

# A SUSSEX DRAGON LEGEND

by John C. Hugill

The Winterfold and Cranleigh district of Surrey is only a short distance north of the county boundary with Sussex. Remembering John Michell's interesting speculations about British dragon (or Worm) legends,\* we were intrigued to learn of Mr. Hugill's discovery of an ancient dragon tale located close to our present-day "spectre territory".

THE Spectre of Winterfold (FSR January/February 1968 p.15) is an eerie-sounding monster which quite recently gave two young people some moments of very real horror. Even they, as time goes on, will find it sometimes hard to believe that they ever encountered such an apparition, and so it is the more strangely coincidental to read, in one of E. V. Lucas' books about Sussex, an account of some oddly similar hauntings which took place only 10 UFO miles away, a little more than 350 years ago. Here is the story, taken from the Harleian Miscellany, dated August 1614, and entitled:

"True and Wonderful. A discourse relating a strange and monstrous serpent (or Dragon) lately discovered, and yet living, to the great annoyance and divers slaughters both of man and cattell, by his strong and violent poyson: in Sussex, two miles from Horsden, in a Woode called St. Leonard's Forrest, and thirtie miles from London, this present month of August 1614. With the true Generation of Serpents".

The story goes on:

"In Sussex, there is a pretty market-towne, called Horsden, neare unto it a forrest, called St. Leonard's Forrest, and there, in a vast and unfrequented place, heathie, vaultie, full of unwholesome shades, and overgrowne hollows, where this serpent is thought to be bred; but, wheresoever bred, certaine and too true it is, that there it yet lives. Within 3 or 4 miles compass, are its usual haunts, oftentimes at a place called Faygate, and it hath been seene within halfe a mile of Horsam; a wonder, no doubt, most terrible and noisome to the inhabitants thereabouts. There is always in his tracke or path left a glutinous or slimie matter (as by a small similitude we may perceive in a snaile's) which is very corrupt and offensive to the scent; insomuch that they perceive the air to be putrified withall, which must needs be very dangerous. For though the corruption of it cannot strike the outward part of a man, unless heated into his blood; yet by receiving it in at any of our breathing organs (the mouth or nose) it is by authoritie of all authors, writing in that kinde, mortall and deadlie, as one thus saith:  
"Noxia serpentum est admixto sanguine pertis"—  
Lucan.

"This serpent (or dragon, as some call it) is reputed to be nine feete, or rather more, in length, and shaped almost in the forme of an axeltree of a cart; a quantitie of thickness in the middest, and somewhat smaller at bothe endes. The former part, which he shootes forth

as a necke, is supposed to be an elle long; with a white ring, as it were, of scales about it. The scales along his backe seem to be blackish, and so much as is discovered under his bellie, appeareth to be red; for I speak of no nearer description than of a reasonable ocular distance. For coming too neare it, hath already beene too dearly payd for, as you shall heare hereafter.

"It is likewise discovered to have large feete but the eye may be there deceived; for some suppose that serpents have no feete, but glide upon certain ribbes and scales, which both defend them from the upper part of their throat unto the lower part of their bellie, and also cause them to move much the faster. For so this doth, and rids way (as we call it) as fast as a man can run. He is of countenance very proud, and at the sight or nearing of men or cattel, will raise his necke upright, and seem to listen and looke about, with great arrogancy. There are likewise on either side of him discovered, two great bunches so big as a large football, and (as some thinke) will in time grow to wings; but God, I hope, will (to defend the poor people in the neighbour-hood) that he shall be destroyed before he grows so fledge.

"He will cast his venom about 4 rodde (22yds.-Ed.) from him, as by woeful experience it was proved on the bodies of a man and a woman comming that way, who afterwards were found dead, being poysoned and very much swelled, but not preyed upon. Likewise a man going to chase it, as he imagined, to destroy it with two mastive dogs, and yet not knowing the great danger of it, his dogs were both killed, and he himself glad to returne with haste to preserve his own life. Yet this is to be noted, that the dogs were not preyed upon, but slaine and left whole: for his food is thought to be, for the most part, in a conie-warren, which he much frequents; and it is found much scanted and impaired in the encrease it had woont to afford."

A horrifying monster indeed, with a number of suggestive attributes which we may recognise in many subsequent accounts. One wonders whether it may have been that same odour of putrefaction which so frightened young Philip Freeman and his companion. Again, the shape of it is interestingly described, when one thinks of the acute terror which must have seized eye-witnesses. Could it not be drawn as opposite and what might not that suggest to a present-day observer?

