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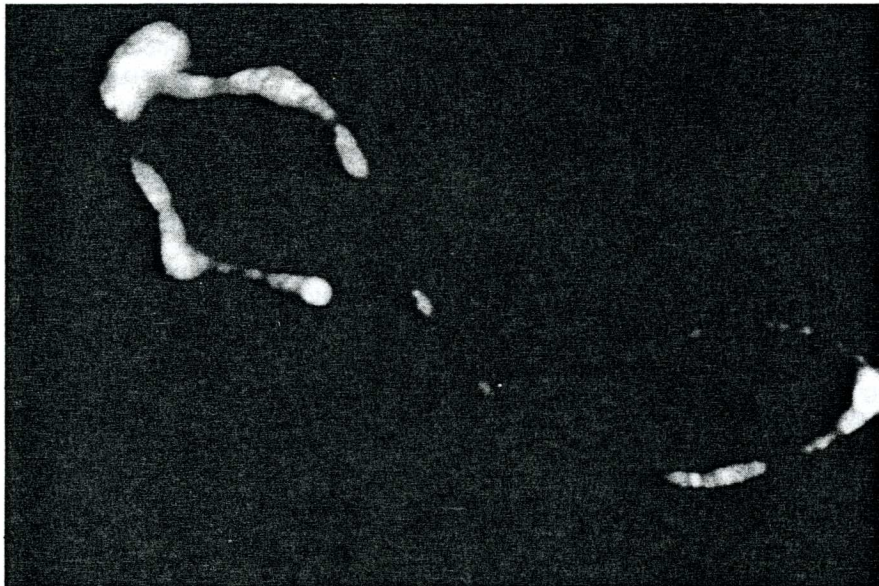
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Hessdalen, Norway: Nocturnal Light

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Project Hessdalen:



This is the Hessdalen Valley in central Norway, site of numerous 'lights in the sky.'

A major new mystery has been catapulted into ufology (not that all of ufology isn't a mystery!) It concerns NL's (Nocturnal Lights) or, if you wish, LITS (Lights in the Sky) which have captured the attention of Norwegian ufologists and their associates in neighboring countries. While such lights may be explainable as "earthlights" or lights generated by electromagnetic fields associated with geologic faults (an explanation that is growing in popularity) the question is left open as to why these lights have only recently appeared in these locations in relative profusion and why there appear to be associated with the sightings of lights, also sightings of "craft" with definitely outlined shapes.

These lights have been photographed and a few of these came to my attention over a year ago but, I must confess, that I set them aside, pending further information. After all, what can be done about lights in the sky? Although they are the most frequently reported class of UFOs, little can be done about them unless one has expensive spectrographic and other equipment and knows where to place it so as to be ready for the next nocturnal light that shows up.

Now we have more information, thanks to the work of a small but active group of Scandinavian ufologists who have organized "Project Hessdalen" with the purpose of deploying such equipment to an area where for months the lights have been localized: the Hessdalen Valley, some 80 miles from Trondheim, in central Norway. Earlier, virtually identical lights were

observed near the town of Arendal, in southern Norway, some 400 miles to the south of Hessdalen. As they were ceasing in the Arendal area they apparently transferred their attention to the northern theater of operations.

It was not until I met and conferred with members of Project Hessdalen, and accepted their kind invitation to become a member of their Advisory Committee, that I recognized the potential importance of "the colored lights of Norway" whose study (if they continue and if Project Hessdalen continues with the enthusiasm with which it has started) is almost certain to yield results of outstanding scientific value.

A bi-weekly newsletter has been initiated, funds are being collected, and a scientific program is taking form. It is of interest to quote from a recent Project Hessdalen Newsletter:

"Leif Havik will arrange a meeting at the University of Trondheim...and will resume his contact with the Seismological Observatory.

"Owe Lewitzki has made a short list of suitable cameras for movies and still shots. All cameras have to withstand rough winter climate. [See accompanying photos of the observing site and some photos of the lights obtained in the past, taken with the shutter open for 5-10 seconds]. Havik will

get detailed geologic maps of Hessdalen... for Paul Devereaux, asking him to propose proper geological instrumentation [Devereaux is the author of *Earthlights* and one of the chief proponents of the geological school of (UFO origin) for use at the site."

