

Past, Present and Future

BUFORA Symposium David Haisell, May 25, 1981 (Excerpt Regarding Shirley Bay)

During the summer of 1953, Wilbert Smith obtained approval from the Department of Transport (DOT) to set up some UFO detection equipment at Shirley Bay, near Ottawa, and by the end of October the installation was complete. The instruments included a gamma-ray counter, a magnetometer, a radio receiver (to detect the presence of radio noise, and a recording gravimeter. ([17](#))

News of Magnet finally leaked to the media presumably because of the conspicuous nature of the Shirley's Bay installation. ([18](#)) As expected, denials were attempted; on the very day the station went into operation Dr. Solandt was quoted as saying reports of the station's establishment were completely untrue. However, he was forced to back down on this, and later claimed he actually had only said that such a station was not being operated by his department, and that he personally had no knowledge of its existence. ([19](#))

Even this was difficult to accept since the installation was located next to DOT's Ionosphere Station on Defence Research Board (DRB) property, and in fact, the building was loaned to Smith by DRB. ([20](#))

Public awareness of this project was to be a source of frustration, annoyance and embarrassment to DRB and DOT, and it put Smith in an awkward position since he was still officially a member of the Second Storey Committee. This was probably a contributing factor to the contents of Millman's November 21st summary report of Project Second Storey. He announced that Project Second Storey's forms and instructions for filing of sighting information were available for any government department seriously interested in pursuing the matter further, but the committee felt that, owing to the impossibility of checking independently the details of the majority of sightings , most of the material did not lend itself to a scientific method of investigation. ([21](#))

Could it be that they were not aware of the scientific study being conducted in the U.S. at that time by the Air Force on UFO reports collect from June 1, 1947 to December 31, 1952? The study was initiated in 1952 and continued through 1954, and proved beyond a doubt the existence of an unidentified phenomenon, even though the conclusions were worded in such a way as to divert attention from the evidence. The study to which I am referring was known as 'Project Blue Book Special Report #14' which is probably the most constantly referred to in the literature of Stanton Friedman, and more recently was the subject of a paper by Bruce Maccabee in the Journal of UFO Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1, entitled the 'Scientific Investigation of Unidentified Flying Objects'.

It is difficult to believe Millman's statement, and perhaps his remarks were designed to appease 'somebody' in the event Smith's association with Second Storey eventually became public knowledge, and also to save face in view of the Adamski & contactee activity now the public eye.

At 3:01 in the afternoon of August 8, 1954 the instrumentation at the Shirley's Bay installation registered an unusual disturbance. In Smith's words "the gravimeter went wild", ([22](#)) as a much greater deflection was registered than could be explained by conventional interference such as passing aircraft. Smith and his colleagues rushed outside only to find a heavy overcast. Whatever was up there as hidden in the clouds. The only evidence they had was the deflection registered on the chart recorder paper.

Two days later the controller of Telecommunications issued a form letter, which was also authorised as a press release, admitting that the DOT had been engaged in the study of UFOs for three and a half years, that considerable data had been collected and analysed, but it had not been possible to reach any definite conclusion, and since new data simply confirmed existing data, there seemed little point in carrying the project any further on an official level. This, despite the fact that "new data... confirmed existing data", which is what one would expect of a positive scientific experiment!

Project Magnet was to be dropped, but Smith would continue to receive and catalogue data on an unofficial basis. ([23](#)) In Smith's words, Magnet went "underground" ([24](#)) probably joining Second Storey. The detection of 'whatever it was' two days before had evidently inspired rapid action. Does it seem likely that a project, which had finally apparently detected what it was looking for, would be terminated? Justification for changing to a 'Top Secret' classification perhaps... It is apparent that pressure was applied to Smith to down-play or even deny the Shirley's Bay incident.

Researcher Greg Kanon writes: "In an abrupt about face, Smith announced, before the May 17th 1955 session of the Commons' Special Committee on Broadcasting, that no UFOs had ever been detected at the Shirley's Bay Station. At about this same time, Captain Edward J. Ruppelt (who earlier served as chief UFO investigator for the U.S. Air Force) was reportedly told by RCAF Intelligence officers that only 'officially' had the Shirley's Bay Station produced negative results. These developments led some UFO researchers to conclude that Smith had been successfully silenced by officialdom."([25](#))

Whatever the case, Smith kept busy over the next few years, and we get a glimmer of what he was up to from a presentation he gave about five years later to the Illuminating Engineering Society's Canadian Regional Conference during which he stated:

"We know that gravity is not all Newton visualised. Far from being a basic force in nature, it is really a derived function, and is the consequence of a dynamic condition, not a static one. We know what goes into its makeup; we know its formula and we have a pretty good idea of how to go about bringing it under control. We have conducted experiments that show that it is possible to create artificial gravity (not Centrifugal force) and to alter the gravitational field of the Earth. This we have done. It is Fact. The next step is to learn the rules and do the engineering necessary to convert the principle into workable hardware." ([26](#)) That statement was made in 1959. The question is, what has been achieved since then?

It has been claimed by some that Smith turned away from orthodox scientific work to the more metaphysical aspects of what he termed 'the new science'. Such was not the case. He carried on his normal scientific work and at the same time delved into the science of metaphysics as a possible answer to the UFO mystery, which apparently produced some concrete results in the laboratory. In the realm of purely orthodox science, Smith was working on the development of an anti-gravity device and believed himself to be on the verge of an important breakthrough just prior to his death.

In the area of metaphysics, Smith claimed to communicate with 'occupants' of UFOs through a contact who provided him with certain information. One instance pertained to areas of reduced binding in our atmosphere. All matter is held together by forces which are not clearly understood and are known as 'binding forces'. Smith was informed that there are areas of reduced binding and that many air crashes were due to entering such regions, where the planes literally fell apart. He was told that means of detecting such areas were easily available to us and that suitable instruments could be constructed. By building a 'binding meter' according to the

principles given to him, he was able to locate regions of reduced binding. He recommended to the government that further investigation be conducted, but because of the unorthodox source of his information, he was unable to obtain official recognition of this work and his letters were added to the 'crank file'.

The last ten years of Smith's life were devoted to intensive thought and study. He formulated several of his ideas into a book titled 'The New Science'.

Smith died of cancer on December 27, 1962. The respect he commanded was reflected in his being posthumously awarded the Lieutenant-Colonel Keith S. Rogers Memorial Engineering Award for dedicated service in the advancement of the Technical Standards in Canadian Broadcasting. This award, presented by the Canadian General Electric Company, was well deserved. Smith was one of the foremost thinkers of his time - a well respected ufologist - one of the first of our breed.

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17. The UFO Connection, Arthur Bray, Jupiter Publishing, 1979, p.63.
 18. Sudbury Star, Nov. 12, 1953.
 19. Toronto Daily Star, Nov. 14, 1953.
 20. Letter from Dr. N.M. Millman, Sept. 24, 1968, NRC files.
 21. Project Second Storey - Summary Report, Dr. P.M. Millman, chairman, Second Storey Committee, Nov. 21, 1953. Bray, p.63.
 22. Form letter signed by the Controller of Telecommunications, DOT, Aug. 10, 1954.
 23. 'Project Magnet - The Canadian Flying Saucer Study', Topside, Winter/Spring 1963.
 24. Canadian UFO Report, Vol.3, No.6, p.23.
 25. 'Sputniks, Saucers and Spacecraft', W.B. Smith, - a paper delivered to the Illuminating Engineering Society, Canada Regional Conference, at a luncheon in Ottawa, June 11, 1959.
 26. *ibid.*