

Object(s): EADT Newspaper Article and Advertising Poster.

Object Number(s): STMEA: 2015-129 and STMEA:2015-130

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EADT Newspaper Article (STMEA:2015-129) and Advertising Poster (STMEA2015:130).

These two objects add a twist to enduring and, as yet unsolved, Suffolk mystery. The report of possible Unidentified Flying Object (UFO) sightings in Rendlesham Forest on 26th December 1980. The article written in the East Anglian Daily Times (EADT) on 10th March 2015, reports a medical Payout for U.S. Airman, John Burroughs, one of the first United States Airmen sent to investigate the siting. The Advertising Poster, is a sales poster for the EADT advertising the article itself.

John Burroughs was able to prove, to the satisfaction of an America court, that the physical symptoms he was suffering, were brought about by his encounter in Rendlesham Forest. The article goes on to describe how the evidence for his case was based on de-classified reports from the US Airforce. Whilst his successful claim, still fails to establish whether it was an alien encounter on that night in 1980, it does reignite the as yet unsolved mystery¹.

The Rendlesham Mystery, UFO Sighting.

The Rendlesham UFO sightings occurred towards the end of December 1980, culminating in the alleged hovering UFO in the early hours of the 26th December. Several writers have speculated on what caused the sighting and an alleged cover up by various authorities.

A brief chronology of the events has been collated by BBC investigative journalist Ian Ridpath²:

1. Security guards saw bright lights apparently descending into Rendlesham Forest around 3am on 1980 December 26.
2. The guards went out into the forest and saw a flashing light between the trees, which they followed until they realized it was coming from a lighthouse (Orford Ness).
3. After daybreak, indentations in the ground and marks on the trees were found in a clearing. Local police and a forester identified these as rabbit scrapings and cuts made by foresters.
4. Two nights later the deputy base commander, Lt Col Charles Halt, investigated the area. He took radiation readings, which were background levels. He also saw a flashing light in the direction of Orford Ness but was unable to identify it.

¹ Potter T. [Internet]. East Anglian Daily Times. 2020 [cited 2 April 2020]. Available from: <https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/medical-payout-for-ufo-mystery-airman-following-rendlesham-forest-encounter-1-3985521>

² Ridpath I. The Rendlesham Forest UFO Case [Internet]. The Rendlesham Forest UFO Case. 2020 [cited 3 April 2020]. Available from: <http://www.ianridpath.com/ufo/rendlesham.htm>

5. Col Halt reported seeing starlike objects that twinkled and hovered for hours, like stars. The brightest of these, which at times appeared to send down beams of light, was in the direction of Sirius, the brightest star in the sky.'

In the same article, Ridpath states that 'There is scarcely any other UFO case anywhere which can boast such a large number of apparently highly credible witnesses on two separate nights, or such a wide variety of supporting evidence that includes supposed physical traces, an official memo confirming the events written by a high-ranking USAF officer, a real-time tape recording made during the second night of the sighting by the same USAF officer, a report by local police officers who were called to the scene on two separate occasions, and written statements made by the military witnesses to the first night's events. There are more TV programmes to be found posted on YouTube about this one case than any other, and it regularly appears on lists of 'best ever' UFO sightings.'

The Police were called to the scene but eventually gave little credence to the story of UFO activity with senior officers later concluding that it was more than likely caused by light pollution from 'aerial phenomena' and Orford Ness Lighthouse reacting with particular atmospheric conditions prevalent at the time³.

The Ministry of Defence were apparently not alerted to the event until they received a report from Colonel Halt two weeks after the incident. Having no evidence from radar tracing at the time, a briefing paper for the Defence Minister, Lord Trefgarne concluded that 'it is not something in which the MOD should or need become further involved.'⁴

However, the Newspaper article (STMEA:2015-129), describes a ruling by a court in the United States, that would suggest John Burroughs condition was evidentially proven to have been brought about by his exposure to the events of 26th December. Could there be any credibility to the story or did John Burroughs legal team simply manage to persuade the judge that there was really some truth in the matter? Perhaps we shall never know.

Possible explanations.

