



Orbs: A Preliminary Search in the RERC Archives

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Introduction

Orbs can be generally described in their broad sense as luminous opaque or translucent spheres that are visible in still digital photographs and video footage and interpreted as circular anomalies. However, this description can be extended towards orbs that are noticed with the naked eye, and may interact with the observer, then acquiring a personal meaning or in the much wider context of humankind, the planet or the universe. Referrals then are to be found in adjectives as in “spirit orbs”, “ghost orbs” and “soul spheres”. Another feature of the orbs is the co-appearance of luminous, often coloured “mists”, also called “ectomists” (analogue to “ectoplasm” but considered by orb enthusiasts to be of a different, finer form of “spirit energy”,) “light waves” etc. which will not be further addressed here. This paper focuses on accounts of spiritual experiences with orbs, notably if precursors to orbs photographed in digital imaging may be present in the RERC archives as written accounts of experiences with them perceived with the naked eye. As it concerns a first acquaintance in order to assert if these accounts point to experiences with orbs resembling contemporary accounts, this paper presents a short introduction to the history of orbs in how a photographic technical term evolved into a household name to continue with accounts from the RERC online database.

History

In the history of the orb as we presently know it in popular culture, the term was supposedly coined by the late American paranormal investigator/ghost hunter and radio host around 1996, Dr. Dave Oester (Oester, 2014, p.2) who then defined it as ‘the shape of balls of light that we observed passing through the walls. We described the spherical shapes of these balls of light as orb shaped.’ However it evolved rapidly into a method of identifying the shape with the anomaly. Oester further explained the term almost automatically was equated to an apparition or a ghost. On the other hand,

according to parapsychologist and paranormal investigator Steven Parsons (Parsons, 2012, pp.4- 5) orbs were first referred to as “lightballs” discovered on photographs resulting from a 800,000 pixel digital camera using flash during a paranormal investigation at the Ellesmere Port’s Boat Museum in 1998. English paranormal investigation groups quickly adopted the American term “orb” after hearing their American counterparts experienced the same circular anomalies in their photographs and video footage. Early other research into orbs was conducted by optical physicist Bruce Maccabee (2000) and skeptic of the paranormal Joe Nickell (1996, 2005). On the other side of the spectrum were the orb enthusiasts conducting their own experiments and relating their experiences (Goodwyn, 2007, Ledwith & Heinemann, 2007, Hall & Pickering, 2006). The opposition between orbs as an explainable mundane phenomenon and the “believers” who deemed them out-of-this world, multidimensional and otherworldly persists.

Orbs as photographic effects flooded pictures literally by the millions with the introduction of digital imaging in the mid-1990s and were mostly generated by the relatively cheap compact cameras as these had been made readily available for mass distribution and within easy grasp for the snapshot photographer. Their small size and built in flash close to the lens Parsons found, accounted for the orbs’ massive appearance. According to ASSAP (The Association for the Study of Anomalous Phenomena) the circles of confusion theory could be expanded with The Orb Zone Theory (or OZT) in which orbs as ‘purely photographic artifacts’ only tend to appear in a photograph within a certain bandwidth or zone using the flash (ASSAP, 2007; Wood, 2012). However, also in expensive high end cameras used by professional photographers such as DSLRs (Digital Single Lens Reflex cameras), orbs surfaced as “circles of confusion”, their initial name provided by digital camera manufacturers for their main explanation. Circles of Confusion (or CoC) is a historic term, transferred from the analogue to the digital era. Simply put, the photographic image is made up of many individual points and when taking the photograph of the subject (e.g. a person, or a tree), light is reflected off the subject and passed through the lens aperture (the diameter of its opening which controls the light let in) which allows for the light points entering the lens where each will be reproduced. Those that directly fall onto the focal plane (of the camera sensor) will be sharp (in focus), however, those points that fall beyond that focal plane tend to be visible as small overlapping circles. (Hart, 1996, p.196). However the human eye isn’t able to discern within a certain area when a point is outside the focal plane and it might still be perceived as sharp. That is called the circle of confusion. However, a circle of confusion is also applied as a method for determining the depth of field as the diameter of the circles relates to the diameter of the aperture (the opening in the lens to let the light pass through). For example, a small (narrow) aperture (expressed in “f”), of f20 produces small circles, so the resulting photograph appears “sharper”, while a large (wider) aperture, f4, produces larger circles looking ‘softer,’ blurring the image (also used to create “bokeh”, the degrading of the image sharpness to create a blurred background in an image). Another cause for orbs are “lens flares” or “ghost images.” These are reflections

falling into the lens from bright light sources (such as the sun) and take on the shape of the width of the aperture of the lens or within the lens's glass elements (Creath & Schwartz, 2005, pp.350-351, Hart, 1996, pp.171-174) create shapes such as circles, rainbows, stripes and glows. The puzzling "thing" however, about the orbs was – and still is- their persistence in popular culture as something other, placed within a paranormal or spiritual context. I should also point out that orbs are not limited to digital photography, they surface since the early stages of professional photography, but for the purpose of the 'household name" status the orb gained during the digital imaging era, this is the focus of my present research.

