

# UFOs IN WALES IN 1905

Roger Sandell

EARLY in the year 1905 Wales was in the grip of a religious revival accompanied by mass hysterical behaviour. One of the centres of this revival was Egryn, Merionethshire, where a woman named Mary Jones had a series of ecstatic visions. As she was later to describe them to the local newspaper, they consisted chiefly of dreams of angelic beings. However, on one occasion while walking home, she had encountered a sinister black-clad man whom she identified with Satan. When she sung a hymn the figure vanished (*Barmouth Advertiser*, March 30, 1905).

As Mary Jones, inspired by her visions, began to preach at local chapels, a strange rumour started to circulate. Her meetings, so it was said, were accompanied by strange lights in the sky. When an interview between Mrs. Jones and a clergyman, the Rev. E. Lewis, was published in the *Barmouth Advertiser* for February 2, 1905, Mrs. Jones described these lights and claimed to receive guidance from them in much the same manner as do members of modern UFO contactee cults:

"She answered that she had seen, almost from the first, each evening, a light between her and the hills. It had revealed to her what to expect at the meetings. One evening she had interpreted the sign to mean four converts. But only three responded in the chapel. 'But there must be four,' she said. No fourth could be found until the door was opened and one stood there, halting between two opinions. The opening of the door brought the stranger in. The four were complete."

The Rev. Mr. Lewis was impressed by Mrs. Jones' sincerity. He also noted:

"That some mysterious lights have been seen on the shore in the past few weeks is beyond doubt. Nor is this the first time for this bay to be visited. They have been reported before, especially one winter in 1649."

Mrs. Jones was interviewed by the *Barmouth Advertiser* again shortly afterwards. However this time the reporter, whose account appears in the paper's February 16th issue, was more fortunate. He was actually present at Mrs. Jones' house when one of the lights appeared. He described it thus:

"Apparently a couple of miles away flashed a brilliant white light in the form of an enormous star. The sky was overshadowed with clouds, no other star being visible."

The same report also noted that several other witnesses had seen the lights at different times:

"The lights were seen by dozens at Portmadoc as the Rev. Llewelyn Morgan will testify. At Aberdovey the lights were seen by a group accompanying Mrs. Jones to the chapel."

An even stranger phenomenon accompanied another of Mrs. Jones' meetings according to the February 23, 1905, *Barmouth Advertiser*.

"After the meeting a gentleman saw a gigantic human figure rising over a hedgerow. Then a ball of fire appeared above and a long ray of light pierced the

figure which vanished. This extraordinary manifestation was witnessed by a prominent farmer from another standpoint."

The ray of light from the fireball, and the sudden disappearance of the strange being, are both very reminiscent of a large number of UFO and occupant cases previously covered in FSR.<sup>1</sup> These features have led to suggestions that some, at least, of the occupants are, in fact, some form of projection from the UFO.

Meanwhile the Egryn manifestations had come to the attention of the national press. The February 13th issue of the *Daily Mail* carried a story by a reporter who visited the village in search of the lights. After a brief description of some of the previous reports, he tells how he decided to stay for an evening to see for himself. His patience was soon rewarded.

"At twenty past eight I saw what appeared to be a ball of fire above the roof of the chapel. It came from nowhere and sprang into existence instantaneously. It seemed to be about twice the height of the chapel, about 50 feet. Suddenly it disappeared, after having lasted a minute and a half."

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Fifteen minutes later, more lights appeared:

"Two lights flared out, one on each side of the chapel. They seemed about 100 feet apart. I made a rough guess that they were 100 feet above the roof of the chapel. They shone brilliantly for 30 seconds and then began to flicker."

After these lights vanished the reporter began to walk back to Barmouth. On the way he witnessed yet another strange light:

"It was about 300 feet up the hillside and about 500 feet from where I stood. It shone dazzlingly with a deep yellow brightness. It looked like a solid bulb of light six inches in diameter and was tiring to look at."

The reporter ends by confessing himself baffled. The only explanation that occurred to him was that the lights may have been marsh gas from a small marsh in the area. However he states that he had questioned residents who told him that the lights had never been seen around the marsh.

