



All this is very grand but how could such an anomalous gravitational field be produced? To answer, I think we must apply Einstein's equations and look for solutions resembling swirled rings with offset centers. Lest that discourage us, Chaitin gives a very lucid discussion of these equations, as applied to similar problems, and solved on a personal computer.⁴ More swirl photographs and measurements will help. Physicists observe that "Nature abhors a discontinuity"; the abrupt change of gravitational field direction postulated for the edge of the swirl, where the gravity vector must point downward, is unsettling. A computer model may help us understand how such apparent discontinuities are possible.

1. Olsen, Thomas M., *The Reference for Outstanding UFO Sighting Reports* (privately published, 1966), page 3-2. See also Dr. Harder's survey in FSR 33/1, page 12.
2. *"The Complete Books of Charles Fort"*, Dover Publications, Inc. 180 Varick Street, New York, NY 10014, USA (1974)
3. **APRO Bulletin** 32, 10 (February 1985).
4. Chaitin, G. J., *"A Computer Gallery of Mathematical Physics — A Course Outline"*, IBM Research, P.O. Box 218, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598, USA.

Sincerely,
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STOP PRESS: A FEW RECENT STORIES

A superficial glance at the batches of UFO reports provided by the American and British news-clipping services suffices to indicate the continuing prevalence of our "phenomenon" — whatever its nature may be.

The general futility and "pointlessness" of most of the press coverage is likewise very evident.

One region of Britain which seems to have experienced a rather special amount of "UFO activity" throughout 1988 and the first quarter of 1989 was the Thames Estuary and the south-eastern part of the county of Essex, around Southend and Canvey Island. As invariably happens, the local buffs were reported as viewing all this with great satisfaction, as indicating the "special" nature of their home patch as a "UFO window or entry-point"! Some estimates of the total number of sighting reports in the Thames Estuary region in the past fifteen months or so put it as high as three-hundred or more.

The London national newspapers of March 22-26 of 1989 carried reports of the alarming experiences of passengers aboard a *McDonnell Douglas 83* aircraft of the British Island Airways Company who, when passing over Sardinia on their return flight from Malta to Gatwick Airport, saw "multi-coloured bright lights flash past their windows" and heard their pilot telling them that it "was a UFO". Minutes later, the passengers were thrown into complete panic when the aircraft dropped abruptly in two "jolts". Many passengers struck their heads violently against the cabin ceiling and claimed that they must have fallen "thousands of feet".

While the captain, in subsequent interviews with press and radio reporters, seems to have stuck to his view that it was a "UFO", it happened that Mr Peter Viller, the Chairman of the British Island Airways, was himself aboard this inaugural flight, along with various executives and journalists. Not surprisingly,

Mr Viller said the UFO theory was nonsense, adding that, in any case, the coloured lights "were anything from 500 to 3,000 miles away". The official explanation given later by the British Ministry of Defence was that the affair was almost certainly caused by the *Aurora Borealis*, or "Northern Lights", seen prominently around that date. And who is to say that this explanation was incorrect?

However, the aircraft's sudden and alarming *loss of altitude* does not appear to have been explained by anybody. In view of the famous Coyne case in the U.S.A., one is naturally left wondering. And, more recently, on June 2, the London papers reported that a *Quantas Boeing 747* flying from Sydney to Singapore at 30,000 ft. has just experienced a similar "500 m.p.h. roller-coaster ride", in which the passengers were catapulted violently around. The *Boeing* had been on automatic pilot, when inexplicably (remember Coyne?) *it climbed 1,500 ft., at an angle of 45°*. The 305 passengers, who had just been told they could unfasten their safety belts, were sent crashing into the sides and roof of the cabin as the aircraft plunged thousands of feet. Many holes were punched in the ceiling by heads, and when the pilot managed to recover control and make an emergency landing at Darwin, 46 passengers were taken to hospital.

During the last week in March several British newspapers and the LBC broadcasting station gave considerable coverage to reports from the U.S.A. that the crew of the latest shuttle, *Discovery Orbiter*, had seen a UFO while on their mission, and had sent a message to Control Centre at Houston: "This is 'Discovery'. We still have the alien spacecraft under observation". N.A.S.A. naturally lost no time in denying the story as ridiculous. But, as the London *Daily Star* commented in their editorial (March 30): "But then they

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HAS YOUR HEAD EXPLODED LATELY?

