

November 2018 meeting musings by **Richard Godley**

Unexplained Mysteries and Cover-Ups

Speaker : **Andy Thomas**

Circumstances led me to be sitting outside the meeting room, peering through the glass throughout and not hearing much that was being said due to the proximity of other users of the venue during the first 15 minutes or so.

One of the contributing causes was that undoubtedly Andy Thomas attracted a larger than average audience to a WAS meeting. Additional to that I was busy on the Society's behalf during that period and take the opportunity to remind WAS members that the Executive Committee is only 4 people out of 7 required and that we also pay a subscription to partake in the Society's activities, and if we can fill at least some of the vacancies it would be a great help.

Anyway, back to Andy's talk. I don't doubt that Andy is sincere in his beliefs and he is definitely a very good speaker, but I remain a sceptic when it comes to such conspiracies theories. I used to believe in UFOs, and then I became an amateur astronomer, and I cannot recall seeing anything in the sky I couldn't explain over countless hours since. Newspapers helped in that regard with the advent of those Chinese lanterns.

As for the Roswell incident - my recollection is that this occurred about 2 weeks after the term 'flying saucer' was coined by a pilot in Washington state who had seen silvery discs in the distance and the reportage got America interested in looking for aliens or something. I don't think the idea of aliens being found in this event was even suggested until about 1980.

Are we living in especially turbulent times? It certainly seems like it, but then again I missed both World Wars, much of the Cold War, and plenty more besides. As we get older we find it harder to process the changes that occur and wonder why it couldn't be like it always was, but the older generations were saying the same when I was young. Nowadays technology drives changes at a faster rate and also ensures that people get to know about them sooner after they have happened. This spurs a more instant reaction that promotes further changes.

There were some things I found amusing, such as the apparent importance of the continuing use of the pyramid symbol by numerous organisations and groups. Surely people are constantly trying to invoke previous successes or trying to associate themselves with the grandeur of the past. Centuries ago the Roman Empire inspired the idea of a Holy Roman Empire in central Europe long after Rome itself had been sacked by heathen tribes. The Islamic Sultanate of Rum was also paying tribute to Rome with its name, even as it was conquering parts of the eastern half of the empire that had once been Roman.

I'm sure we did go to the moon. We have plenty of moon rock and if we could get that back we could obviously get men to go there and do it. Apollo was a huge project, with I think about 450,000 people working on it. People are led to think that suddenly we were there on the moon, just a few years after the Apollo 1 launch pad tragedy during training. But if we were not really going to send men to the moon what was the purpose of Apollo 10, which went there, descended towards the lunar surface and then intentionally flew straight back to lunar orbit without landing. Why fake that? Or if that flight was real, and also the other manned test flights of Apollos 7, 8 and 9, which are also probably less well known now, why wouldn't the subsequent missions that actually landed on the moon also be real?

Still, it was a fascinating talk, and the audience appreciated it.