Immediately after quoting this fascinating story (and incidentally 22 yards *is* a long way to spit venom, but not to project it by more sophisticated means), E. V.



Lucas goes on to mention the reported presence of a "headless horseman" in the same neighbourhood, whose gruesome habit it was to mount suddenly behind some unsuspecting rider, and grip him round the midriff with his arm. Now look at Freeman's sketch of the Winterfold Spectre, and who can say that it might not have done the same?

\* See *The Flying Saucer Vision* by John Michell. (Sidgwick and Jackson, 25s.)

# A MINISTRY OF DEFENCE EXPLANATION

## The Angus Brooks Sighting

To Mr. Brooks

### The Angus Brooks Sighting A Ministry of Defence explanation

Sir,—

1. As promised at our meeting I am writing to let you know the conclusions we have reached on your report about the object you saw at Owermoigne on 26th October.

2. The information which you provided both in your written reports and your discussion has been most carefully checked. We have also examined all possible activities in the area which might have given rise to your sighting but have been unable to trace any other evidence of unusual or unauthorised aerial activity. In addition, in spite of the extensive local publicity on the television, radio and in the Press no corroborating reports have been received. Whilst it is true that the spot from which you made the observation is relatively remote, we did see some human activity during our walk to and from it last month; a farm worker on a tractor and a van on the road on the opposite hillside. It seems unlikely that an object, which you estimated as having an overall length of 150 feet could have hovered above the horizon for 22 minutes, unnoticed by anyone else.

3. We do not doubt that the experience which you have described was a very vivid one, nor have we overlooked your long association with aviation. However we are unable to agree with your conclusion that you saw a controlled flying vehicle of unique design and performance. I know that this

may seem to contradict you, but I am sure you will understand that the information you have given us is capable of other interpretations which we believe are the more likely explanation of what you saw.

4. The explanation is this. You have told us that on the morning of 26th October, 1967 you were walking with your dogs on Moigne Down. There was a gale force wind blowing and you decided to shelter from it and at the same time to look for something unusual in the sky, that is to say, a bright star which you hoped you might see in daylight. You first saw a contrail which was the normal vapour trail produced by high flying aircraft, but this had no physical connection with the subsequent sequence of events. The next thing you saw was a vitreous floater—a piece of dead matter (a dead cell) floating in the fluid of the eyeball. Such objects appear as rods and/or discs, are present in most people's eyes and are more noticeable when one is looking at a brightly lit source of even colouring such as a clear sky. The fact that you had an eye injury some years ago, since repaired by a corneal transplant, makes it possible that there may have been some larger floaters than usual. There are several similarities between the object you described and the floater, particularly its translucency and the slightly darker centre line of the rod-like components. The downwards and transverse movement of the object is compatible with the natural movement of a floater when the eye is held stationary and the direction and

speed of departure of the object match the movement of a floater when the eye is flicked upwards. However, it is unlikely that the floater would have remained stationary for as long as 22 minutes. But, you will recall that you had the impression that the sighting lasted for a much shorter period than the 22 minutes shown on your watch. It seems possible, therefore, that on lying down, after walking over rough country in a force 8 gale you were feeling a little tired and you fell asleep or entered a near sleep state.

5. There had been a great deal of publicity in October about UFO sightings and this, the floater and the fact that you had been looking for an object in the sky could have triggered off a dream in which the floater took on the more elaborate form you have described. Your instant knowledge and certainty of its size and distance and intent are all suggestive of the immediate and inexplicable awareness which are characteristic of many dreams. The distress of your Alsatian could be explained by her finding you in an unusual state, asleep in the open air, rather than by the presence of an unusual object.

6. I recognise that you might find our conclusions unsatisfactory but in the light of the information available to us, we must form our own judgement about the object you have described. As I have said, we have no other evidence of any unusual aerial activity in Dorset that day nor, despite wide publicity, has any other witness come forward. While it would be intellec-

tually arrogant to dispute the hypothesis that in the infinity of space, there could be other intelligent life, we have no proof of this. Neither have the reports of unidentified flying objects passed to us provided evidence that extra-terrestrial craft have visited earth. Our radar cover is such that we are also quite satisfied that there is no clandestine aerial activity over the United Kingdom under terrestrial control. With respect, your report does not give us cause to alter or amend these conclusions.

7. Finally, I should like to thank you very much indeed for your extremely detailed and interesting report and for the kind welcome and whole-hearted co-operation you gave to Mr. Dickison, Mr. Cassie and myself when we visited you in February.

