

# UFOs AHOY!

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ANYONE who has read Ivan T. Sanderson's *Invisible Residents*<sup>1</sup> will be aware that there is some evidence to suggest that there may be intelligent life residing in our oceans. Three-quarters of the earth's surface is under water and, for the most part, we do not know what happens there. UFOs have been sighted diving into the sea, and rising out of it, not to mention their activities over and in reservoirs, rivers and lakes inland.

Although they do not play a leading part in the book, the seas around Britain have had their share of strange activity, ranging from mysterious lights offshore which have resulted in lifeboats being called out in the belief that ships were in difficulties; through mysterious radar blips, and supposed hoax distress calls from ships which could not be found; to actual sightings of unidentified objects dropping into the sea or, less frequently, rising out of it. Some of the sightings *might* be explained as meteorites; on the other hand, some so-called meteorite sightings might be explained as UFOs! Research in the pages of *Flying Saucer Review* and other publications has yielded twenty cases of objects seen diving into or rising out of British coastal waters during the years 1955-1970. So how many more UFOs have been nipping in and out of the sea out of sight of land?

March 24, 1955, was the date of some spectacular sightings off the South Wales coast, according to Gavin Gibbons in *The coming of the space ships*.<sup>2</sup> At 7.15 p.m., a farmer's wife of Aberarth saw, to the north-west and well out to sea, "a large orange ball giving out a black trail and zig-zagging downwards . . . It looked very like the sun except for the movement and the long, black, smoky trail that streamed out behind . . . It exploded and, still in the shape of an orange ball, plunged into the sea." It could still be seen glowing beneath the surface of the water for an hour afterwards.

Twenty-five miles north along the coast at Rhoslefain in Merionethshire, two men saw a similar sight a little later in the evening, around 8 p.m. They saw a bright orange object zig-zagging down into the sea, and although they could not distinguish its shape or size, they said it gave off a dark trail, like smoke, and became lighter in colour as it got lower. "Suddenly the object stopped giving off smoke and substituted flame instead, before dropping straight into the sea. But it did not stay in the water for long. Almost at once it shot up into the sky again, this time leaving a grey trail behind it. It then shot northwards at great speed, leaving no trace in the water."

Another sighting on the same day was of a disc of many colours rotating at great speed round a golden centre. This was travelling in a westerly direction, and was seen from a point just to the west of Shrewsbury. Half an hour later, yet another sighting was made. An orange ball, moving more slowly than the earlier ones,

travelled westwards before dropping into Cardigan Bay about thirty miles north of Fishguard in Pembrokeshire. It fell in a mass of dark smoke and flames, and continued to glow under the water. It did not rise again.

Several months later, on October 18, 1955, a blue and white object with red flames coming from its tail was seen by people in North Devon and Cornwall. Fishermen at Mevagissey on the south coast of Cornwall reported seeing a strange light which illuminated the sky and coast along a wide area around 12.30 a.m. A sizzling noise was heard and when the object struck the water it sounded as if it was exploding.

A blood-red UFO, larger than the harvest moon, was seen to rise from the sea off Porthcawl, Glamorgan, South Wales, by two policemen around midnight on September 1, 1957. The object had a jagged black streak across its centre and took off at great speed towards the Atlantic. An Air Ministry "possible explanation" was the planet Venus playing tricks—but it was later ascertained by *Flying Saucer Review* that Venus had gone below the horizon around 9.00 p.m. on that evening.

The officers and crew of the steamer *Boston Gannet* saw "a strange object twisting and turning and falling into the sea" near the mouth of Loch Seaforth when they were sailing near Lewis and Harris in the Outer Hebrides on February 27, 1961. Several ships raced to the spot, but nothing was found, and no aircraft were reported missing.

