

Warminster (U.F.O.) Newsletter

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Presented as an Information Service for Persons Interested in Keeping
in Contact with Unusual Happenings in the Warminster District.

CLOSE-UP

For several years, the Wiltshire town of Warminster has been a centre for the manifestations of a phenomenon which to-date defies adequate explanation.

The appearances of a variety of unidentified aerial objects in the skies have attracted a great number of people to the district, from many parts of the country and world.

Numerous people have come to Warminster to study and skywatch pointing the need for a means of 'keeping in contact' with current activity in the district.

Several members of the Warminster community, actively interested in the phenomenon, have jointly produced this Newsletter in the hope that it will cater for the demand for the circulation of information.

Our continuation is entirely dependant on your demand. For instance, we have the resources to publish monthly if requested. If you are sincerely interested in the happenings at Warminster and wish to be kept in contact via this publication, let us know.

Our policy will be one of factual reporting of sightings and experiences as and when they occur. It is not our aim to make wild evaluations of occurrences, nor to deliberately look for any 'ulterior motives' in witness reporting (for instance one well known UFO magazine spent three pages debating whether one UFO landing near Warminster could have been just a piece of farm machinery and of how 'dreary' the eyes of the witness appeared to the writer!)

Reports are at present flooding in from throughout the country as we go to press, indicating a new wave of UFO activity. Apart from minor localised flaps, the UFO scene has been relatively quiet since the big 1967 wave - apart from Warminster, which has remained a centre of intense and sustained UFO activity since 1965.

Future issues of this Newsletter will feature in greater detail, some of the most outstanding cases of the literally hundreds of unusual occurrences that have been reported in the district. Landings, weird contact claims, mystery footsteps of an 'invisible walker,' uncanny premonitions, strange mists and apparitions are just some of the combinations of the Warminster mystery.

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NATION - WIDE

Predictions earlier this year of intense UFO activity in August due possibly to the present close proximity of the planet Mars to Earth, have materialised. It has been noticed that other years, when the red planet was at it's closest, flaps or waves of UFO activity occurred.

Reports are reaching us from throughout the country. A mysterious light was seen in the sky over Bath, Somerset on July 22nd. "It hung in the sky for about a minute and then dropped out of sight behind some trees. It was red and looked about the size of a football," said one witness.

A Bath solicitor and his wife also watched the light on July 22nd for a full minute from their home at the top of Widcombe Hill, Bath. They described it as bright, rather mauve than red light. It appeared to them to drop in a field just above the cemetery in Prior Park Road.

A 16 year-old boy spotted a strange star-shaped object in the sky over Bath the following night (July 23rd). He said, "It was the shape of a star with four arms and was quite low. It was a sort of pink colour. It hovered for a while, then the arms came in so that it was egg-shaped, and it shot off across towards Odd Down."

A detailed account of an unidentified flying object seen over Tynemouth, Northumberland, has been prepared by mathematics teacher Mr. Wolfgang von Metz. He and a neighbour observed the UFO on 16th August with the aid of field glasses and a small telescope. The object looked like a disc seen edgewise-on. It was yellowish at the centre with red tips and at times seemed to be surrounded by a bluish haze.

Mr. von Metz said that after watching the UFO for a few minutes he drew it to the attention of engineer Mr. G.R. O'Brady-Jones, an engineer living in the same road.

Independantly each man drew a sketch of the object and on comparing them found that they were almost identical.

A few hours before, 25 year-old Police Constable Leslie Leek successfully photographed twelve frames of a UFO. P.C. Leek and four other officers watched the UFO for two hours over Aldridge, Staffordshire.

The object, at first stationary, was bright, squarish-shaped, something like a very bright star. After being viewed for over two hours, it eventually moved eastward at speed, turning orange colour before disappearing.

Two of the photographs show an egg-shaped object hovering at a little over 1,000 ft., another looks like a flying saucer on its edge, and the fourth is more or less a blur.

A security ban was later slapped on the photographs by Staffordshire's Chief Constable Mr. Arthur Rees, whilst they were being examined at Preston Airport. However after pressure from the Press, the photographs were later released.

Between August 15th and 17th at least four sightings were reported from Hull, Yorkshire. One object remained stationary for up to five hours. It had bright lights on it and appeared to have legs also with flashing lights.