L. W. Akhurst, Ministry of Defence, Main Building, Whitehall, London, S.W.1.

April 5, 1968.

### Moigne Down UFO

Sir,—Thank you for your Report awaiting my return to Owermoigne. I will forward copies together with this reply to the other Commissions as your approach to the subject should be of interest to their studies.

I propose to take your report by paragraph and comment.

#### Paragraph 2.

1. Corroborative reports in the area were received, these were night sightings of "star" and "dart" shaped craft. Either format could be affected by the Moigne Down UFO with its fuselage control.

2. On the day of your visit there was one farm worker on our side of the valley and one van passed along the far road on the other side. This confirms that the percentage of activity

in such a large and remote area is so low that on the day of the sighting it was more than possible that I was alone in the area. This had been the case in the previous eight months.

#### Paragraph 3.

1. The report of any one person's experience can open interpretation permutations covering the range from frank disbelief to "Establishment" oriented conclusions and I cannot but think that your contradiction of my interpretation of the very vivid experience that you agree I had, must stem from the latter. Your paragraph 4 only strengthens this thought.

#### Paragraph 4.

1. The "con" trail mentioned was not a normal vapour trail as it disappeared almost at once and must have been the craft's angled reflection in the sun. Vapour trails, as we know, continue with the aircraft and produce lengthy "streamer" effects.

2. The "Floater" theory (What an unfortunate choice of name, means: Mistake. Bloomer. in dictionary "slang"!). The Musca Volant, my specialist informs me, moves upwards and downwards and, as the craft entered the vision circle at 30 deg. moved across descending to centre of vision . . hovered for 22 minutes . . then exited vision circle at 320 deg., this hardly conforms. As my eyes were not stationary during the observation . . the chances of the exact similar shaped Musca Volant being present in both eyes at the exact same time can be discounted. The corneal implant of two years before had only improved the vision and M.V.'s had not been noticeable in the eye concerned. I understand that rod like M.V.'s are exceedingly rare and seldom, if ever, linked.

3. In our discussion, my comment was not that my impression of the observation was shorter than the elapsed time, but, that after a period, I had lost the feeling of time due to the interest and admiration I was feeling for the craft's construction and of its non-aggressive appearance.

4. I walk daily for around two hours over rough country in all met. conditions and wind forces. I do not stop for rest, as I look upon this walk in the same way as I used to run each morning for exercise when at the office, and, as for sleeping en route . . please!! The fact that the gale was howling and my Alsatian was painfully pawclawing me to leave the spot was hardly conducive to "dropping off".

#### Paragraph 5.

1. It is normally contended that dream "triggers" are of more personal involvement than everyday news and I had not been particularly interested in the UFO "splashes" at that time.

2. My instant knowledge, certainly of size, distant and intent are indeed suggestive of the immediate awareness of the existence of the craft.

3. The Alsatian would not obey spoken or physical orders to remain still on the day and, on the two following days (with witnesses) at the site, showed distress which could only have been attributable to having been pained or frightened at the craft's appearance. She could have received high VVHF signals.

#### Paragraph 6.

1. In your conclusions your disadvantage is, of course, that I was there at the time and any Investigation Commission can only work on the creditability of second hand report details combined with technical, medical and scientific assistance, so, with



View of hillside from which Mr. Angus Brooks (position arrowed) observed his cruciform UFO on October 16, 1967. Photograph taken by reader F. E. Marshall of Portland, looking West from nearest usable road



Angus Brooks clothed as he was on October 26, lies in the shallow hollow on the hillside pointing in the direction in which he saw the UFO. One of the Dalmatian dogs—with an Alsatian, now dead—accompanied him on the walk. Photo by F. E. Marshall

reciprocal respect, your conclusions have not given me cause to alter my opinion of the Moigne Down UFO.

Although, at the start of this experience, I had no wish to become involved in the UFO story, I now find I am interested enough to be doing some thinktank work on this. May I

suggest that "Fatigue Mirages" and "Ghostings" be given some "lateral" thought by your department and on completion of my studies, I will pass my results for discussion between us.

We should be happy to see you any time you are in this area, I enjoyed our meeting; next time, who knows, the

Moigne Down UFO may give you the doubtful "privilege" of seeing it. My best regards to John Dickison and Alec Cassie and, of course, to yourself.

Angus Brooks, "Grasshoppers",  
Chilbury Gardens, Overmoigne,  
Dorset.

