive study of UFOs, *The UFO Handbook: A Guide to Investigating, Evaluating and Reporting UFO Sightings* (Sphere Books large-format paperback, £5.95, 300 pages) is based on his personal research into more than 1,300 UFO sightings reported to him during two years as chief investigator for the *International UFO Reporter*. It is the most objective and sensible book about UFOs ever published, but to many ufologists it will make depressing reading. Hendry reviews the different types of sightings, and shows convincingly that many (if not most) can be confidently attributed to natural phenomena (especially stars and planets), or man-made objects (especially planes — and in USA, ad planes). That these are so often seen by excited witnesses as “flying saucers” is a sign of the emotional hold the UFO idea has over people in the Western world.

Hendry is not debunking UFOs but rather he is exhorting us all to raise our critical standards and improve our investigation techniques. As he says in his conclusion: “I do not endeavour to argue that UFOs do not, in some form, exist; indeed, why shouldn't they? The twentieth century hardly understands everything that is seen in its complex skies. Personally, I *want* there to be anomalistic UFOs that defy the laws of physics for the simple reason that it would usher in a new scientific revolution. But with our current inability to fully draw the distinction between real UFOs and IFOs, fantasies or hoaxes, coupled with a heated emotional atmosphere, I can only assert that it is my *feeling* that some UFO reports represent truly remarkable events. . .” (p.285).

With its detailed coverage of all types of UFO sightings, including radar visuals and CE IIIs, and over 100 pages devoted to investigation tools (including hypnosis, lie detection, magnetic detectors and statistics), this is a book which should be read carefully by everyone who honestly wishes to begin to understand the UFO phenomenon. It is a well written book, not at all heavy going, and is illustrated with photographs and diagrams.

The persistent rumours, during the past 30 years, of crashed UFOs found with little charred bodies inside, have recently received fresh impetus from Leonard Stringfield's publications and lectures (see FSR Vol. 25 Nos.4, 5 & 6, for example), and *The Roswell Incident* by **Charles Berlitz & William L. Moore** (Grosset & Dunlap, New York, hardback, \$10, 168 pages; UK hardback edition published January 1981 by Granada Publishing, £5.95) provides more fuel to heap upon the fires of speculation. Similar in approach to the authors' earlier *Philadelphia Experiment*, the central incident here is the discovery in July 1947 of some space debris on a remote ranch in New Mexico. It was taken to nearby Roswell air base and an enthusiastic public information officer issued a press release announcing that a crashed

disc had been found. The previous week had seen a tremendous UFO flap across the USA, and the press and radio gave wide publicity to the release which the Air Force promptly quashed by announcing that the “crashed disc” was only a downed weather balloon. That much seems to be fact. The rest of the material in the book falls into the “rumours of rumours” category, often from unnamed witnesses — interesting but unsubstantiated.

If half of these rumours are accurate, it would seem that there are several caches of crashed discs, pickled spacemen and God knows what else hidden away in various top secret sites across the USA. In past years such ideas were easily dismissed as ridiculous, but now that the “silent majority” is slowly becoming aware that unscrupulous deception is one of the tools of power, we must all be prepared to think again. The material available to the authors was barely sufficient to make a book and has had to be thinly stretched and padded in places with associated but not strictly relevant UFO material. The result will probably be welcomed by nuts-and-bolters and derided by the parapsychical school, but it is likely to be of interest to many ufologists. The authors provide a bibliography and index, and there are some old press photographs of the principal participants.

Although apparently aimed at the teenage reader, *Earth's Secret Inhabitants* by **D. Scott Rogo & Jerome Clark** (Tempo Books/Grosset & Dunlap, New York, paperback, \$1.95, 218 pages) will appeal to a much wider readership. UFOs and entities, “winged weirdos”, “the mad gasser of Mattoon”, Springheel Jack, phantom cats, monster birds, Bigfoot, and trolls. . . all are represented here, and in their closing chapter the authors give various explanations for the mysterious appearances of these “secret inhabitants” of the Earth. 29 illustrations include witness drawings and photographs of the things they have seen.

It is perhaps an indication of the growing interest in strange phenomena of all kinds that a new weekly partwork was launched in Britain in mid-October by Orbis Publishing. The title *The Unexplained* covers a wide variety of subject matter, and the first five issues under review contain articles on UFOs, ESP, man-beasts, hypnosis, spontaneous human combustion, black holes, telepathy, Kirlian photography, regression to past lives, the black madonna, clairvoyance, and sea monsters. Most of the articles are written by well-known authorities, including FSR editor Charles Bowen whose UFO series has a prominent position. Each issue is priced at 50p in the UK and contains 20 pages and 6 articles. There are many illustrations, in colour and black and white, and UK readers should have no difficulty in obtaining *The Unexplained* from their newsagent. It is also (or will be)

available in other parts of the world — Eire, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Europe, and the USA.