We are indebted to Dr Bernard Finch for the following curious item of news, which appeared in one of the British papers (we are not sure which) in July or August of 1988. No doubt many FSR readers — in common with your Editor — recognize the symptoms only too well.

Exploding head syndrome quite harmless

A previously unreported medical condition known as the *Exploding Head Syndrome*, in which patients experience a bomb-like detonation in the back of the head, is described by a consultant neurologist in the weekly medical journal, *The Lancet*.

It has nothing to do with that morning-after-the-night-before feeling, and is not a pain in the head, but a loud and unexplained noise that occurs during sleep.

Mr John Pearce, consultant neurologist at Hull Royal Infirmary, has examined ten patients with the symptoms, and says he thinks it is probably common but unreported.

The sufferers are generally middle-aged or elderly, usually female, with no other signs or symptoms, and usually in good health. He says it occurs exclusively when the person is sleeping. She is then awakened by a violent sensation of, as it were, an "explosion inside the head, which occurs abruptly and with great force".

The persons are usually so alarmed that at first they think the experience was painful, but on further questioning it turns out that they were not so much aware of a *pain* as of "a noise deep in the middle or back of the head".

One of the patients, a 67-year old woman, was awakened by "a sudden bang in her head" once every two or three weeks.

She described it: "It was as if my head was bursting with a flash of light over both fields of vision, after which I would be dazed for a split second, and then

would come round, terrified, my heart thumping."

Another sufferer (a 68-year-old man this time) said: "It's more of a thunderclap than a pain, though you never know when it's coming, except that it has always been when you are asleep."

The neurologist says the attacks have no apparent cause and are not related to excitement, food, or alcohol the previous evening. Victims of it tend to fear, he says — and they fear quite wrongly — that it is an early sign of a cerebral haemorrhage or a brain tumour.

He says that a sense of "explosion in the head" is not mentioned anywhere in the standard medical textbooks, and the condition, harmless but frightening, ought to be given official recognition. He emphasises that the condition does not seem to be related in any way to neurosis, and although it is essential that the sufferers be reassured, drug therapy for it is entirely unjustified.

Concluding, he says: "This syndrome is entirely benign and, I suspect, common and under-reported. The cause of the bomb-like noise remains a mystery; no known vascular or hydrodynamic changes in the brain, labyrinths, or cerebrospinal fluid would cause such a symptom".

Well there, I thought you'd all feel better after reading that!

I know I do. *Personally, I still think it's all due to UMMO or the PLEIADES.*

G.C.

HYPNOSIS DECRIED

A doctor with a long experience of all aspects of UFO research, including in particular the hypnotic regression of subjects, has drawn our attention to an item in a London newspaper which suggests that hypnosis is unreliable. (The doctor's own comment was that it was "just possible" that the issue of such a report might be part of an attempt to make sure the public would lend no credence to the increasing number of alleged UFO experiences divulged under hypnosis.)

The article, in the *Daily Express* (end of May/early June, 1988) runs as follows:-

HYPNOSIS ALERT

The use of hypnosis by police to interview witnesses has come under attack in a major new survey.

On the eve of the publication of Home Office guidelines on the subject, new laboratory research suggests that information gathered under hypnosis is unreliable.

CONFIDENCE

The Australian* university researcher who conducted the survey said: "The suggestions of the hypnotherapist are transformed into pseudomemories".

Mr Kevin McConkey, of Macquarie University, Sydney, said that people hypnotised become more confident about their recollections. But, he warned, there is no correlation between confidence and

accuracy.

Many police chiefs are still convinced that hypnotism can be useful. (Our italics. ED, FSR).

In the past decade hypnotism has been used — with varying success — in many celebrated cases, including that of the "Yorkshire Ripper".

The new Home Office guidelines are expected to be highly sceptical about the use of hypnosis. They are likely to recommend that it should be used only when all else fails, and that the interview should be video-recorded.

*A lot of folk in Australia are, of course, still worried that the Knowles family and the Nullarbor Desert Case (see FSR 33/2 and 33/4) received so much publicity world-wide.

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would, wouldn't they?"

In this case, as in that of the British Island Airways' plane, there is probably no way in which the truth can be ascertained.

Finally, it might be mentioned that on April 21, 1989, the London *Evening Standard* reported very briefly that in Israel, the Police at Haifa had "officially confirmed" that a UFO had crashed on a beach near that city, and that they had gathered up fragments of the falling object, which resembled a "fireball".