A similar case was reported from the Essex coast on July 6 in the same year. The crew of a pilot cutter radioed that they had seen an object drop into the sea eight miles away (in the North Sea twenty miles off Walton-on-the-Naze). Lifeboats were launched and other ships went to investigate, but once again nothing was found and no planes were reported missing. Back to Scotland again, and March 11, 1962, when an object was seen falling into the sea west of the Shetland Isles. A lifeboat could find nothing. Later in the month, on March 24, ships were warned to look out for an unidentified object in the sea between Orkney and Shetland. Further south, off the east coast of Scotland, another unidentified object was seen in the Moray Firth, on April 6, 1962. The aircraft and ships which searched for it found nothing, and the search was called off.

A little further south along the eastern coast of Scotland is Girdle Ness, close by Aberdeen. The collier *Thrift* was heading south when, just before 6 p.m. on November 20, 1963, four crew members including the skipper saw a "flashing red light" which passed within a mile of her port side, fifteen to thirty feet above the sea, and suddenly disappeared three miles astern. The captain made for the spot, at the same time alerting the

shore, and the *Thrift* together with lifeboats and an RAF Shackleton searched the area for three hours. The captain said, "Judging by the way the radar contacts disappeared from our screen it seems that whatever was there must have sunk before we could get to it. We found no trace of wreckage during our search, but something definitely fell into the water."

The only case I have found of a UFO diving into a stretch of water inland took place in London. On April 13, 1964, a bus driver was witness to the rapid descent of a UFO in Walthamstow. The cigar-shaped, silver object cut through telephone wires and landed with a splash in the River Lea, having gouged a deep scar in the concrete edge of the towpath on its way down. The police dragged the river but found nothing. They said the water was only four to six feet deep at this part, and felt that what was seen were simply ducks. The witness not unnaturally denied this possibility.

During the afternoon of December 15, 1964, a lifeboat and helicopter set out from Rhyl on the North Wales coast after reports were received that an unidentified aircraft had crashed into the sea. The search was eventually called off when it was discovered that no plane was missing.

Up in Scotland again, the trawler *Star of Freedom* was badly damaged and holed after colliding with an unidentified object in the sea fifteen miles east-south-east of the island of Barra during the early morning of February 3, 1965. Although the skipper thought he had hit a surfacing submarine, both British and American authorities said that their craft were not responsible.

Only a few days afterwards, a "ghost plane" was seen to dive into the sea near Minehead on the North Devon coast. On February 12, 1965, four witnesses saw the object from two different points along the coast. A lifeboat, two RAF helicopters and a Shackleton failed to find anything after a search of an hour and a half, and no planes were reported missing. The "ghost plane" may have been seen inland before it reached the sea, for a strange low-flying plane was reportedly seen over Swainswick, near Bath in Somerset. The sighting of the plane, ash-grey and flying about one hundred feet above the road in a west to south-west direction, was described by the witness as follows. "The plane was so unusual that it attracted our attention. There was definitely something abnormal about it. It did not seem to be distinct, but had a misty appearance, yet there was no mist or fog about. It came from behind some trees. Then it literally just disappeared before our eyes. The strange part was that it made no sound, and did not appear to have an engine. But it was certainly not a glider." Shades of John Keel?<sup>3</sup>

A "misty nebulous ball shape in a grey-blue colour" attracted the attention of a witness at Eastbourne, Sussex, on August 23, 1965. The object seemed to skim across the sea without noise, and was seen at around 9.30 p.m. Just before 10.00 p.m., the inshore rescue boat was launched after receiving a report that a "long white object" was floating offshore. Nothing was found.

Now a jump of five years, and back to the North Wales coast. A report from Prestatyn on May 26, 1970 (just along the coast from Rhyl, where a similar report was made in 1964), said that an aircraft had crashed in

Liverpool Bay. A sea and air search was called off after nothing was found, and no planes had been reported missing.

On July 19, 1970, men gathering sea coal on the beach at Norden on the Durham coast thought they saw an aircraft diving into the sea. They reported this and a rescue boat was sent out. After an intensive search, the boat returned having found nothing.

Twice during August 1970 the Scarborough lifeboat put out in search of a crashed aircraft, but nothing was found.