Background of the PhD research

For now, in short, in conventional optic terms orbs are regarded as reflected highlighted particles of airborne material such as dust, insects, pollen by a natural (the sun) or artificial light source (the flash). Despite their dismissal as 'circles of confusion' and the endeavours to make the public aware that orbs can be created purposefully as photographic effects, there is something I came across in my master's research (2016) on the cultural-cosmological impact with regard to orbs during interviews conducted in 2014-2015 with so-called orb enthusiasts. Orb enthusiasts are people who not only claim that they are firm believers of the floating light spheres but also tend to be in contact with them. This contact occurs telepathically with examples of orb enthusiasts who conducted experimental research to direct an orb into a certain position by asking "it" to do so. Then the orb enthusiast would take a picture to prove that indeed, that orb is positioned in that particular corner the orb enthusiast had in mind. It has to be stressed that conventional optic explanations and the considerations as mentioned previously account for a good deal of the orbs in photographs and video footage. By contrast, over the years cases have emerged which account for the presence of orbs in someone's life over a longer period of time. This presence could be in the form of a single orb that becomes of personal importance to the perceiver. This particular orb could be there alone or part of a flock of other orbs or orb-like manifestations. It may suddenly appear, stay along for a while and disappear. To the perceiver, the orb is experienced in the sense of something present, this presence is recognised as resembling being in the same room with another person and it may return repeatedly or just once or twice over a lifetime, with no exception to the effect of its profoundness to the experienter. It should be pointed out that orbs have been reported frequently in other conscious and non-conscious states such as dreams, during the near-death experience (or NDE), out-of-body experiences (or OBE), mystical experiences, clairvoyantly as part of the auric field, UFO encounters and paranormal experiences. These examples fall within anomalous experiences as 'believed to deviate from ordinary experience or from the usually accepted explanation of reality according to Western mainstream science' (Cardeña, Lynn, Krippner, 2014, p.4).

One of the orbs' peculiarities is that people can view them in broad daylight with the naked eye, both indoors and outdoors and instantly capture them with their smartphone or other device that contains a camera feature. Still, there are conventional explanations that might provide satisfying reasons for the orb to appear in the photograph. These may be that (1) although the orb has been observed and its picture taken, it still might be a photographic effect. The link that has been established by the observer between seeing the orb with the naked eye and seeing it on the subsequent photo might also be due purely to (2) the interpretation and imagination of the observer and as such have no cause and effect relationship. It may also be (3) purely coincidental. Still, as I have been researching this "orb phenomenon" since 2013, the problem arises when for instance the orb is positioned right there in the part of the picture where the observer has seen it simultaneously with the naked eye and has the urge to understandably make sense of it. Elaborating on this, what also happens is that (4) enduring experiences with orbs exist (with one or more orbs lingering in the experiencer's direct vicinity), which is something I came across repeatedly in my present research, which is specifically aimed at researching spiritual experiences with orbs.

With regard to the RERC archive and again as demonstrated by other researchers on light phenomena (for example Fox, 2008) who have consulted with the first-hand accounts gathered there over the years and pointed out its invaluable wealth, it gets very interesting when accounts describe anomalous light phenomena which strongly resemble contemporary accounts of orb enthusiasts, forwarded to the RERC archive long before the term "orb" was coined. Nevertheless, a word of caution should be given as definitions of orbs may vary strongly, placed within the context from which they emerge. The aforementioned 'circles of confusion' provide in a conventional materialistic and naturalistic explanation. However, viewed from a paranormal perspective parapsychologist and member of the SPR Council of Spontaneous Cases Steven Parsons (Parsons, 2014, p.44) writes

'Orbs are considered to be generally bright circular anomalies within any part of the image. Other shapes such as angular and elongated forms are also found and described. They may appear as single or multiple anomalies and may also vary both in colour and intensity. To date, tens of thousands of orb pictures have been offered forward by amateur paranormal investigators and lay members of the public as evidence and proof of something truly paranormal being captured by the camera.'