Colin Wilson has divided **Starseekers** (Hodder & Stoughton large-format hardback, £10.95, 272 pages), his study of man's discovery of the Universe, into three sections: Ancient Cosmology, The Era of Discovery, and The Exploding Universe. Astronomy enthusiasts will find this a thorough and readable investigation, enhanced by the beautiful design and production and many illustrations in black and white and colour.

Whether you favour the idea of parallel universes, or the extra-terrestrial hypothesis, when considering the origin of UFOs, **John Gribbin's** book **Timewarps** (Sphere paperback, £1.25, 180 pages) should be of compelling interest to every ufologist. Without the use of mathematics he explores the basic concepts of time and space, dealing succinctly with causality, relativity, and time dilatation. Could Black Holes provide a gateway into the future or other universes, he wonders? In order to illustrate otherwise complex ideas he uses the ingenious device of recounting these ideas as they have been employed in science-fiction plots. Perhaps some may consider this a superficial approach, but it is a way of making these concepts and their possibilities available to a wide audience of intelligent, non-mathematical readers. Dr. Gribbin's approach combines the precision of Western science with the breadth of Eastern philosophy, and his investigation includes Jung's synchronicity, J. W. Dunne's theories of time and space, and precognitive dreams, concluding with a sympathetic explanation of the I Ching.

As a finale he puts a question to this fount of ancient wisdom regarding his own book, and, as usual, receives a profound yet intriguing answer. John Gribbin's writing remains amazingly lucid even though he is dealing with the far-out complexities of modern physics, and this book will open up concepts never broached by the traditional approaches to space travel. It has a comprehensive bibliography and index, and is illustrated with diagrams and photographs.

The feeling that the definitive photograph will answer all criticism and for ever silence the vociferous sceptic is nowhere stronger than among the ranks of those who study strange phenomena. In **Photographs of the Unknown** (New English Library hardback, £7.95, 144 pages) **Robert Rickard** and **Richard Kelly** have gathered an unprecedented collection of photographs depicting the inexplicable, from fire-walking to poltergeists, from pictures of Christ to those of alien beings, and from water and land monsters to UFOs. Flipping through these pages, the student of Fortean phenomena realises that there are no definitive answers here, only more questions.

The authors have divided their subject matter into six sections under the headings "Strange Life" (water and land monsters), "Unusual Natural Phenomena", "UFOs", "Psychic Phenomena", "Paranormal Persons" (such as angels, aliens and ghosts) and "Mind Over Matter" (such as psychic surgery and poltergeists). Each section is sub-divided into individual phenomena, each of which is given a full double spread of the generous

page size (8½ × 11½ inches) which contains up to six photographs and a clear explanatory text.

The UFO section is, perhaps not surprisingly, the longest, probably reflecting the range of material available to the authors, and contains some well-known and some lesser-known UFO images of all shades of probability including some admitted hoaxes. There is an intriguing series of colour pictures of the Canary Islands sighting of March 1979, rarely seen before in colour. The UFO pictures spread over into the section of "Unusual Natural Phenomena," providing for the investigator of UFO photographs some useful examples of ball lightning, lenticular clouds and "ghost lights." If we had to choose the three most startling images in this book of visual marvels they would be the Shiels colour shot of Nessie popping her head out of the water for a quick look-see (p.14), the blow-up from the Patterson 16mm movie of Bigfoot striding purposefully into the Californian forest (p.25), and the series of shots showing psychic surgeon Tony Agpaao plunging his hands into a patient's gory innards (p.117).

The authors pass no judgements as to the authenticity of any particular image, though naturally they have weeded out the obvious hoaxes. They have instead provided readers with a concise and knowledgeable introduction to the history and idiosyncrasies of paranormal photography which succeeds in setting the stage for that which follows. Everyone who has any curiosity about our strange world, whether they consider themselves to be ufologist, psychic researcher, parapsychologist, Fortean researcher, or simply the "man in the street," will most certainly want to possess this incredible volume.

In **The Dark Gods** by **Anthony Roberts & Geoff Gilbertson** (Rider/Hutchinson paperback, £4.50, 266 pages) we enter a world peopled by demons, the ultra-terrestrials who appear here on earth as Men-in-Black, UFO entities, fairies, and other mystery characters. The authors draw heavily on occult lore in their study, and the case for the reality of evil UT forces *seems* to be overwhelmingly proved. However, closer examination of the evidence on which their thesis is based shows that it contains few reliable first-hand reports which can be checked. The Croglin Grange vampire story, for example, is now known to be highly dubious. Also there is too much reliance on the imaginings of the mentally unstable, on fiction, and on the eccentric beliefs of esoteric orders. In fact the authors are too uncritical in their selection of material. Facts are often overstated, for example UFOs are not "often seen hovering over. . . standing stones and 'sacred sites' in general" (p.109), and there is not a "preponderance of sightings over leys" (p.147). No back-up sources are quoted to support such "facts." Again, doubtful and unsupported statements such as the following are made: "Now the entities tend to instruct their followers to go to important ley convergences. . . to 'charge' these." (p.165).

