

OBITUARY

OUR FRIEND WAVENEY GIRVAN

IT was just by chance that I met Waveney Girvan. I remember how I had been discussing some small official matter with a colleague, when to my surprise I saw a copy of the *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* among papers on his desk. Surprise indeed, for that particular gentleman was a sceptic if ever there was one!

When he learned that I had been a regular reader of the *REVIEW* since 1955, my colleague observed that it was high time I met the editor. My expression must have betrayed that I suspected a leg-pull, for he hastened to add that the editor of the *REVIEW* had once published a book for him. He was as good as his word: Waveney Girvan accepted his invitation, and we spent two convivial hours discussing every aspect of the flying saucer mystery.

It was a wonderful evening for me, for I had long been an admirer of Waveney's work, particularly after he had taken over as Editor of the *REVIEW* in 1959. When it was time to go, I was delighted to find that our guest and I had to catch the same train from Waterloo!

That was a few years ago, and since that day we travelled together much of the time . . . until August this year.

Waveney was wonderful company: an extremely intelligent man with a restless, inquiring mind; a man of infinite charm and sparkling wit, yet relentless in the pursuit of truth; a gentle man, not lacking in patience, yet impatient of bumbledom and mediocrity where better could be expected. Many of us would be well satisfied to have achieved any one of the varied accomplishments of this son of a Scottish surgeon. He was a chartered accountant, a distinguished author, a successful publisher, founder and chairman of the West Country Writers' Association, literary executor to the estate of Eden Phillpotts, an inventor, and latterly, a top executive of a great publishing house.

The UFOs caught his imagination even before Arnold's sensational sighting and the advent of the name "Flying saucer" in 1947. There were, after all, the wartime Foo Fighters, and the mystery rockets over Scandinavia in 1946.

For me, the drudgery of London commuting vanished from the time I met Waveney Girvan. Ufology was certainly not our only topic of conversation, but at times it was the most exciting one, and amusing too, when we considered the evasive



Waveney
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antics of authority, and the stuffiness of sceptics! Well I remember the "kick" we had from Aimé Michel's letter and article about Vauriat, and the discovery of global orthoteny. I remember too how proud Waveney was of the new-look cover which appeared on the May/June issue of 1963, an issue which he considered one of the best ever—until others even better came along! Perhaps the most exciting time of all was at the height of the Charlton crater affair, which culminated in Waveney's debunking of the "meteorite" brigade, and the exposing of "Dr." Randall. I'll always treasure the memories of those evenings in the train.

Last August it became increasingly apparent that Waveney was a sick man. I thought he was exhausted by the way he had thrown himself wholeheartedly into his work, his other projects, and the editing of the *REVIEW* (a single-handed marathon for the best part of five years!), but that turned out to be wishful thinking. When I returned from holiday last September, his seat in the train was empty: the journey was strangely quiet and lonely.

For all who knew and loved Waveney Girvan, the world seemed an empty place on the morning of the 22nd October, 1964.

CHARLES BOWEN