

this year, came the extraordinary Knowles case, in which, if we are to believe all the experts, either (1) a meteorite, or (2) ball-lightning or (3) the rising Sun, or (4) a "dry electrical storm", displayed an inordinate interest in the travellers' baggage and thoughtfully made off with not only their luggage-rack from the top of the car but also all their bags and valises. (Is this, maybe, how Aliens equip themselves with the necessary raiment when planning to appear *in mufti* among us? "CALLING ALL COSMIC TRANSVESTITES").

As the following report (sent to us by Mrs June Hill) shows, there was however, after all, at least one weird series of happenings in the West Australian "Outback" in May of 1987:-

From the newspaper "SUNDAY TIMES" (PERTH, W. AUSTRALIA) January 18, 1988:- (Reporter Gail Williams).

Mysterious Lights Stole his Power!

"Strange things happen when you're minding an oil-rig in the middle of nowhere.

Just ask Mr Doug Hodgekiss, who received some extraterrestrial visitors during a six-month stint at Patience, near the eastern edge of the Gibson Desert.

Doug, a retired clerk, took up a position minding an oil-rig last year, so as to experience the peace of mind that solitude in the desert brings.

Patience — little more than a well in the ground somewhere between Lake Disappointment and the South Australian border — provided the remote paradise he was seeking.

"Desert Doug" — as his friends named him — experienced a lot more.

Stumbling across saucer-shaped burns in the scrub near his hut; being stuck to the spot unable to lift his camera; being woken up in the middle of the night by loud noises; animals dropping dead in his path; and strange lights appearing outside his window were just a few of the eerie happenings.

Solitude

With a ten-hour drive to his nearest neighbours at Carnegie Station, Doug's only contact with humans was the chats he had with pilots who occasionally flew in with supplies from Newman, 700 kms. west of Patience.

On May 21, his tranquility was shattered by flying objects and strange noises.

The night of May 21 began like any others. Doug, aged 60, and until then sceptical about UFOs, explained what happened: "Normally, I would turn the generator off, to conserve fuel, and spend the evenings in darkness. I was standing in front of the gas stove, looking out across the desert

at the beautiful stars, and saw this very bright white light, which seemed to cover miles.

"Thinking it was a convoy of trucks or a truck with huge lights for driving at night, I thought I had visitors. I put the coffee on for my guests. Normally you don't see a soul, and I got quite excited at the prospect of having a chat with someone.

"Then the light disappeared, and I assumed they had broken down. I was disappointed, and sat down. Out of the corner of my eye I saw an eerie box of light about the size of a huge furniture removal-van, a metre off the road, and moving across the desert. After a few minutes, it hovered over the sand-hill horizon, then faded, became smaller, and gradually disappeared."

Over the following few months, Doug said, the strange light appeared more frequently, and in varying forms, until his return to Perth last October.

Sometimes it was shaped like an inverted balloon, at other times like a beam, and it was often accompanied by a loud roar which Doug described as similar to that of a power drill.

One night he prepared to chase a cube of flashing lights in his Nissan patrol-van. But his battery was flat. *It was as if the lights had absorbed his electricity.* The battery was a three-month-old heavy-duty "Truckie", and it was completely flat.

"The next evening", said Doug, "the whole camp area was lit up by a square of very bright, white, light, and the diesel engine and generator went into overload, losing power, and the bright lights of the camp dimmed to very dull glows and died out. The diesel, weighing over 20 tonnes, and mounted on a steel skid, began to bounce up and down, making a real thumping sound on the ground."

Doug photographed three saucer-shaped objects flying in a formation, but the pictures came out a gold colour. Doug said: "The film processor said that meant the film had been subject to extreme heat and radiation".

Blind

He said the desert animals showed strange reactions to the lights and the flying objects.

"I saw night hawks, which have incredible eyesight, fly straight into the side of the drill, and I came across a deaf and blind dingo. Birds just dropped dead in my path."

Doug brought back with him a rock that he had found in a burnt saucer-shaped area which he described as about 14 m. in diameter. He said: "People at the Department of Physics at AAIT (West Australian Institute of Technology) said it had been heated to 1400 °C."

Doug wasn't deterred by his ordeal, and is already restless to "go bush" again.

ANOTHER ALASKAN REPORT?