By contrast, people who get orbs in their pictures AND describe interactions with them, the orb enthusiasts, may define them in terms of

'Since 2012, I've taken many photos of Orbs, and know them as 'representations of the soul essence or energy signature of a being,

group consciousness, or craft, existing in a higher dimensional state'. 'Orb' is an umbrella term that covers many subtle manifestations, which can vary in form, colour and kind, and frequency, or dimensional strata, and include projections of the energies of star people, lightships, angels, elemental beings, souls both incarnate and discarnate, and other spirit beings.' Orb-like phenomena can also be projections (or probes) of entities of the lower astral 3-4D strata.' (Heartstar, <https://heartstar.org/orbs/>; retrieved 18 January 2020).

This brings me to introduce you the observation gathered from the literature review and interviews conducted that frequently orbs emerged in the experiencers' lives during or after a personal crisis (losing a loved one, severe illness, mental crisis, religious crisis) whereas before many of them claim they never had orbs in their pictures before or discerned them in their presence with the naked eye. It should be noted however and perhaps it is a finding in itself, that on the other hand the category of sensitives -people with strong psychic abilities- mentioned orbs as part of the common array of paranormal phenomena occurring throughout their lives. Over the past years, both authors of books on orbs disclosing their experiences with orbs (for example Ledwith & Heinemann, 2005), as well as interviewees, find companionship and solace in their presence as well as regard them as tools for personal and spiritual growth.

A Preliminary Search of the RERC Archive for contemporary orbs

As the RERC archive aims to collect accounts of religious and spiritual experiences, according to Alister Hardy's call for experiences described as 'Have you ever had a spiritual or religious experience or felt a presence or power, whether you call it God or not, which is different from, or more than, your everyday self?' it comes perhaps as no surprise orbs could be included. Similar accounts to contemporary photographs and their narratives might be found here, as examples brought forward from the RERC-archive may demonstrate. Although it should be stressed that the archive contains accounts only and not photographs, the latter being an intricate feature of the orb phenomenon. However, as the term "orbs" is a recent term, categorisation and therefore comparison should be approached with caution as also Mark Fox (Fox, 2008) explained about his research in the RERC archive on *Spiritual Encounters with Unusual Light Phenomena: Light Forms*. Should orbs be equated to floating spheres, globes, lights, stars and circles? As their outer and inner shape, density, colour, size, and patterning may vary as well as their appearance and mode of interaction from a sole presence to a flock determining what serves as an example and what isn't, depends also on the context in which people describe their single brush or repeated and ongoing interaction with orbs.

The search term “orb” entered in the RERC database yields thirteen results (retrieved on 3 January 2020), of which “orb” is included also within the term “absorbtion” or “absorbed”, “motorbike” or “Forbes” as these contain the letters o-r-b. Nevertheless, of these thirteen “hits”, three accounts do in fact refer to orbs in the contemporary designation, being account numbers 005509, submitted to the archive in 2011, hence the search term “orb” yielded this account (this account was pointed out to me earlier, by Marianne Rankin before I accessed the database) and 005479, submitted in 2009. The third account, number 400032 has the date of writing of 1999. The subject is “Orbs of Light” and was experienced in 1947 and it is unclear to me if the subject was added by the person maintaining the RERC database after the term “orb” became a common name at a much later date. In that sense perhaps the high number 400032 is an indication that indeed this is the case. These aforementioned accounts will be presented first to give examples of contemporary use of the term “orb” distilled from the RERC archive.

I have chosen to publish the whole account for the purpose of its context as indicated and *emphasising the text in Italics* concerning what might be direct referrals to orbs. The first account is given by a father who lost his son and is aware of ‘an energy following him’ and he consults two mediums of which one points out that the son has provided directions to indicate proof of his presence on a photograph. The second account refers to orbs as indicators of a health issue and the third is an example of what can be described as seeing glowing balls without further interaction:

(RERC ACCOUNT NO. 005479, DATE OF WRITING 2009)