From the cases I have quoted, it certainly looks as though UFOs are for some reason diving into our seas and not emerging again, at least not within a short space of time. It could be that Ivan Sanderson is right, that there are undersea civilisations of some kind; the only other possible explanation seems to be that all these UFOs are in trouble and are crashing, and for some reason they sink rather than float, with the result that the elusive physical proof of UFOs is never obtained. A final item has no connection (not direct, anyway) with the UFO sightings, but perhaps lends support to Ivan Sanderson's theory. This concerns the mystery of blue holes on the sea bed, as reported in the *Daily Express* of September 20, 1970<sup>4</sup>:

"Commander Jacques-Yves Cousteau, the French underwater explorer, returned home this weekend to report a new mystery of the sea. At his base in Monaco he spoke of strings of puzzling blue holes that he and fellow scientists aboard the research ship *Calypso* spotted in the sea bed while cruising in the Caribbean.

"The blue holes were first observed, he said, when the *Calypso* was approaching British Honduras. From the surface they looked like giant tiddleywink counters lying in the depths. There were dozens of holes about 300 yards in diameter, some strung out in lines up to twenty-five miles long. But what surprised the scientists most was the near perfect circularity of the holes.

"Closer inspection showed that the holes were only a few feet deep—just enough to make the cavities show up dark blue against their surroundings. The mystery is how these cavities were formed. Commander Cousteau theorises that they were scooped out of the rocks by pelting rain back in pre-historic times when this part of the ocean floor may have been above the surface."

#### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> *Invisible Residents* by Ivan Sanderson, published 1970 in the USA by The World Publishing Company.
- <sup>2</sup> *The coming of the space ships* by Gavin Gibbons, published 1958 by Neville Spearman.
- <sup>3</sup> See "Mystery aeroplanes of the 1930s" by John Keel, *Flying Saucer Review*, Vol. 16, Nos. 3 and 4; Vol. 17, No. 4 [and this issue—ED.].
- <sup>4</sup> This cutting, and others of interest, supplied by Stan Bentley of Gipton, Leeds.

#### For further reading

- "UFOs and the sea" by Antonio Ribera, *Flying Saucer Review*, Vol. 10, No. 6.  
"More about UFOs and the sea" by Antonio Ribera, *Flying Saucer Review*, Vol. 11, No. 6.  
"UFOs and the Scottish seas" by W. S. Robertson, *Flying Saucer Review*, Vol. 11, No. 3.

# World round-up

of news and comment  
about recent sightings

## AUSTRALIA

### Tasmania landing and chase

From *The Advocate-Weekender* of July 10, 1971, we learn how—

"Narrawa farmer Mr. Virce Williams this morning found no trace of a landing by an unidentified flying object which appeared to land near his house last night.

"Mr. Williams reported sighting a glowing object at about 7.30 last night.

"Mr. Williams watched the UFO through field-glasses for some time and chased it in his car.

"His children were the first to sight the UFO which appeared to land not far from the farmhouse.

"This morning Mrs. L. J. Riley, of Wilmot, told *The Advocate-Weekender* that two months ago her husband had been followed by a UFO for about two miles through Cethana.

"It kept pace with her husband's car at about roof height and about 50 yards from the driver's side of the car.

"When her husband stopped the car the object had 'bobbed off.'

"The sighting took place at about 7.30 p.m.

"Mr. Riley had not previously reported the sighting because he thought people would 'think he was mad.'"

Credit: **W. K. Roberts** of Tasmania UFO Investigation Centre.

## ENGLAND

### Police see UFO

From the London *Evening News* of August 16, 1971—

"A police patrol saw an unidentified flying object today. They spent half an hour peering into the sky over Aldridge, Staffs. And they were so puzzled they asked Jodrell Bank and Air Traffic Control, Preston, for help.

"Sgt. Jim Ottewell and four constables saw a rectangular bright-yellow object move off in a south-westerly direction. Jodrell Bank had not seen the object, but it had reports of it from Liverpool and Derbyshire."

### Formation of four

The *Bolton Evening News* of August 16, 1971, carried the following news item—

"A man and his wife called neighbours out into their garden late last night . . . to show them glowing white UFOs heading for Winter Hill.