IN an article by the Spanish reporter Fernando Mendoza carried in the newspaper *El Adelantado* of Salamanca (March 24, 1987) — and not so far as we know yet seen anywhere else — it is stated that at about 11.15 p.m. local time on March 17, 1987, near Anchorage, Alaska, four U.S. coastguards stationed in that region claimed to have observed separately (from different observation sites) a squadron of very brightly

shining UFOs travelling northwards towards the Pole. Mike Haller, a spokesman for the four men, expressed the opinion that what they had seen may have been some Space satellite coming down and burning up, or perhaps one of the U.S. "AWAC" radar early warning

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OBITUARY

Charles Bowen

by Professor R.H.B. Winder

OUR friend and colleague Charles Bowen, Editor of *Flying Saucer Review*, died on the 14 October 1987 after a long and debilitating illness which attacked him soon after retirement from his principal job. He was just 69 years old. Our deepest sympathies go to his Wife, Helen, and their four talented children.

Charles was a Londoner, born on the 21 September 1918 in Bermondsey, educated at Battersea Grammar School. War service took him to Norway and Sierra Leone with the Welsh Fusiliers, as a Staff Sergeant in Intelligence working on radio and radar. He was a man with many interests, and talents, none of them superficial, ranging from music to journalism. He loved Mozart and was a competent pianist, but he also wrote articles on Philately and Football, read (and spoke) Chaucer's English, and lectured on a variety of subjects. It is not surprising that such a wide view should lead him to an early interest in our subject and take him on to edit one of its leading journals.

He told the story of his first meeting with Waveney Girvan, his predecessor at the *Review*, when he wrote Waveney's obituary published in the November-December 1964 issue. They were introduced by a mutual acquaintance and fellow reader, only to discover that they commuted regularly on the same trains between Waterloo and Woking. For several years thereafter our enigmatic subject received regular and intensive airing on the Southern Railway. Charles' innate leanings towards journalism, the knowledge he gleaned from Waveney and the friendship that developed between them out of their shared interest made Charles the ideal successor when Waveney, sadly, died in October 1964.

Charles' twenty years of unpaid active service on the *Review* made him, by far, its longest serving editor. The magazine prospered under his stewardship, steadily increasing its circulation, its influence, and its world-wide circle of associates and friends expert in



the strange and controversial subject with which it deals. He also edited the remarkably successful and widely published *The Humanoids* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. He maintained a consistent commonsense policy in a field notorious for a dotty element which its strangeness is apt to foster. His sensible talks and discussions on television and radio in addition to his sober editing of the *Review* confounded those who would consign us to the madhouse, and contributed greatly to the measure of respect that the subject now enjoys.

We all owe him a great deal.

OBITUARY

Tim Dinsdale

FOLLOWING upon the sad loss of our erstwhile Editor Charles Bowen, FSR has recently sustained another crippling loss of a much loved and valued Consultant, for on December 17, 1987, the newspapers carried the report (*Daily Telegraph* of that date) of the sudden passing — and at the early age of only 63 years — of our old, old friend and colleague, Tim Dinsdale, famous for his books and for his many years spent in investigating the "*Loch Ness Monsters*" and other strange creatures.

Tim, a qualified aeronautical engineer by training, had had an extremely interesting life. Like myself, he spent many years in China, having lived there as a child. He even had the extraordinary experience of being one of 400 British children aboard a steamer which was captured by a huge band of Chinese pirates. (In fact, as a young Vice-Consul, I was one of

the diplomats who had the job of negotiating the children's release!)

Tim Dinsdale had a vast amount of knowledge ranging over a very wide field, not excluding what we term the "paranormal" or the "para-psychological". Like myself, he was a member of that very exclusive little body known as "*The Ghost Club*" (the oldest body of its kind in Britain — older even than the Society for Psychical Research where we were both members too), and I frequently had the pleasure of discussing with him some of the more "weird" features that beset both "our subject" and the subject of "*Fortean*" and mystery animals, etc., and we were in general agreement as to what lies behind it all.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes to his wife, Wendy, and their family. — G.C.

THE LOST HARRIER JET AND THE CORNFIELD RINGS: EXCLUSIVE!

© Colin Andrews, M.A.S.E.E., A.I.L.E., FSR Consultant

COMPLETE mystery still surrounds the top-secret British *Harrier GR5* jump-jet aircraft which, pilot-less, flew on for over 500 miles and eventually crashed into the Atlantic Ocean off the south coast of Ireland on Thursday, October 22, 1987.

The machine had taken off from Dunsfold in Surrey on a test flight at 16.59 hrs. with Pilot Humphrey Taylor Scott at the controls. Six minutes later, and without any hint of an emergency from its pilot, radio contact was suddenly lost over Wiltshire to the west.