The *Daily Mail* was not content to leave the matter there. A couple of days later it carried a report from Mr. Bernard Redwood, a scientific researcher, whom it had sent to investigate further. Mr. Redwood describes how, equipped with instruments capable of measuring electrical discharges, he had spent a night's vigil at Egryn (perhaps the first properly organised skywatch in UFO history!). Like the "Mail's" previous reporter, he was fortunate enough to see the lights and reported that his instruments failed to register any unusual electrical condition. Having thus ruled out any unusual form of lightning, Mr. Redwood, in spite of the earlier reporter's enquiries, was inclined to dismiss the lights as marsh gas.

At present it is not possible to say whether or not this

interesting series of reports forms part of a larger wave. That this may be so is suggested by the fact that Charles Fort gives details of two other Welsh observations from this year. One is of an object like a red-hot iron bar seen over Cardiff on March 29 and the other is of a somewhat stranger object, described as resembling a flying pig, and seen over Llangollen on September 2.

Only detailed examination of the Welsh press for 1905 will establish how many other cases there were.

Whether or not the Egryn events were part of a larger pattern, they are of great interest in that, unlike other late nineteenth century and early twentieth century UFO waves, they were interpreted in religious terms rather than as the work of unknown airship pioneers. As a result they appear to have given rise to a cult similar to some modern UFO cults. Like modern UFO reports, the Egryn lights engendered visions and rumours of wise and benevolent beings, and of sinister black-clad individuals (for not only Mary Jones, but several of her followers experienced these visions). However, in 1905 these were interpreted as "angels" and "demons", while today they are "extraterrestrials."

Whatever the explanation, it is apparent that these matters were as much part of the UFO mystery in 1905 as in 1971. The study of the psychological and social patterns behind these events is a task which UFO researchers cannot neglect.

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> For a recent case with both these features see "A Huma-noid was seen at Imjärvi" in *FSR*, September/October and November/December 1970.
- <sup>2</sup> See Charles Fort: *New Lands*, chapters 30 and 32. Also J. Vallée: *Anatomy of a Phenomenon*, chapter 1.

#### References to IS BAVIC REMARKABLE ?

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# GREEN WATER FROM SAAPUNKI

## Result of water sample analysis

THE recent March/April edition of *Flying Saucer Review* carried an account by Elis W. Grahn of the "landing", or "near-landing", on Sunday, January 3, 1971, of a "light-phenomenon" at Kuusamo, Saapunki, in North-Eastern Finland. The object, which had approached slowly at tree-top height, was seen close to his house by farmer Mauno Talala and other observers at neighbouring houses. Unnaturally bright

and blinding, it lingered for about a minute before disappearing upwards into the sky.

Snow which had been beneath the light was found to have melted, and then frozen into needle-shaped, fragile particles of ice over an area of 2 × 3 metres. The colour of this ice was dark green.

Samples of this ice were collected by engineer Ahti J. Karivieri: one was sent to *Flying Saucer Review*, and an

TEST	RESULT	CONCLUSION
<b>Solid S</b>		
1. Ignition	All matter was vaporised	Suspended material entirely organic
<b>Liquid L</b>		
1. pH	5.3	Not unusual
2. Evaporation at 100°C for 24 hours	Residue equals 0.031% w/w (310 ppm)	Dissolved salts?
3. Microscopic examination of residue	Semi-crystalline	Dissolved salts
4. Residue treated with dilute HCl	Residue soluble giving a reddish/pink solution	Manganese and/or Cobalt salts? (see below)
5. Borax bead test on residue	Negative	Inconclusive
6. Flame test on residue	Positive for sodium	Sodium present (see below)
7. Silver nitrate test on liquid L	Cloudiness	Chloride present
8. Barium chloride test on liquid L	Cloudiness	Sulphate present
9. Treatment with dilute acids	No effervescence	Carbonates and bicarbonates absent
10. Flame emission* (air/acetylene flame)	Positive results for sodium	24.5 ppm
	Negative results for caesium	Caesium absent
	Negative results for calcium	Calcium absent (see below)
11. Atomic absorption (air/acetylene and nitrous oxide/acetylene flame depending on element)	Indication of calcium	Less than 0.5 ppm
	Positive result for magnesium	Approx. 2.6 ppm
	Positive test for aluminium	Approx. 50 ppm
	Negative result for silicon	Silicon absent

\* Instrument used—Pye Unicam SP90A Atomic Absorption spectrophotometer

In addition, tests were carried out for Titanium, Manganese, Cobalt, Copper and Chromium but all gave negative results and therefore assumed absent.