Now please note this ambitious plan! "We are going to send a letter to every household in Holtalen [of which Hessdalen is a part...but lest the reader becomes alarmed, there are but 1083 households in Holtalen and in Mitre Gauldal 2179 households]. These areas had the most UFO reports last year. We will describe the project and ask them to write down every UFO sighting they have had. We will enclose prepaid, self-addressed envelopes...a meeting with the people of Hessdalen will be arranged for November this year."

We salute their enthusiasm, and if it continues, I plan to visit Norway in 1984. In this I have been "scooped" by Hilary Evans in England, whose account of his summer 1983 visit can be found in the *MUFON Journal*, July 1983. His description of the Norwegian scenery may well move some readers to use Hessdalen as an excuse to visit Norway.

Lief Havik, a member of Project Hessdalen, has kindly sent us some material on the Hessdalen sightings of some time ago and on the history of these Norwegian Lights. His article, abbreviated in the interests of space, follows below.

The Colored Lights of Norway



UFOs in Hessdalen, Norway

The Hessdalen Valley has been a well known name here in Norway, as well as in our neighboring countries [Ed note: although I couldn't find it on a large scale map]. Hessdalen is a valley 130 km. from Trondheim, in the middle part of Norway. Because sightings are still going on in this area, this article cannot be complete; later we can follow the cases step by step. We must ask you to compare these observations with those in Arendal, a small town in southern Norway. The Arendal sightings were very similar to these in Hessdalen, although about 700 km. separate the two locations. The sightings in Arendal started in early November, 1981 and ended at the end of December last year. But just when the sightings were tapering off in Arendal, they started in Hessdalen! In both places the UFOs preferred to appear about 7:30 to 8 p.m. and in both places the UFOs motion was similar: vertically above the mountains, and they could move horizontally with enormous speed, or slowly, or could hover for minutes above the mountains before they again moved.

Since the beginning of December 1981, many bright lights have been seen but often also egg-shaped and cigar-shaped objects. Very seldom have so many people seen so many flying objects, in such a short period. We now have several hundred witnesses. We have not interviewed many witnesses as yet [Ed note: this was written in 1982; since then we understand a fair amount of interviewing has gone on now that Project Hessdalen is under way], preferring to concentrate on making observations ourselves.

However, one witness, Lars Lillevold, told us: "I went out of my house in the evening of Jan. 18, 1982, and about 7:30 p.m. [by then in Norway in January it had already been dark for several hours] I saw an egg-shaped object above a telephone line about 30 meters [100 feet] from my house. It had a metallic center with a bright orange light surrounding it (energy field?). The latter was like a soft woolly covering which I felt would be soft to the touch. I am sure the object itself was made of metal. It stood still, silently, before it began to move slowly through the valley."

Some people have seen egg-shaped objects with windows from which streamed bright yellow-white light. But all agree that the light is shining through some sort of covering...a "dead" light.

Interest ran high in Hessdalen and some people gave up looking at the 7:30

news on T.V. and went out to some high spot in hopes of spotting these remarkable UFOs. Often we can count about 100 cars with curious people.

We have used a magnetic field detector with a frequency range of 1-10 Hz but have not recorded anything yet, even though one of the objects passed less than 3 km. from us. On a map provided by the Norwegian Geological Institute, we have found a very strong earth magnetic field exactly where the UFOs are passing. Some UFOs seem to disappear just where the strongest fields are. This area is a rich mineral area and was an early mining area.

What is surprising to me is the way these objects move. They suddenly become visible and move to the north, and then suddenly disappear. They can move at enormous speeds or as slowly as a helicopter or even more slowly. They can hover over the mountains, move up and down, up and down, like a ball bouncing on a floor.