Reference has already been made to the Orford Ness Lighthouse. Which might have been responsible for the lights that were seen.

³ Ridpath I. Rendlesham Forest UFO - the police evidence [Internet]. ianridpath.com. 2020 [cited 3 April 2020]. Available from: <http://www.ianridpath.com/ufo/police.htm>

⁴ Digital copy of DEFE 24/1925: UFO reports; with redactions | The National Archives [Internet]. Discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk. 2020 [cited 3 April 2020]. Available from: <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C10023477>



Image: Orford Ness Lighthouse⁵

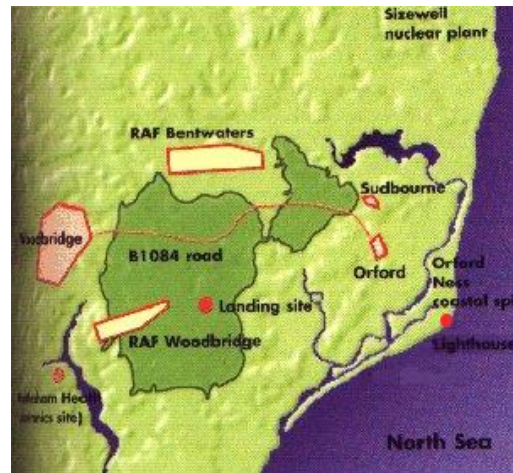


Image: Map showing location of Orford Ness Lighthouse relative to the UFO sighting⁶

Without doubt, a light from the lighthouse, would have been visible at the site of the alleged UFO incident on a clear winter's night.

An explanation from outer space. Well yes, it's just possible!

Clarke, Roberts McGonagle and Anthony⁷ mention a Russian Satellite, Cosmos 749, was launched on 4th July 1975 and was part of a Soviet military radio communications surveillance system⁸. It was originally designed for a low orbit and it re-entered the earth's atmosphere late in the evening of the 25th December 1980, causing a large fireball as it broke up. The light display from the rocket reportedly lit up the skies of southern England with a final fragment landing in East Anglia. They go onto suggest that 'a total of twelve satellites decayed during the week of the UFO scare.'

Suffolk Ghosts and Folk law

It was claimed that an alien spacecraft landed in Rendlesham that night. Could the aliens, have really been one of the infamous Suffolk Ghosts?

The Suffolk coastal area it seems, was rich in tales of Ghostly apparitions, allegedly witnessed by several people. Mills West⁹ tells many tales of ghosts local to the area such as the 'Wild man of

⁵ By Phil Champion, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=13627675>

⁶ <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rafmap.png>

⁷ Rendlesham secret files [Internet]. Uk-ufo.org. 2020 [cited 3 April 2020]. Available from: <http://www.uk-ufo.org/condign/rendsec.htm>

⁸ Cosmos-3M (11K65M) | Cosmos 749 [Internet]. Nextspaceflight.com. 2020 [cited 3 April 2020]. Available from: <https://nextspaceflight.com/launches/details/2364>

⁹ West H. Ghosts of East Anglia. Newbury: Countryside; 1991.



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Orford' allegedly hauled up in fishermen's nets in 1204, the 'Black Beast' of Bungay who appeared to a church congregation in the midst of a raging thunder storm. Even central Suffolk has its own tales such as the 'Green Children' of Woolpit who emerged from a pit on the edge of the village. With so many tales long held in local folk law, the thought of alien beings would likely add to the many stories being exchanged in local inns and taverns.

At the time of the Rendlesham Forest mystery, people's imaginations had already been stirred by such films as Alien, The Extra Terrestrial and TV programmes like Star Trek and Dr Who. In fact, interest in so called 'Flying Saucers' goes back as far as the 1940's. Indeed, since the end of the Second World War speculation has been rife that there may well be life on other planets in our universe. A TV commercial for dried potato, imagined an alien race laughing at the 'Earthlings' having to boil and mash potatoes for themselves.

We may never know the full truth behind the Rendlesham Forest mystery. However, it is plain to see from the 165,000 entries found on a simple Google search, that many people still have something to say about what has since become known as 'Britain's Roswell'.