

A glowing, saucer-shaped UFO is shown in flight against a sunset sky. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a bright orange and red near the horizon. In the foreground, the dark silhouette of a building and trees is reflected in the calm water of a lake. The overall mood is mysterious and dramatic.

THE

UFO

FILES

The Inside Story of Real-Life Sightings

David Clarke

THE UFO FILES

THE INSIDE STORY OF REAL-LIFE SIGHTINGS

DAVID CLARKE



The National Archives

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featured in the *Yorkshire Evening Press*
(20 September, 1952).

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CHAPTER TWO *'There may be flying saucers and there may not be. But this was something I have never seen before.'*

Sunday Dispatch, 21 September 1952

THE FLYING SAUCER AGE

AN EXTRACT

This is an edited extract from Chapter 2 of *The UFO Files* by David Clarke, published September 2009 by The National Archives. This book is largely based upon the real-life accounts of UFO experiences recorded in files collected by Britain's Ministry of Defence (MoD), many of which are today held by The National Archives, based in Kew, Richmond. Where applicable, National Archives document references are given in the text; original documents can be searched on the Catalogue at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue and viewed online at DocumentsOnline (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline).

Flying saucers over Farnborough

In 1950 Stan Hubbard was an experienced test pilot based at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough, site of one of the aeronautical industry's most important annual events, the September air show. On the morning of 15 August, a dry, clear summer's day, Flight Lieutenant Hubbard was walking along the airfield runway towards his quarters. He later recalled his attention was attracted by what he described as 'a strange distant humming sound'. I had the chance to interview him in 2002 and he remembered then how, turning to investigate, he saw in the direction of Basingstoke an object that looked

'for all the world like the edge-on view of a discus, the sort of discus we used to throw at sports day in school ... and it was rocking from side to side very slightly ... but maintaining a very straight approach. That was something that has stuck in my mind very clearly, vividly, to this day.'¹⁷

As it approached the airfield the sound emanating from the object increased in intensity to become 'a heavy, dominant humming with an associated subdued crackling-hissing ... which reminded me strongly of the noise inside a large active electrical power station.' He continued:

'It was light grey in colour, a bit like mother of pearl, but blurred. It was obviously reflecting light because as it rocked it looked like a pan lid as you rotate it, with segments of light rotating around. And I could see that around the edge as it went overhead, it was a different colour, it had a

FIG. 14 RAF test pilot Stan Hubbard, whose 1950 sighting triggered a secret investigation by the MoD.



definite edge to it. And the whole of the edge was a mass of tiny crackling, sparkling lights. And associated with that, there was a real impact of a very strong ozone smell.

‘There were no windows or portholes or any other characteristics at all. It was featureless, and the remarkable thing about it was there was no sound of air movement ... as the object was coming closer and then went overhead I tried to estimate its size, altitude and speed, but with the absence of any readily identifiable feature it was difficult to gauge these factors with any confidence... I guessed that its height above ground when first seen was probably between 700 and 1000 [ft] and since it certainly seemed to maintain altitude throughout the period of my observation, I guessed that it would have to be about 100 ft in diameter. It must have been travelling very fast, perhaps as high as 500 to 900 mph.’

Hubbard immediately reported this sighting to his commanding officer and soon afterwards received a visit from members of the Ministry of Defence’s Flying Saucer Working Party, which had been established that same month to look into the UFO mystery. Chaired by G.L. Turney, head of scientific intelligence at the Admiralty, it included five intelligence officers, two of whom were scientists, the other three representing the intelligence branches of the army, navy and RAF. Hubbard recalled the questions included:

“‘How high was it?’ ‘How big was it?’ ‘How fast was it?’ ‘What was it?’ ... and one question which I think reflects the tenor of the interview was: ‘What do you suppose the object was, and where would it have come from?’ I replied simply that in my opinion it was not something that had been designed and built on this Earth. Clearly, from the effect it had on the team, it was the wrong answer.’