At 10.10pm on the evening of August 9th Arthur Shuttlewood and an Australian friend of the family skywatched for a while on Cradle Hill, Warrminster. Despite a dull and dreary night with unsettled weather conditions, they saw from a point NW,

Photographic Details:

Type of Camera: Russian Zenit E. SLR 58mm lens.

Type of film used: Ilford Black & White, 400 ASA.

Camera settings: 15 seconds at f2.0 Focussed at infinity using tripod and remote shutter release.

NOTE: The exposure was taken whilst the object was in a northeasterly position.

Witnesses: Frank Morton, Lincoln Richford, Bob Langford, Peter Thurgood, Phillip Chancellor.

AMBER LIGHTS

For some months we have been taking an interest in sightings of amber coloured lights reported occasionally from the hills of Cradle & Starr. The most recent of these reports as far as we can ascertain was on the Saturday night of July 31st/August 1st.

Jim Wellings and John Dunscombe report that watchers on Cradle Hill on the above night witnessed at 22.30hrs an amber light traverse from the barrier point VP-5 to midway in a NNW direction between the two copses. Here it diminished.

At 23.30hrs the object appeared again traversing NNE from Sack Hill, south towards Battlesbury Hill. At this point the light diminished.

At 00.15hrs on August 1st, the object yet again appeared in the same direction as the one at 23.30hrs. As it traversed above Battlesbury, it changed colour to red at one end and dimmed in brilliance.

Margaret Logan together with other watchers on Starr Hill, East of Cradle, reported that at about 00.45hrs a golden-amber coloured object appeared to come out of the ground in the east. It glided smoothly, pulsating slightly as it began its journey. The object drifted over West Mill Farm. It then began to flash from gold to red, gold, red, and then back to gold. By this time it had reached the dip which is apparent before the skyline follows the rise of Starr Hill. Here the object rose, keeping the same level above the horizon, by following the contour of the hill. When it passed over the tumulus, which is the highest point of Starr Hill, it appeared to rise slightly in a vertical manner. It then travelled a short distance farther, still following the contour of the hill, and quickly faded out.

At the same time (00.45hrs) witnesses on Cradle Hill witnessed the same, but a dimmer version of the phenomenon as described by the Starr Hill observers. The latter no doubt having a clearer view from their vantage point.

If indeed the four sightings were of the same object, then it certainly appears that it made four consecutive runs of the area. The first over Cradle Hill copse. Secondly over the west side of Battlesbury, thirdly directly over Battlesbury and fourthly directly over Starr Hill.

Altogether some forty witnesses observed the phenomenon that night. In each case the object viewed from the various positions already stated equated from the horizon was approximately 25° to 30° to viewing.

Attempts at photographing these lights on numerous occasions have proved fruitless. No sound has ever been heard. The universal navigational system of aircraft whether military or civilian show no comparison whatsoever in likeness to these objects.

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All inquiries, correspondence etc. regarding the Warminster UFO Newsletter should be addressed to: 4, Preston House,
East Street,
WARMINSTER, Wiltshire.

NEW STARR HILL MYSTERY

The following is an extract from a letter received from Steven Hall of Crayford, Kent.

"Two friends and myself came to Warminster on 26th June 1971. We stayed at Starr Hill until 2.30am, and during that time we saw a bright red star, which I at first thought was Mars until it suddenly moved to our right, then went straight up in the sky and remained stationary. During this time I took four photographs including one time exposure. We also saw a strange Black Cloud saucer-shape hanging over Starr Hill.

"Later that night we saw a green misty thing over in the field in front of us about 75 yards away from us and it kept moving around. After a while, we noticed that to see it clearly one had to look from the corner of the eye, as for some unknown reason we were unable to look directly at it."

This report co-ordinates in very similar circumstances to a report quoted approximately four years ago.

Then witnesses on numerous occasions from Starr Hill, looking towards West Hill Farm, in the direction of the crescent shaped Fir Tree Plantation - an area covered by a varied selection of hawthorn bushes.

Whilst viewing it appeared to all concerned that one of these bushes had a tendency to move. The nearest example of movement and antics it performed were described, "as if someone was put into a large sealed plastic bag and told to escape!"