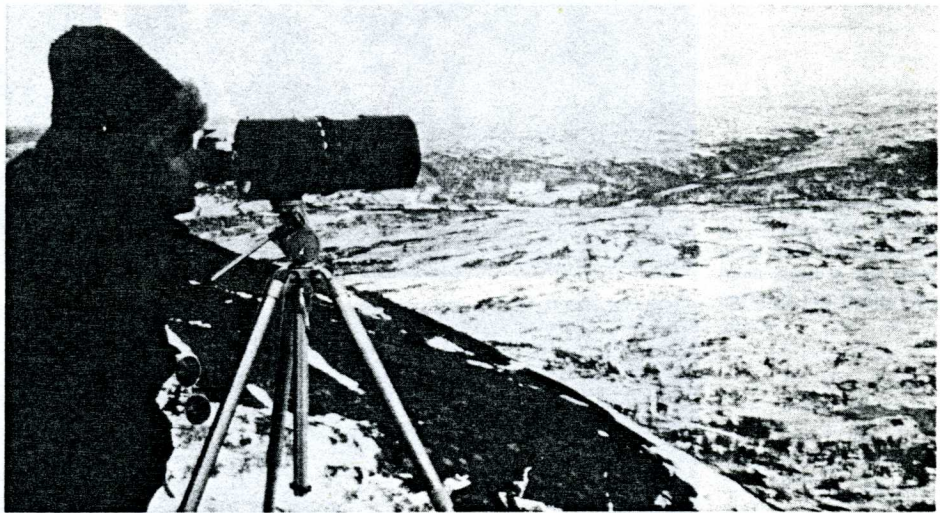
Since the publication of an article about these sightings we have received more reports from this area; they seem to get more and more remarkable. One report, from Jon Aspaas, follows:

"On the night of April 1, and about half-past midnight, I saw a big oblong object passing slowly in front of the mountain Rogne. The object was well lighted and came from the south in Hessdalen."

To illustrate the sightings in Hessdalen I will try to describe some of our sightings. One can understand that it is impossible to interview all of the witnesses; but that is not absolutely necessary when we already know so much about the sightings ourselves.

On the 17th of March we went on an expedition to Hessdalen. We stayed for four days and we were rewarded by six observations and four photos. On the first day we were just packing up our equipment on a snow sled (see photo of equipment) and the time was about 7:20 p.m. Somehow we didn't think we'd make any sightings that evening but at 7:32 Lars Lillevold shouted, "There it is!", and we ran to the road which was about 80 feet away. There we were standing, looking at an oblong object, slowly passing in front of Finnsaahogda (a mountain). It was absolutely soundless, and disappeared to the north. We could see the mountain in the background, and I suppose the object was about 600 meters (1950 ft.) above the valley ground. Unfortunately our cameras were among our equipment on the sled.

We brought our equipment to the Chalet Vaarhusvollan but went back to Aspaas-hill and there we found the Norwegian Air Force and some pressmen. At 8:39 p.m. "something" came from the north, and crossed over Finnsaahogda going west. At 9:45 we went back to the



Project Hessdalen has been organized to systematically record the numerous sightings in the Hessdalen Valley since December, 1981. Objects have appeared in a variety of shapes including egg and cigar-shaped and oblong.

Hessdalen — continued

chalet and enjoyed 1½ hours of skiing [Ed: a proper way to enjoy UFO watching].

By the way, my camera is a Praktika LTL 3 with an Itorex 135x2 (conv.) film, Kodak Ektachrome 400 ASA, exposure time 1/15, at f/5.6

Mr. Havik also included in his paper a detailed account of the various local theories being advanced for these many sightings. Because of their basically amusing nature, I have taken the liberty of summarizing them here. You will recognize the very familiar tendency of the expert in his own field attempting to find a solution in terms of his own expertise, blithely disregarding the solutions of others, and the facts as well.

Thus we have the expert in optics pontificating that sightings were due to reflections between cold and warm air, especially since these were observed in a valley where this is more apt to occur.

This disregards the facts that these sightings were made in all weather conditions, in temperatures ranging from 84F to well below freezing, and even in snowstorms, and for a definite period of time. Surely warm and cold layers of air existed in that region for many years in the past. Further, the motions suggest controlled actions, hardly to be expected from random reflections...and reflections of what?

Next we have the meteorologist speaking: Reflections from cars 50 miles away! Again, why reflections at this particular time and not in the past?

Let us pass on quickly to the university astronomer: The planet Mars! Now, just what is Mars doing in the valley, traveling from south to north, and with a mountain in the background? Many sightings were made from hill tops, looking down into the valley.

And then we have the arm-chair experts: All lies and hallucinations.