The working party’s visit to Farnborough would not be the last. On the afternoon of 5 September 1950, just two weeks after Hubbard’s first observation, he saw what he believes was the same object again. On this occasion he was standing with five other serving RAF airmen on the watch-tower waiting for a display by the Hawker P.1081 when he spotted the object in the sky to the south of the airfield, towards Guildford. ‘I grabbed hold of the chap next to me,’ he recalled, ‘and said: “Hey, what do you think that is?” Pointing ... and he shouted “My God! Go get a camera quick! Go get some binoculars!”’

Hubbard and his colleagues then watched an incredible performance of aerobatics by what the official report describes as ‘a flat disc, light pearl in colour [and] about the size of a shirt button.’ Hubbard described it as ‘fluttering, as though bordering on instability, in a hovering mode, the object would swoop off in a slight dive at incredibly high speed and in quite stable flight, then stop abruptly and go into another fluttering hover

mode. This performance was repeated many times ... and it appeared that all this was taking place some eight to ten miles south of us over the Farnham area.'

The UFO was under observation for some 10 minutes during which the little crowd had swelled to more than a dozen RAF personnel. 'They were awestruck,' Hubbard recalls, 'but not one of them had a camera! I remember one of them saying "Sorry Stan, I didn't believe those first stories." It made my day.' Within 24 hours they were all questioned by the Flying Saucer Working Party. 'We were not given their names and we were strictly warned not to ask questions of them, nor make enquiries elsewhere in the Ministry', Hubbard said. 'We were also warned not to discuss the subject later, even amongst ourselves in private.'

Despite his misgivings Hubbard believed the assurance given by the Air Ministry member of the team that he 'had never had a more reliable and authentic sighting than ours.' He was unaware of the outcome of this investigation until he got to see a copy of the working party's final report after its release in 2001. In its summary of Hubbard's initial sighting the report said there was no doubt the experienced test pilot had honestly described what he had seen,

'but we find it impossible to believe that a most unconventional aircraft, of exceptional speed, could have travelled at no great altitude, in the middle of a fine summer morning, over a populous and air-minded district like Farnborough, without attracting the attention of more than one observer.' (DEFE 44/119)

Accordingly, they concluded he was 'the victim of an optical illusion, or that he observed some quite normal type of aircraft and deceived himself about its shape and speed.' The report then turned its attention to the second incident, which they described as 'an interesting example of one report influencing another.' Although Hubbard believed the objects he saw on both occasions were identical, the authors felt this opinion was of little value. While they had no doubt a flying object of some sort had been seen,

'we again find it impossible to believe that an unconventional aircraft, manoeuvring for some time over a populous area, could have failed to attract the attention of other observers. We conclude that the officers in fact saw some quite normal aircraft, manoeuvring at extreme visual range, and were led by the previous report to believe it to be something abnormal.' (DEFE 44/119)

The working party were satisfied this solution was correct because of another example of misperception reported to them by the Air Ministry member of their team, Wing Commander Myles Formby. Whilst on a rifle

The UFO was under observation for some 10 minutes during which the little crowd had swelled to more than a dozen RAF personnel. 'They were awestruck,' Hubbard recalls

range near Portsmouth he spotted what he at first thought was a 'flying saucer' in the distance.

'Visibility was good, there being a cloudless sky and bright sunshine. The object was located and held by a telescope and gave the appearance of being a circular shining disc moving on a regular flight path. It was only after observation had been kept for several minutes, and the altitude of the object changed so that it did not reflect the sunlight to the observer's eye, that it was identified as being a perfectly normal aircraft.' (DEFE 44/119)

Sceptics and believers

During the summer of 1952 there was a new wave of sightings across the world. In America more than 500 sightings were reported to the United States Air Force in July alone, leading future CIA director Major General Charles P. Cabell to launch a new UFO project, Blue Book, under the control of the Air Technical Intelligence Center with Captain Ruppelt as its director.

For the Americans, the most alarming of these sightings occurred in the US capital, Washington DC. On 19 and 20 July 1952, strange moving blips appeared on radars at Washington's National Airport and at Andrews Air Force Base. The phenomena reappeared the following weekend, sometimes moving slowly, then reversing and moving off at incredible speed. Aircraft were scrambled, but the crews saw nothing, despite being vectored towards targets that were visible on ground radar. At the same time, civilian aircrew and ground controllers reported seeing strange lights whilst the phenomena were visible on radar. These events alarmed the Truman administration and led the *New York Times* to demand why 'a jet fighter of Air Defence Command, capable of a speed of 600 miles an hour, failed to catch one of the "objects"'.¹⁸

A huge press conference was called at the Pentagon as officials moved to calm public fears. High-ranking figures, including the director of United States Air Force intelligence, Major General John Samford, reassured the assembled media the radar blips were probably the result of temperature inversions created by the hot summer weather. These types of unusual conditions, he said, could produce false echoes on radar screens.