Numerous photographs of this particular 'bush' showed nothing unusual as regards the shape or movement, on either instant or time-exposure photographic work. Each result showed the 'bush' as a perfectly ordinary hawthorn bush.

The group decided further investigation was necessary. They walked from the viewing point, down across the field towards the 'bush' in question and probed, finding nothing unusual.

There was indeed a hawthorn bush at this point, but nothing unusual could be found to account for the strange behaviour in this immediate region.

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SPHERICAL LIGHT PHOTOGRAPHED ON CRADLE HILL

Location: Cradle Hill, Warminster

Time & Duration of sighting: 0419 - 0423hrs. (4 minutes)

Type of object observed: Steady light source. No apparent scintillation
-2.5/3 mag.

Colour: White.

Tactics of object: The light was first seen in a Northerly direction ascending at an approximate angle of 45 degrees (appearing from behind the copse) to an elevation of approximately 20 degrees before taking up horizontal flight away to an easterly direction. No propulsion sounds were audible. Apparent speed quite slow.
NOTE. Before the object attained horizontal flight, it was observed to undulate for a few seconds.

Object viewed through Binoculars: Spherical and white, seen as light source only, no solid form.

Distance and Size: Impossible to estimate

Weather conditions: Mild conditions. Very high scattered clouds moving very slowly in an easterly direction, no apparent winds at ground level, low lying mist over Warminster town. Visibility on hill good with bright moonlight.

THE WARMINSTER 'THING'

We feel that it would not be out of context to publish in this issue, a brief synopsis on the history of the Warminster phenomenon. An excellent account was written by modern historian W. Middlebrook for the Warminster Journal earlier this month, from which we quote.

'The first reported experience of 'The Thing' as it came to be known, was on Christmas Day 1964. A woman heard weird crackling noises in the early morning sky, a peculiar droning that seemed to descend savagely upon her, pushing her remorselessly against a wall and scaring her to the limit of human endurance.

'That same morning, the head postmaster of Warminster, who later gave public testimony at a mass meeting held at the Town Hall, heard the same terrifying noise, "as though our roof top was being roughly battered - as if 5,000 tiles were being ripped off and loudly slammed back into place."

'The first eight months of 1965 brought dozens of strange reports, affecting both people and animals- dead mice found in gardens, their tiny bodies burnt and riddled with holes, dead pigeons falling to the earth, stunned animals and so on. There were reports of strange things happening to motor-cars, engines suddenly stopping or behaving erratically, headlights smashed, etc., while mysterious sightings in the sky were also reported, of strange objects speeding noiselessly through the upper atmosphere.

'Things reached such a pitch that a public meeting was held at the Town Hall on 27th August, 1965, the building packed to capacity and many unable to get in. Experts of Unidentified Flying Objects sought to reassure the people of Warminster that there was nothing to fear from these strange visitations, and six members of the public testified there and then to their sightings and experiences.

'Two days later, on 29th August, a young factory worker called Gordon Faulkner was walking out of his back door with his camera with the intention of lending it to his sister. At that moment that Thing came in sight. "It looked like a fast plane," he said, "but there was no sound."

'With little hope of success, Gordon pulled out his camera and clicked the shutter at 1/50th of a second focussed at infinity, and later took the film to Mr. Edwin Till a long established photographer for developing. Mr. Till had a shock when he saw the result of this lucky snap, and enlarged it to reveal what certainly looked like a 'flying saucer'. Early in September the enlarged photograph was published on the middle page of the Daily Mirror, and Warminster suddenly became the focus of intense interest from all over the world.

'In February 1966, a farmer whose cattle grazed on Cradle Hill, kept reporting the stampeding of his cattle, so bad that he was constantly repairing smashed fences. Mr. Arthur Shuttlewood, reporter of the Warminster Journal, who had faithfully covered every phase for the mysterious Warminster happenings, went up Cradle Hill at night to investigate.

'It was on Cradle Hill, at 3.42 on the morning of September, that Arthur Shuttlewood saw his first cigar-shaped UFO, and from then on he instituted a regular watch on the lonely hill. Apparently many UFOs were seen, and from Whitsuntide to Autumn 1966 "anyone could have come up Cradle Hill and I could personally guarantee they would have seen things for themselves," said Mr. Shuttlewood.'