Perhaps only a psychologist can tell us why the human mind, especially one trained in a particular subject, so desperately resists something new that is not in his field? And, mind you, without bothering to look into the facts for himself. Why do they abandon scientific thinking when it comes to anything outside their field? I am reminded of the time that the director of the Jodrell Bank radio telescope in England dismissed the now famous New Zealand UFO movies as "a meteorite burning up in the atmosphere"! Yet that man calls himself a scientist but does not think like a scientist.

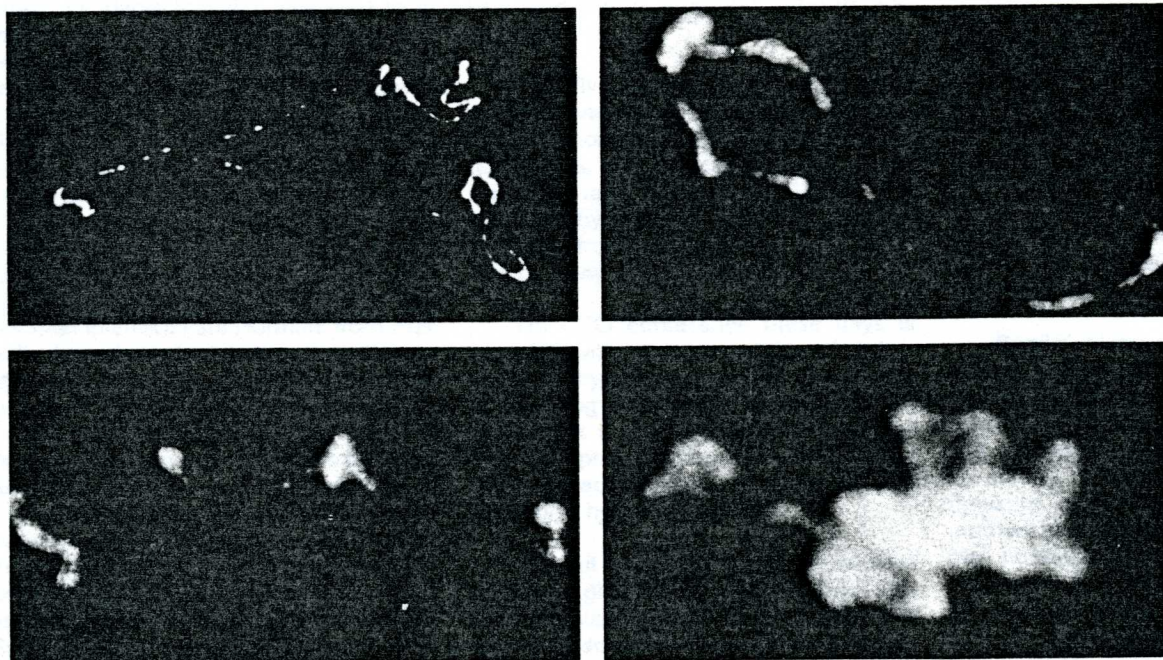
Mr. Havik points out that it is hard to photograph an hallucination and, as for lies, the sightings were confirmed by the Norwegian State Television and by the Norwegian Air Force. He puts it well when

he writes: "All these theories are put forth by so called 'experts' who want to understand and explain everything. I am ashamed for these people, who are well educated professors and so on; it looks like some of them want to 'explain' themselves to death. They are behaving like idiots. These phenomena may have a natural explanation, physical or psychological. It is a pity that people who understand physics and psychology don't want to come to Hessdalen, although they have been invited."

Now that "Project Hessdalen" is under way, and interest of scientists open minded enough to "be curious and anxious to find out," to use Schroedinger's description of the ideal scientist, has been aroused, we may get someplace.

Certainly these strange lights, although they seem to behave in a programmed manner and can hover, move slowly or very rapidly, vertically and horizontally, may have a "natural" explanation, as earthlights etc. But it is not enough merely to have a label for something, and have that label fool us into thinking that because we have labelled something, we understand it!

We wish Project Hessdalen success, and may the lights appear long enough and often enough for enough data to be gathered. □



The photos at left were taken at exposures of 5 to 10 seconds. A magnetic field detector has been used in the past, without recording any effect.