Samford's public reassurances followed those given to authority figures in private: President Harry Truman himself had been sufficiently concerned to phone Captain Ruppelt asking for an explanation. And Truman was not the only national leader who read the newspaper headlines. On 28 July, the day before the Washington press conference, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had sent a memo to his Secretary of State for Air and copied it to Lord Cherwell, one of his most trusted scientific advisors. This demanded:

‘What does all this stuff about flying saucers amount to? What can it mean? What is the truth? Let me have a report at your convenience.’
(PREM II / 855)

The Prime Minister received a reassuring response from the Air Ministry on 9 August 1952. Preserved alongside Churchill’s memo at the National Archives, it said UFOs were the subject of ‘a full intelligence study in 1951’ that had concluded all incidents reported could be explained by natural phenomena, misperceptions of aircraft, balloons and birds, optical illusions, psychological delusions and deliberate hoaxes. Churchill was told that an earlier investigation, carried out by Project Grudge in 1948–9 had reached a similar conclusion and that ‘nothing has happened since 1951 to make the Air Staff change their opinion, and, to judge from recent Press statements, the same is true in America.’

The government’s Chief Scientist, Lord Cherwell (Frederick Lindemann) said he ‘agreed entirely’ with the Air Ministry and, in a minute circulated to Cabinet members, dismissed the American saucer scare as ‘a product of mass psychology’. But not everyone was so convinced. A 2009 release by the Churchill Archives included a letter from Duncan Sandys, then Minister of Supply, to Cherwell that stated: ‘There may, as you say, be no real evidence of the existence of flying saucer *aircraft*, but there is in my view ample evidence of some unfamiliar and unexplained phenomenon.’¹⁹

The division in the establishment between those who ‘believed’ that reports of flying saucers should be taken seriously, such as Duncan Sandys and Lord Mountbatten, and those who dismissed the whole subject as