Hundreds of people have visited Cradle Hill from many parts of the country and world in the hope of seeing something. Reported landings, weird contact claims, mystery footsteps, uncanny premonitions, strange mists and apparitions, are just some of the happenings that have occurred since 1965.

We possess enough material to write many volumes on the Warminster phenomenon alone. It is our intention to serialise in greater detail the events as they have occurred together with the people connected with them.

HUGE CIGAR OVER CRADLE HILL COPSE

On the night of June 4th a member of the Worcester Forester Regiment stationed at Battlesbury Barracks, Warminster, looked out of his window at 23.15hrs and was astonished to see hovering over Cradle Hill copse, a long cigar-shaped object. The witness, who being a member of the Armed Forces cannot let us publish his name, said that the object had three bright lights along the side of the cigar, with one huge red light on the right hand end. Although the witness was approximately 1½ miles away from Cradle Hill, he estimated that the object was easily comparable to the size of a pencil held at arm's length. Following several seconds of observation, the object suddenly blanked out into thin air.

BBC-TV Points West reporter John Craven interviewed the witness concerned and the programme we understand was later featured throughout the country on Nation-wide.

Unfortunately, as far as we can ascertain, there were no skywatchers on Cradle Hill that night. However another quite independent witness reported that at around 23.00hrs on one evening in June, she saw from her home in Victoria Road what resembled a "long fiery cigar mostly red in colour." The object appeared stationary, appeared solid and was noiseless. She estimated the object to be about the size of a cucumber held at arm's length. Her husband also witnessed the object, which was seen in the direction of Cradle Hill.

ACTIVITY OVER CORTON

A number of reports of UFO activity have reached us from Corton, a small village about six miles outside Warminster.

Mrs Ley of Fir Tree Cottage reported to us that on July 29th whilst walking from Corton across fields to Knook village, she saw a stationary light in the northern sky. The time was 8.15pm. It looked like a very bright star. Mrs Ley watched the light in the setting sun for three or four minutes and then turned away to see if there was anything else in the sky. When she looked back the light was not to be seen. Returning home to Corton "I saw a broad shaft of light travelling very fast from North to West, silently." This object was observed from 8.20pm to 8.55pm. "It travelled very smoothly and at speed and was as if alight. The setting sun was behind to the right. The object made two or three turns in a curve during this time, looking like a shining fish and went back along its course, turned again and resumed its journey westwards."

Without knowledge of the above report, Mrs M.E. Carey, 61, Corton, reported that herself and her son George were on top of Corton Hill early in the evening of July 29th.

"As we neared the top of the hill, we saw a hovering white glowing light, mushroom-shaped. It shot off at terrific speed in the direction of the sun," said Mrs Carey. No sound was heard.

We also understand that the Rev. Angus Logan saw a white light in the sky whilst driving through the nearby village of Boyton. This report is being followed up.

COS-MOS - aims to Contact SpaceMen or Saucers

Cosmos Journal is recommended to those especially interested in all forms of contact and contact claims.

COS-MOS DETAILS FROM

Norman Oliver,
95, Taunton Road,
Lee,
LONDON S.E.12.

NATION-WIDE Continued

a glowing UFO heading towards Upton Scudamore from Westbury.

The object was in view for a good full minute before blinking out, then a red light appeared. While journeying in "duck-bobbling motion" in front of view to the witnesses, Mr. Shuttlewood says they could distinctly make out three lighted compartments (or windows) in the object.

"After the red glow, the object blazed a beam of white light straight at us," said Mr. Shuttlewood. "It quite dazzled us."

A courting couple at Cirencester, Gloucestershire, stopped their car at a favourite spot on August 18th when a UFO appeared - only 100 yards away.

"It looked like an orange light in the sky at first," said 16 year-old Judith Wills. "Then another Thing arrived and the two of them hovered together. They were definitely not aeroplanes."

Her boyfriend Duncan Edwards, aged 19, said: "They made a horrible noise. I went like a block of ice."

On August 18th a WEDNESDAY - UFOs were reported either hovering or moving across the sky Rugeley, Smethwick, Bedford, Lichfield, Cannock Chase and Poole.

