

UFO REALITY/Jenny Randles. (1983) 248 pages, illustrated, index, references. £9.95 from: Robert Hale Ltd., Clerkenwell House, Clerkenwell Green, London, EC1R 0HT. This is the fifth book from the prolific hand of Ms Randles, it is sub-titled, "A critical look at the physical evidence." One might argue that this is a contradiction, for if there was 'physical evidence', surely there would be no UFOs!? The book consists of some 14 chapters written in her usual style, which always makes for easy reading. She adopts what she terms 'the JR set': 1051 UFO cases covering five years, which she has personally evaluated as her hard-data for evidence. This is a great weakness of the book, she has not personally investigated the cases. Just because a case has been investigated up to levels 'A' or 'B', should not give it a higher status. How competent were the investigators involved is just one reservation that should always be taken into account. More and more, Ms Randles, instead of giving the true facts about the UFO subject, prefers to mould the opinions of her readers. UFO Reality fails to balance the open-minded viewpoint with that of the skeptics. This is evident in the lack of references to Klass and Sheaffer (they are only mentioned 3 times in the book) and in the section 'further reading', not one of their books is recommended! Hardly a critical look at the evidence.

Throughout the book I thought many cases were omitted that she could have used for critical study. For example, in Chapter 13 when discussing photographic evidence, discussion is to be found on the Trinidad Island prints, but there is no mention of the Jersey cases from 1973 which showed an identical object with what looks like a vapour trail - Kodak felt that the 'object' was caused by processing irregularities. Another good case which was omitted, was the Wistaston, Cheshire hoax photos from 1978. Here is an example of an English case being evaluated by Ground Saucer Watch in the states and uncovered as a hoax. In the chapter on UFO movies, no mention is made of the 1976 Ben Boyd case from Australia. One could go on; but in fairness Ms Randles may be totally unaware of these cases.

One final point, on page 152, she states the following, "I was told by a former British Government official once that he understood that such a device (a crashed UFO - Ed.) could be found in this country. It was allegedly under wraps at a military base somewhere in South Wales." She says she treats such unsubstantiated stories as nothing more than interesting, and though provocative they tend to be unproveable. One could ask who was the official? Which Base? If some cases tend to be unproveable, does that mean that some have been proved? I won't go on but it is annoying that in too many UFO books, carrots are ritually dangled before the reader without any factual proof. Was it too tempting for Ms Randles to include this 'rumour'? It would appear so. Many books on the subject claim to be critical, many are not and this title, whilst appearing on the surface to achieve the job, many researchers, more knowledgeable, will be able to notice its faults.

THE MEGALITHIC ODDYSSEY/Christian O'Brien. (1983) 176 pages. illustrated. £4.95 from: Turnstone Press (same address as Acquarian-press). This book discusses 'astronomically aligned' stone circles and giant cairns on Bodmin Moor and their origins. Who were the designers and builders? O'Brien claims an advanced race of Master Builders travelled the world overseeing numerous projects. Although the research and text is well-threaded together it hardly statters one's own vision of prehistory.