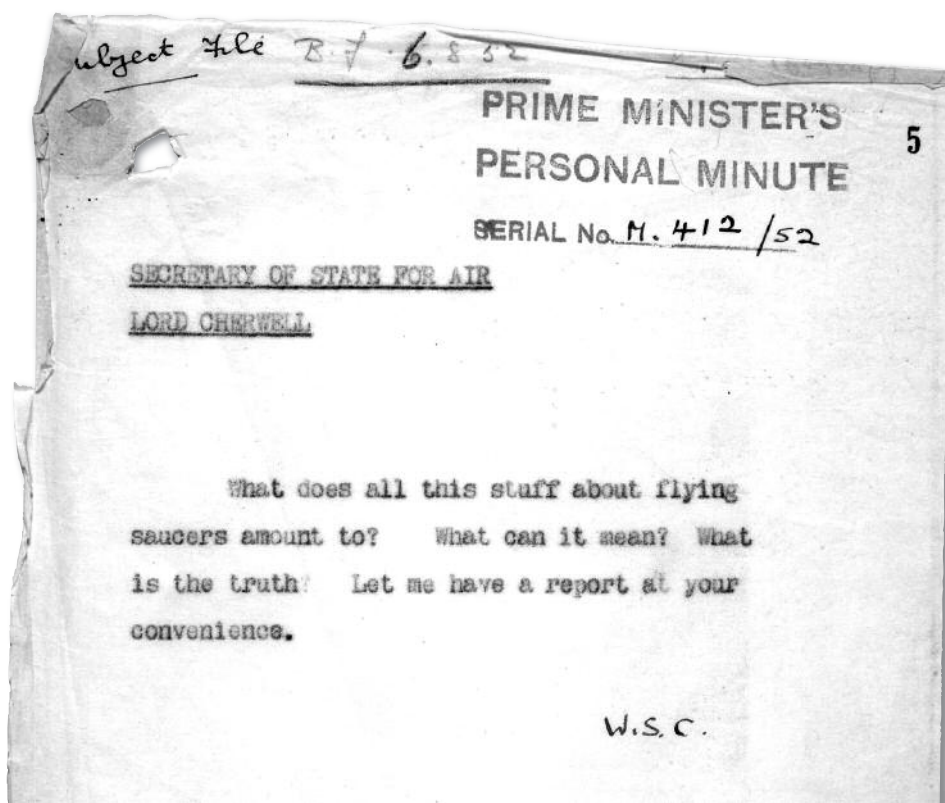


FIG. 15 Following a ‘flap’ of UFO sightings over Washington DC, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill asked the Secretary of State for Air: ‘What does all this stuff about flying saucers amount to?’
PREM II/855

'mass hysteria' was growing. The sceptics tended to be scientists, who applied cold logic to the UFO question and demanded solid evidence, and their opinion was ultimately the most influential.

The Topcliffe incident

With the debate ongoing, events were to take another unexpected turn when a fresh series of sightings occurred during a major NATO exercise in Europe, Operation Mainbrace. The most dramatic was reported by a group of Shackleton aircrew who saw a circular silver object above the airfield at RAF Topcliffe, North Yorkshire, on the afternoon of 19 September 1952. A report made to Topcliffe's commanding officer by one of the men, Flight Lieutenant John Kilburn of 269 Squadron, can be found among the Fighter Command papers preserved at the National Archives. In this Kilburn said he was standing on the airfield with four other Shackleton aircrew watching a Meteor fighter descending:

'The Meteor was at approximately 5,000 feet and approaching from the east. Flt Lt Paris suddenly noticed a white object in the sky at a height between ten and twenty thousand feet some five miles astern of the Meteor. The object was silver in colour and circular in shape, it appeared to be travelling at a much slower speed than the Meteor but was on a similar course. It maintained the slow forward speed for a few seconds before commencing to descend, swinging in a pendular motion during descent similar to a falling sycamore leaf. This was at first thought to be a parachute or engine cowling. The Meteor, meanwhile, turned towards Dishforth and the object, while continuing its descent, appeared to follow suit. After a further few seconds, the object stopped its pendulous motion and its descent, and began to rotate on its own axis. Suddenly it accelerated at an incredible speed towards the west turning onto a south easterly heading before disappearing. All this occurred in a matter of fifteen to twenty seconds. The acceleration was in excess of that of a shooting star. I have never seen such a phenomenon before. The movements of the object were not identifiable with anything I have seen in the air and the rate of acceleration was unbelievable.' (AIR 16/1199)

As in America, the year 1952 was to be a busy one for UFOs and the Topcliffe incident was just the first in a series of reports made by military personnel that reached the Air Ministry. There were also a growing number of incidents involving the tracking of fast-moving unidentified objects on RAF radars. For example, on 21 October 1952 a flying instructor and his Royal Navy student were in a Meteor jet on exercise from the RAF's central flying school at Little Rissington, Gloucestershire, when they saw three saucer-shaped UFOs. Flight Lieutenant Michael Swiney, who later served

in air intelligence and retired at the rank of Air Commodore, vividly remembers this encounter. The circular, plate-like objects were also clearly observed by his student, Lieutenant David Crofts. They became visible when the Meteor punched through a layer of cloud at around 12,000 ft. Initially Swiney thought they were three parachutes descending towards them. Crofts described them as elliptical in shape and iridescent, like circular pieces of glass reflecting the sun.

Shaken, Swiney abandoned the training flight and reported the sighting to ground control. The objects, stationary at first, appeared to change pos-

FIG. 16 A sighting of a 'flying saucer' by RAF Shackleton aircrew in Yorkshire during a NATO exercise made news headlines in September 1952.

FIG. 17 Details of the Topcliffe incident were circulated to Air Ministry intelligence in this message dated 20 September 1952. AIR 20/7390



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AM/DD. OPS. (AD) 12/4274/P MESSAGE
(Received 20th September, 1952)

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Reptd. to:- Air Ministry London.

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A 1/41 Sep. 19

File on folders 58.

88K 25/9.