"Mr. David Stretch, a clerical officer with the NCB at Lowton, could not believe his eyes when he spotted the silent sphere-shaped objects.

"He called his wife Sandra to the window of their home at Hulton Lane, Daubhill, Bolton. She saw them too.

"He was still sceptical. 'I've never seen any UFOs before and quite frankly I didn't believe they existed.

"Even when we both saw them I was doubtful so we went into the garden and called our next-door neighbours out. When we all saw the same thing I was convinced,' he said today.

"The UFOs, four of them, moving across the sky in joined pairs, were silent, glowing white and round.

"We watched them for at least five minutes,' said Mr. Stretch. 'They kept glowing brighter as they headed over Bolton towards Winter Hill. Other people must have seen them; they were so bright.'"

[Has anyone checked if this may have been a refuelling operation by Air Force planes?—EDITOR.]

Credit: **John Peers** of Little Hulton.

### Orange and gold UFO

Here is an item from the Peterborough *Evening Telegraph* of August 17, 1971—

"RAF Wittering and Stamford police had reports last night (16) of an unidentified flying object seen moving over the town.

"A spokesman at RAF Wittering described it as an orange and gold coloured light at about 5,000 feet high, east of Stamford shortly before midnight.

"And a police patrolman spotted it moving east to west over the George Hotel, Stamford, nearly three hours later.

"Mr. S. Hodgeson of 29 Cambridge Road, Stamford, who viewed it through a telescope, said he was satisfied that it was not a star.

"The UFO was said to have no definite shape, and so far no explanation for it has been found."

Credit: **D. W. Goss** of Peterborough.

### Flashing light UFO over Hull

The following account was printed in the *Hull Daily Mail* of August 16, 1971—

"Claims today that a 'flying saucer' hovered over North Hull for at least five hours last night and early this morning were made by a number of people today.

"A housewife who told the *Hull Daily Mail* that she watched a round, saucer-shaped object through a pair of binoculars borrowed from a neighbour.

"Mrs. Florence Leach, of 103, 12th-avenue, North Hull Estate, said her

eldest daughter, Catherine, first spotted the UFO.

"At the time she was returning home with her boy friend on his motorcycle along Sutton-road.

"When they came in they said I would not believe them. But I borrowed binoculars and got a good look at it.

"It was round, with bright flashing lights on it. It seemed to have legs hanging down and they had lights on them, too.

"It really put the wind up us; I thought the little green men were coming for me."

"Mrs. Leach said the object was seen by herself, her husband, her daughter and boy friend, next-door neighbour Mr. J. Greaves, and another neighbour, Mrs. Black.

"It was in the sky from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m. this morning when I got up for a drink. When we looked at it, it seemed to be moving slowly to the right," said Mrs. Leach.

"This morning it had moved to the other side of the house.

"I personally do not believe in flying saucers,' said Mr. S. Wrightson, president of the Hull and East Riding Astronautical Society, 'but I don't ridicule people who say they have seen hrem.'"

Credit: **R. Gardiner** and **N. C. C. Foster**, both of Hull.

### That old friend again?

From *The Times* of July 23, 1971, we learn that—

"Police seeking a dangerous wild animal that attacked a dog in Ashdown Forest, Sussex, have enlisted the aid of a big game hunter. They have sent him plaster casts of the animal's paw prints in an attempt to identify it.

"People who have seen the animal in the forest, including two policemen, describe it as like a puma, black and tan coloured with streaks of yellow and pointed ears. It attacked a dog belonging to Mr. Alistair Whitley, a farmer, of Outback Farm, Nutley."

Thanks to **L. C. Sherrington** for drawing our attention to this item.

### Sights in the Hampshire skies

Two readers' letters, and replies, taken from the Portsmouth evening paper *The News* of Friday, May 21, 1971—

"As I was driving out of Portsmouth at about 11.30 on Saturday evening, I saw a bluish-white glowing dot moving across the sky over Portsdown Hill.

"I was able to keep sight of it for