April 28, 1968

# World round-up

## ENGLAND UFOs over Brough

The *Westmorland Gazette* of Kendal for May 24, carried this item,—

"Following the current trend of appearances of Unidentified Flying Objects, several particularly bold ones are reported to have presented themselves recently in the Brough area.

"They were sighted soon after midnight by three people travelling in a van on a secondary road between Barnard Castle and Brough. Mr. and Mrs. A. Luisi and their daughter Angela were on their way home to 11 Garburn Road, Kendall.

"The phenomenon was first spotted by Angela as she looked through the skylight of their van. She saw 'a white revolving mass like a whirlpool' which she says lit up the whole sky. Mrs. Luisi describes what she saw as 'a large orange ball of fire followed by five small ones.'

"With a flash of light, the objects vanished, leaving the sky black and empty.

"We have travelled abroad for thousands of miles and have been in some very bad storms, but we have never seen anything like this.' Mrs. Luisi said."

## NORTHERN IRELAND

"Football-sized" UFO over Armagh.

A report from the South-Western part of Co. Armagh was published in the *Belfast Telegraph* of April 26, 1968,—

"A mysterious flying object was spotted over Armagh last night and witnesses included two policemen who were on duty in the city.

"Sixty-two-year-old Mr. James Guy, College St., Armagh, was standing in Scotch Street when he saw what he described as 'a very bright shining object about the size of a football' travel across the sky from the Monaghan direction, south of the city.

"I watched it for five minutes till I lost sight of it as it passed in an eastern direction into the haze. It was a marvel, as it travelled white as snow, in a straight line across the sky,' he said.

"Constable Robert McCutcheon, who was on duty, accompanied by Sgt. D. Coyle, said the object, which was of the same brightness as the Pole Star, travelled slowly across the sky.

"Minutes later a second object appeared from the Keady direction and travelled over the city towards Loughgall,'" he added.

## AUSTRALIA

### Red lights in the paddock

The following account is taken from the *Taranaki Herald* (New Zealand) of May 2, 1968, and relates to an incident near Heyfield, Victoria,—

"What two sanitary collectors saw in the early morning hours in a paddock near this small dairying town in Eastern Victoria has set off an RAAF inquiry.

"It happened on Wednesday when their truck broke down 1½ miles from Heyfield.

"Gavin Whelan and Ian Lord said they were thinking about getting a tow when they saw a string of red lights approaching.

"But when it didn't come closer, we got up on the truck bonnet and saw it was an object in a paddock. It had a row of red lights and a dome with a light on top," Mr. Whelan said today.

"Later I went to the paddock with my wife, Valerie, and we found the area of grass wilted as if it had been sprayed with poison."

"On Thursday morning at 4.40 on their collection round, the collectors saw more lights moving above ground level."

Credit: Mrs. V. L. Scott, Blagdon, New Zealand. Also: Mrs. Judith Magee, Secretary, Victorian UFO Research Society, for a similar account from the *Melbourne Herald*.

## CANADA

### UFO scares Nova Scotia cattle?

From *The Light Herald* of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia (edition of May 2, 1968) we learn how,—

"A farmer in the South Ohio region had the misfortune of having his cows get away from him sometime last week

## of news and comment about recent sightings

and so a neighbour was called to assist in the rounding up of the strays. The neighbour, while searching in back of the meat plant in South Ohio, claims to have come across the strange apparition indeed. There in the sky about 1,000 feet up was a bright object which was stationary and giving off such a brilliant light that no definite shape could be seen. The light was described as being 'like a flood light' coming straight down from the unidentified object. Six men watched as the object moved away and the light disappeared.

"The possibility of the object being some type of aircraft in search of something or someone was ruled out as the air-port had no reports of anything in this area. The men remember that there was a buzzing noise coming from the UFO. One of the men called the airport and it was reported. He was told that Moncton would be called in to investigate and that the men would be contacted later. No word has yet been received on this. One of the men is a former member of the R.C.A.F.

"The fact that the cows were on the loose led the men to discover this sighting. In some other cases where UFOs were sighted, there were animals involved. It is known that animals react much more easily to high pitched sounds than men."

Credit: Raymond Reddy of Reading, Pennsylvania.

## MALAYA

### Kampong Keramat UFOs

From the *Malay Mail* of March 4, we read how,—

"Residents of Kampong Dato Keramat here are excited over two unidentified flying objects which they think are flying saucers.

"But neither the control tower of Kuala Lumpur Airport nor the Royal Malaysian Air Force could confirm any unidentified object on Friday and Saturday.

"An RMAF spokesman said none of their planes was in the area at that time nor did they have any report of such a sighting.