Following unusual incident observed R.A.F. Topcliffe by number officers and aircrew 191053 local time. Meteor aircraft observed at approx. 500 feet and descending. White object was seen 5 miles astern at approx. 15000 feet and moving at comparatively slow speed on similar course. Object was silver in colour and circular. It maintained slow forward speed before commencing descent. Swinging in pendular motion like a falling sycamore leaf. Thought by observers to be parachute or cowl from Meteor aircraft. Aircraft had turned towards Dishforth and object. Whilst still descending, appeared to follow suit. Pendulous motion and descent ceased and object began rotary motion about its own axis. Suddenly accelerated at an incredible speed in westerly direction but turning to a S.E. course. Observers stated that its movements were not identifiable with anything they had seen in the air and acceleration was in excess of that of a shooting star. Duration of incident 1 5/20 seconds.

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ition and then vanished. Subsequently he learned that aircraft were scrambled by Fighter Command to intercept these UFOs. When I interviewed Michael Swiney in 2004 he recalled his reaction:

'I was frightened, I make no bones about it. It was something supernatural, perhaps, and when I landed someone told me I looked as if I had seen a ghost. I immediately thought of saucers, because that was actually what they looked like... I even put an entry in my logbook, which reads: "saucers! ... 3 'flying saucers' sighted at height, confirmed by GCI [radar]."'²⁰

On landing at Little Rissington the two men were ordered to remain in their quarters until the following day, when an Air Ministry team arrived to interview them. The team took statements and asked the men to draw what they had seen. Swiney's student, David Crofts, recalled he was told 'they [Air Intelligence] had been in communication with every country in the world that was likely to have that sort of aircraft in the vicinity and drew a blank.' When I interviewed him in 2004 he remembered: 'They also said they [the UFOs] had been picked up on radar; fighters had been scrambled and the target had a ground speed of 600 knots, heading east but the fighters saw nothing, didn't make a contact and returned to base.'²¹

Despite this clear testimony it appears the men's statements describing

FIG. 18 An extract from the Operations Record Book of RAF Little Rissington that includes a sighting of 'three mysterious saucer-shaped objects' by the crew of a RAF Meteor jet on 21 October 1952. AIR 29/2310

SECRET				PAGE NO. 2
PLACE	DATE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS	REF. TO APPENDICES
Central Flying School (Advanced) Little Rissington	October, 1952			
	17.10.52.		Squadron Leader D. G. H. SIMMONS led a team consisting of Flight Lieutenant W. J. STACY and Flight Lieutenant W. H. CADAMY on a visit to No. 603 Squadron, (R. Aux. A.F.) THORHABY. Tests were carried out on Meteor and Harvard aircraft.	
	20.10.52.		Squadron Leader H. E. WHITE, D.F.C., A.F.C., led a team from No. 1 Squadron, Examining Wing on a visit to No. 6 F.T.S. TREWELL. The team consisted of Lieutenant E. C. SPRAGG, R.N., Flight Lieutenant G. ALLAN, M.C., and Flight Lieutenant J. M. NICHOLSON. Tests were conducted on Harvard aircraft.	
			Squadron Leader D. G. H. SIMMONS led a team from No. 3 Squadron Examining Wing on a visit to No. 226 O.C.U. STRADISHALL. The team consisted of Flight Lieutenant J. C. STEELE and Flight Lieutenant E. L. TEBBUTT. Tests were conducted on Meteor aircraft.	
	21.10.52.		Flight Lieutenant M. J. E. SWINEY, instructor, and Lieutenant D. CROFTS, R.N., student, sighted three mysterious, "saucer shaped objects" travelling at high speed at about 35,000' whilst on a high level navigation exercise, in a Meteor VII. Later, A.T.C.C. Gloucester reported radar plots to confirm this, but Air Ministry discounted any possibility of "extra terrestrial objects".	
	22.10.52.		The first of the D.4 Link Trainers to re-equip the Link School was installed.	
	27.10.52.		Squadron leader H. E. WHITE, D.F.C., A.F.C., led a team consisting of Flight Lieutenant L. J. COOK, Flight Lieutenant R. E. HERBERT, Lieutenant E. C. SPRAGG, R.N., and Flight Lieutenant G. ALLAN, M.C. to No. 1 Grazing Unit, DIGBY. Tests were conducted on Tiger Moth aircraft.	
			Squadron Leader W. T. ELLIS, A.F.C., led a team consisting of Flight Lieutenant R. A. DEWILDE, Flight Lieutenant K. L. TEBBETT, Flight Lieutenant F. H. P. GATLE, and Flight Lieutenant W. H. CADAMY on a visit to No. 207 A.F.S., FULL SUTTON. Tests were conducted on Meteor aircraft.	
SECRET				PAGE NO. 3
OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK				
Instructions for use of this Form are contained in R.R. 249 / A.P. 1301 (Chapter XX) and A.P. 3040.			OF (Unit or Formation) Central Flying School (Advanced) R.A.F. Little Rissington.	No. OF PAGES USED FOR MONTH Four
PLACE	DATE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS	REF. TO APPENDICES
Central Flying School (Advanced)	October, 1952			
	21.10.52.		Flight Lieutenant R. H. LAMBY	