There are also too many assumptions, for example that the figure in Mr. Templeton's photograph of his daughter is a spaceman. The caption to this picture reads: "Fireman Templeton's photograph of his daughter is an interesting parallel to spirit photographs. The entity this time is, of course, a space being." Space being? Mr. Templeton saw nothing when he took the picture, and all

we objectively see now is a vague shape in the sky behind the girl's head. With subjective vision this becomes the top half of a spacesuit-clad figure.

Such a wish to believe pervades this book. It also contains some small but niggling errors in names and book titles, even foreword-writer Colin Wilson is not free from error. The Reverend Donald Omand was **not** trying to rid Loch Ness of the monster when he carried out an exorcism there (p. 13). As he wrote in a letter to us: "I never exorcised the monster, as is supposed, but Loch Ness and the land immediately round it. My reason was to overcome the spirit of evil. . ."

From these criticisms it might be supposed that we do

not favour Roberts' and Gilbertson's basic belief in the existence of UTs and the evil they engender. On the contrary, we feel that there may be more than a grain of truth in the idea. But this book fails to provide convincing evidence. It is also difficult to read in parts, Anthony Roberts being a supporter of "a rich and expressive use of literary flamboyance" (p. 53), whereas simplicity in writing, whether fact or fiction, should always be a writer's aim, if only for the sake of his readers. Paranoia is a state of mind to which the unwary ufologist can easily succumb, and this book is a lesson to UFO students to mix their studies with less heady pursuits and thereby retain a balanced outlook on life.

RESEARCH REPORT — 4

Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind

Jenny Randles

WHEN the movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* hit our screens in 1978 many people relatively unfamiliar with our subject saw the experiences epitomised therein as the ultimate in Ufology. That that is not the case, is illustrated by the recent emphasis on study of the next (and at the moment, the ultimate) kind of close encounter — code named the CE4. As an aside I might note that in my opinion the title of Mr. Spielberg's movie was a misnomer, as none of the events within it were a third kind encounter. Any sequel (and I gather one is in the pipeline) must surely not be CE3K (or 2) but CE4K. We shall see!

The Close Encounter of the Fourth Kind has several different interpretations at the moment. Coral and Jim Lorenzen use it purely for abductions, which seems fair enough. However, this definition is hardly commensurate with the true nature of the phenomenon. Abductions in reality are but a sub-class of the CE4 phenomenon. In Britain it has certainly become customary to refer to events where entities manifest inside the house (e.g. the famous Cynthia Appleton encounter . . . see *The Humanoids*), along with similar related incidents, as CE4s. Indeed I have come to utilise this terminology to apply to any case of direct interaction between witness and apparently alien entity. This distinguishes such events from the CE3, which would merely involve the *observation* of entities. I feel that such a division is the most logical in view of our growing conception of the phenomenon. Mind you, in the process I have come to discover that the CE3 is consequently much more rare than might otherwise be thought! Most sightings of entities *do* involve some degree of contact, and appear not to be accidental.

Be that as it may there is a growing trend to study the CE4 in isolation from other facets of the UFO phenomenon. This is fine, provided any possible correlations are not forgotten, since specialisation of this nature is of value in such a complex field. In physics, for example, light,

and radio waves, are in different parts of the electromagnetic-wave spectrum, as we now realise. However, there was ample justification for studying them separately, not simply because their effects and consequences are different, but also because such a breakdown facilitates overall understanding. Hence I find the modern approach worthwhile.

On October 11, 1980, NUFON sponsored a conference, on the theme of the CE4 experience, at Dr Johnson's House, Birmingham. The hosts were the local groups UFOSIS (West Midlands) and PARASEARCH (Staffordshire). I would like to discuss some of the implications of that day's events, which it seems were well appreciated by all those who attended. Indeed the crowded hall included many of the leading researchers in this aspect of British Ufology, such as Paul Deveraux, Hilary Evans, Bob Rickard, John Rimmer and Roger Sandell, in addition to the NUFON and UFOIN teams.

There was a packed programme, which is always an understandable failing at such events. One seemed to be constantly under siege from a barrage of faces, and the process is exhausting although usually quite rewarding.

First off was Kevin McClure, a principal organiser of the UFO study team of the Society for Psychological Research. His breadth of appraisal was illustrated by his study of a variety of paranormal experiences during a wave in 1904-1905 which accompanied the Welsh religious revival. Incidents which his extensive research has dug out include many typical UFO sightings, which seemed to be central to a catalytic witness (the woman who led the revival), and even featured what may be the earliest MIB experience on record! Such work unleashes a whole new dimension of the UFO mystery and makes one wonder just what else might be discovered if we widened our sights a little and dug deeper into past events. The correlation between the religious manifestations, where visions and auditory contacts occurred, and the UFO