August 23rd - A near landing was witnessed by a group of Girl Guides at their camp at Kimbleton Manor, Droitwich, Worcestershire.

"Suddenly out of the blue, there was a tremendous roar. We looked up and saw what appeared to be an aircraft out of control. It looked enormous and we felt it was crash onto the tents.

"Instead, it went into the next field 50 yards away and hovered lower than the trees around it. All we could see then was a red glowing light. There was no sign of any wings and while it hovered it was absolutely silent," said 31 year-old Mrs Olwyn Grainger, one of the Guide leaders.

Travelling on a motor-bike from Frome, Somerset at 00.30hrs on August 2nd a witness (a member of the Armed Forces whose name we cannot publish) noticed in the sky an orange circular object hovering just beneath cloud level. Similar to a heliostrobe beacon, the object moved off and disappeared behind cloud.

Several skywatchers on Cradle Hill, including Francis Pullen and colleague from the Cambridge UFO Study Society, Cleeve Stevens a BUFOA member and Arthur Shuttlewood, watched a red and white flashing area of light in the North-east on the night of August 25/26th.

The glowing light, which was observed for approximately ten minutes from the army barrier point V.P.5., appeared to change shape on several occasions from circular to rectangular. The time of this sighting was 23.55hrs.

Possibilities that the above sighting could be attributable to military exercises on Salisbury Plain can be discounted. Army personnel are at present away on block leave for three weeks, no exercises are taking place, the ranges being open.

Perception of Local Phenomenon - Nothing New

History Re-cyclised

Before the flying saucer and spacecraft era, phenomenon of the description being witnessed today has been viewed by past generations, giving descriptiveness in different terms of recording.

For example; The 5th of 9ber, 1633, the Prince of Orange landed. The 30th of October at about 7 in the evening were seen, as it were, long streamers or pickes in the sky, towards the north and north-west, but towards midnight it was seen very terrible, those long streamers, as it were, warring each with other, and seeming as it were two parties.

In the year 1696, or thereabouts, it was a report in Bristol, and thereabouts, that it rained wheat upon this town of Warminster, and six mile around.

1760. Northern lights very strong for two or three seasons, and then totally disappeared.

Above extracts from 'History of Warminster'

1765. On tuesday night a very large and surprising meteor or ball of fire was seen in the air near Warminster. It was, said one report, for about a quarter of a minute, the night was nearly as light as when the sun shines.

Extract from Western Gazette

On tuesday the 17th January 1860, the sky being perfectly clear and not a cloud to be seen, loud rumblings resembling a heavy discharge of artillery, prolonged for above a minute, startled many persons from the strangeness of the sound and caused all who heard them to look upwards involuntarily.

Extract from Wilts Archaeological Magazine
Vol 6. p. 387.

T.H. Baker who farmed at Mere Down between Kingston Deverill and Mere records in his book Season Prices and Phenomena, of seeing 'a Comet in the east before sunrise in September, October and November of 1832. A lunar rainbow on October 30th at 10pm in the S.W.'

In the year 1822 or thereabouts, one evening in May, there was a thunderstorm over Kingston Deverill. A specially dark and heavy cloud appeared moving over the hills from Mere. Then a kind of trunk or tube appeared from out of the cloud, swinging and swaying like a pendulum below it. This tube extended rapidly until, about half a mile from the church it touched the ground. Nobody could make out what it was, but the villagers were scared stiff, expecting a catastrophe of some kind to overtake the village. This thing was now like a transparent tube, a mile in length about three feet wide at the bottom and much wider where it entered the cloud at the top. The two ends were fixed but the central portion waved and moved about in an alarming fashion.

There was no noise of any kind. This went on for twenty minutes during which time the cloud moved nearer and nearer to the church, crossing a field of young wheat in a zig-zag manner. It had nearly reached the enclosures near the church, and the whole village had by this time been called out of doors for safety, when another cloud approached on a lower plane. The tube suddenly withdrew and disappeared up inside the cloud!

The only proof that it had ever been was that the young wheat over which it had passed was marked by a darker colour than the rest, and the next heavy storm of rain several days later, restored the colour.

Keep in touch with current happenings at Warminster;
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