this dramatic incident were subsequently destroyed. On his retirement, Air Commodore Swiney made inquiries with the MoD hoping to locate a copy of his original report on the incident. He was amazed to learn that most records of UFOs before 1962 had been routinely shredded. Today all that remains in the files at the National Archives is a single surviving reference in the flying school's operations record book which simply records how the two men 'sighted three mysterious "saucer-shaped objects" travelling at high speed at about 35,000 feet whilst on a high level navigation exercise.' The document adds that air traffic control later reported radar plots that appeared to confirm their report 'but Air Ministry discounted any possibility of "extra terrestrial objects."' ²²

Writing in 1988 Ralph Noyes, who was private secretary to the Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Ralph Cochrane, at the time recalled their 'own embarrassed unease, widely shared by the [RAF] operations staff, that "our own people" had begun to fall for "that saucer nonsense".' Indeed, as a direct result of these incidents a decision was taken in 1953 that the Air Ministry should investigate UFO reports on a permanent basis and responsibility was delegated by the Chief of the Air Staff to a section of the air technical intelligence branch, DDI (Tech). The memoirs of Captain Edward Ruppelt refer to an exchange visit to Project Blue Book's base at Wright-Patterson airfield, Ohio, by two RAF officers shortly afterwards. In his *Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*, published in 1956, Ruppelt revealed the officers were in the USA 'on a classified mission' during which one admitted the sightings during Operation Mainbrace had 'caused the RAF to officially recognise the UFO.'

From angels to aliens

One of the features of the UFO phenomenon that most concerned the Air Ministry was visual sightings that appeared to be corroborated by radar operators, as featured in the report by Michael Swiney and David Crofts. Unexplained phenomena had been tracked on RAF radars early in the Second World War (see p.25 of *The UFO*) and again during the 'ghost plane' flap of 1947 (see p.33 of *The UFO Files*), but until 1952 none of these had involved visual sightings.

In his history of UK air defence radar systems, *Watching the Skies*, Jack Gough says that 'angel' and 'ghost' echoes continued to plague RAF radars during the early 1950s. They sometimes appeared from the ground 'as a cloud of responses very similar to the echoes obtained by small aircraft'. When tracked as individual echoes they could easily be mistaken for military aircraft as they followed a steady course and were plotted at heights from 2,000 ft to 10,000 ft. ²³

The Air Ministry turned to their scientists to provide a solution to this

problem. Initially there were two competing theories to explain ‘angels’. The first was they were caused by unusual conditions in the atmosphere that created pockets of air that bent and reflected radar beams to produce false targets on radars. This appeared likely, but could not explain how some ‘angels’ moved against the prevailing winds or faster than measured wind speeds.