The last radio message was a routine one, to air-traffic controllers at the top-secret Boscombe Down Air Force Base near Salisbury, Wiltshire.

Filed by Americans

Other aircraft were immediately alerted after the loss of radio contact, and an American military transporter made visual contact with the *Harrier* 90 miles to the west of the south-west tip of Ireland. The transporter was conveniently equipped with video camera, and filmed the *Harrier* in flight! The astonished American crew reported *that the jet-fighter had no cockpit canopy, and that its pilot was missing*. They shadowed the *Harrier* for 410 miles, until it finally went down 500 miles out over the Atlantic Ocean.

The Pilot Found

Despite a huge search operation, involving aircraft, shipping, life-boats and even mountain-rescue teams in South Wales, no trace of the pilot could be found. Then, on Friday, October 23, a gamekeeper, Mr Ken Pitman, came across the body of an airman lying in a field near the village of Winterbourne Stoke, near Stonehenge, in Wiltshire. A local television news programme gave this announcement as a late news item received at the end of the programme. I immediately got into my car and headed along the A303 Highway towards the village, which is just 18 miles from my home in Andover, Hampshire.

The location of Winterbourne Stoke already meant something to me, for it was in a cornfield near that village that a set of four mysterious circles of "swirled", flattened indentations had been found on Saturday, August 22, only eight weeks earlier. Photo 1 shows these large formations as they were when found, and was taken by Nigel Taylor as we flew over the area on one of our regular reconnaissance inspections of the area.

When I arrived at Winterbourne Stoke after hearing the news programme announcement, I at once made my way to the field where we had found these circles some weeks earlier.

A battery of floodlights cut into the darkened countryside, and surrounded a spot in a field just opposite to the site of our set of "mystery circles". A large gathering of Military Personnel could be seen moving around inside the illuminated area. A parachute lay nearby. In the darkness I could just make out two Army vehicles parked in the corner of that very field where the circles had been found. Whoever was in the vehicles was guarding an inflatable dinghy.

For some reason which I cannot explain (except to say that it was *intuitive* — EDITOR) I had had a

strong inner feeling that the finding of the pilot might in some way be associated with the phenomenon of the circles. And I had that feeling even before I heard where the accident had happened. Strangely, therefore, it did not come as a great surprise to me when I heard that the mishap to the pilot had taken place *above that very field where the circles had been*. It seemed only a confirmation.

I decided that the most responsible action I could take would be to contact the Ministry of Defence and inform them of my researches on the mystery rings in the cornfields throughout southern Britain in particular as well as in other parts of the world, and explain to them how this incident with the *Harrier* aircraft troubled me.

Reaction of Ministry of Defence

So on November 2, 1987, I telephoned to the Boscombe Down Air Force Base. They informed me that the *Harrier* inquiry had now been transferred to Prospect House in London, and advised me to talk to the man heading the inquiry, Squadron-Leader Graham Davis. I rang the telephone number which they had given me, and was answered by a Sq.-Ldr. Pike, who told me that Sq. Ldr. Davis was still out on Salisbury Plain conducting his investigations, and that it was he (Sq.-Ldr. Davis) to whom I should tell what I had to say.

Until that point I had made no mention of the cornfield circles. I now proceeded to tell Sq.-Ldr. Pike of our research and of our recent discoveries near this village of Winterbourne Stoke. *He was very interested, and asked me many questions*. "How do you think these circles are formed?" he asked. "What kind of energy do you suppose is involved?" "Where have you seen these things?" "Do you know of anybody who has seen one being formed?" etc., etc.

I explained that I believed the phenomenon was very rare indeed but nevertheless world-wide, but that this, the southern part of England, is experiencing a far higher frequency of reports than any other part of the entire world. And I concluded: *"What I feel to be significant is that this very field in which four circles were recently found lies directly below the area in Space where it seems that this pilot was taken out of his £13.5 million pounds' worth of Jet-fighter."*

Later on that same day I received a telephone call from the Ministry of Defence to advise me that my information had been conveyed to Sq.-Ldr. Davis, and that it had also been "conveyed to the Boss". "We will be in touch with you again soon," they said.

Pilot Changed Course

Nothing further has been heard from the Ministry so far. Meanwhile I have been carrying on with my own investigations and enquiries in and around Winterbourne Stoke, *and the information I have obtained confirms that the Harrier changed its course by a few degrees right over the field with the circles, and that the pilot inexplicably left his aircraft at about that point in his flight. He was not ejected by the ejector-seat with which the aircraft was fitted. That remained in the air. An inflatable dinghy left the aircraft with him, as*