Staff at coastal radar stations had linked ‘angels’ on their screens with flights of seabirds spotted with the naked eye. On rare occasions large individual birds had been known to cause chaos

The second more improbable-seeming theory was that angels were really formations of birds flying to and from their breeding grounds as part of their annual migrations. At the time the few ornithologists who were using radar to study bird movements had problems persuading the RAF to take this theory seriously. However, during the war staff at coastal radar stations had linked ‘angels’ on their screens with flights of seabirds spotted with the naked eye. On rare occasions large individual birds had been known to cause chaos. Barry Huddart, who served with Fighter Command HQ in 1957, recalled one incident ‘when fighters were scrambled to intercept an echo on a radar screen which turned out to be a Golden Eagle at 25,000 ft in a jet stream, very unusual but nonetheless true.’²⁴

By 1957 Fighter Command HQ was so concerned by the ‘angel’ problem that it ordered a secret investigation by its Research Branch. The two-year study was to combine the skills of its radar technicians with the expertise of British ornithologists. Selected RAF radar stations around the east coast were asked to send film from their radar cameras for analysis. Meanwhile, morbid experiments were carried out to measure the echoing area of various types of birds. Dead animals were obtained from bird sanctuaries and their bodies were wrapped in cellophane and then whirled around whilst radar was bounced off them to measure their ‘echoing area’.

The investigation was concentrated around one key radar station where ‘angels’ had been frequently reported. RAF Trimmingham on the north Norfolk coast was one of the first to be equipped with a new powerful radar, the Type 80. Ornithologist David Lack used this to track ‘angel’ echoes for a year. His study revealed the heaviest ‘angel’ activity occurred during the spring and autumn months, usually at night in calm weather when birds were migrating over the sea. Lack and his colleagues were able to demonstrate that what the radar operators were actually seeing were flocks of small birds migrating to and from East Anglia and Continental Europe. These observations led the RAF inquiry to conclude in 1958 that most ‘angel’ echoes on radar were caused by birds after all.²⁵

Nevertheless, a big problem remained. How could ‘angels’ be eliminated

from radar without playing havoc with the tracking and control of military aircraft? The answer was a gadget that simply tuned out the ‘noise’ created by the presence of smaller birds and other clutter from radar screens whilst at the same time increasing the strength and visibility of echoes created by aircraft. This system was simplified further when all ‘friendly’ aircraft were fitted with transponders that transmit a coded identification signal to ground stations.

Advances in radar technology may help explain why the majority of accounts describing UFOs on radar were made during the 1940s and 1950s, before technological innovations removed the noise that plagued older systems. The older post-war radars appear to have been more effective detectors of a range of natural and unusual phenomena including ‘angels’. Once computers were used to remove anything that did not behave like an aircraft from screens, reports of UFOs on radar became fewer. This was brought home to me during a visit to a busy RAF radar control centre in 2005. When I asked one of the operators if they ever detected radar UFOs she replied, with a smile: ‘Sometimes, but when we spot one we just send for the technicians who come along and tune them out.’

NOTES ON THE TEXT

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| <p>17 Extract from interview with S. Hubbard, 18 April 2002;</p> <p>18 <i>New York Times</i>, quoted in <i>The Times</i>, 30 July 1952;</p> <p>19 Churchill Archives, University of Cambridge, Lord Duncan Sandys papers, DSND 15/4;</p> <p>20 Extract from interview with Michael Swiney, 13 March 2002;</p> | <p>21 Extract from interview with David Crofts, 26 February 2002;</p> <p>22 AIR 29 /2310;</p> <p>23 J. Gough, <i>Watching the Skies</i> (HMSO 1993);</p> <p>24 RAF Radar Museum newsletter no. 35–36, April–July 2003;</p> <p>25 AIR16 /1485.</p> |
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'What does all this stuff about flying saucers amount to? What can it mean? What is the truth?'

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The UFO Files tells the story of over 100 years of UFO sightings, drawing on formerly secret government records at the National Archives. Alongside extraordinary reports by ordinary people it reveals details of official interest and investigations stretching back to before the First World War – for although the terms UFO and Flying Saucer were not coined until the middle of the twentieth century, people have long seen things in the sky that they could not explain.



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David Clarke is Senior Lecturer in Journalism at Sheffield Hallam University. He has a long-standing interest in UFOs and other aerial phenomena, and has worked with the National Archives in promoting UFO material recently released by the Ministry of Defence. He is an experienced journalist, contributing to the *Yorkshire Post* and other newspapers and magazines including *BBC History*, as well as acting as researcher and consultant to a range of radio and television productions. He is the author of *The Angel of Mons* (2004).



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