Exactly one year after my heart attack, my son died. He ended his own life after discovering that he had M.S. My wife and I found him hanging from a garden tree. I desperately tried to revive him. At the same time I endeavoured to open his chakras pulling[?] on energy to re-enter his body. My son had died some eight hours earlier just after midnight when we were in bed asleep. Months later on, I was speaking with a Psychic Medium (who had never been to our home) He described the scene we were met with on 24th August 2007 but he went further "Your son saw you trying to revive him. He saw you trying to get his spirit to re-enter his body. He was watching you" said the medium. I attest that no-one was around to see my efforts or hear my calling God to help me so how I ask could the medium provide me with such a detailed and accurate account of the horrendous event? We went to see our son's body in the hospital mortuary. When my wife left the room momentarily I felt that I had to throw something. Was my son's energy soul in that room. The room was square. I went to a corner and felt out for energy (realising it could be static energy or such like). There was none, so I asked my son to come into the corner where I was standing. Moments later, I felt a strong energy presence, I then moved to the corner diagonally opposite. There was no energy/soul presence, then I called out for my son's soul to come into the new corner. The energy soul responded. This action I continued. I was moving, the energy was following me In October of this year, we went to see a different medium. Again, one who had never met or seen my son. The medium referred to a

third person (a young man) standing between my wife and myself. "Would you describe the young man?" I asked. The medium went on to describe my son and the VERY clothes he was wearing How could he do this I asked myself. so accurate down the colour and type of pullover my son had on when he died. I recontacted the first medium some time in our readings. He provided information about our son which only we were privy to. *Suddenly, he went quiet. "Go into your garden as far as your greenhouse then turn to your left. Your son is going to surprise you take photos at this place said the medium. I did as he asked taking my digital camera with me. I fired five shots at this spot discovering that one had captured a beautiful ORB. I'd never seen one before. We had the image enlarged and printed. Maybe I was lucky to have photographed an ORB but how did the medium know that I should go left at the green house? how did he know that I had a greenhouse. He'd never seen my garden nor the layout. Again, only one of five shots (all taken within a split second,) had captured the ORB. Will someone explain!*

(RERC ACCOUNT NO. 005509, DATE OF WRITING 2011)

I have lived at my present address in [place name] since 2006, it is now 2011. The first year I needed a Gall Bladder removal, the second year I was referred to the Gynea - Cancer clinic. Cancer was detected in the uterus because I was bleeding profusely, so all my reproductive bits and pieces were removed. It took me a year to not only regain - but enjoy increased energy levels. *Around that time I began to witness orbs shooting across the sitting room, they seemed to start from the wall opposite the very large picture window in my sitting room, zoom across to the window, at such a speed, but stop, at the glass. Quite a phenomena. I became quite hooked.[...] . But, and this is the crux of the story, and connected to the orbs again, this phenomena had still continued from time to time. A few days before my dilemma re the doctors, one orb, a red one, about the size of a ping pong ball, kept hovering by me at just below waist level. I spoke to a close friend who is a medium - about it - she warned me - it was a health issue, possibly complications. What more can I say? After that - no more orbs - I'm sorry not to see them any more, but perhaps it was meant to be a temporary witness in my life and the culminator was to warn me of a health issue. Isn't it wonderful.* From questionnaire: As I wrote of several experiences - I can only say that it was all an awakening over a period of time – moving towards an acceptance and understanding of our True Selves. I have reacted with Tears of Joy, Wonderment, Peace & Love.

(RERC ACCOUNT NO. 400032, DATE OF WRITING 1999)

During the night when I was in bed, on I think *about three or more occasions I saw a glowing ball of light to my left above my head near the ceiling. I sensed that this was something unusual* and I remember pulling my head under the clothes and looking again, I made sure it was still there it could not have been a reflection because the window at the left side of a bed and I was sure that it was something unusual. I think I felt not afraid but unsure of what it was. *As far as I remember I have never seen the.... Glowing balls since then ...,*

Limitations and pre-orb terminology to encounters with balls, lights, spheres etc.

As this paper concerns only a preliminary search into the archive, other search terms were employed loosely in order to see what the results from the archive would provide for descriptions closely resembling orbs and in the search field "subject" (and not the similar entry in the second field "text") as a "ball of light (1 result)", "floating ball"(0 results), "luminous"(3 results) "disc" (22 results), the combination of "luminous disc" yielded no results; "circle of light" (0 results), "circle"(34 results), "sphere" (62 results, including "atmosphere"), "globe" (0 results), and finally "star" (86 results) to see what accounts would be generated from the database. The determination of other search terms can be contemplated of course in a later stage of the study. The use of distinctive designations employed by contemporary orb enthusiasts such as "soul sphere", "ghost orb" or "spirit orb" already include assumptions about the nature/origin of the orb and were not employed at this time. Yet, to illustrate what kind of accounts from the RERC archive may describe orbs before the term was coined as set against an account from someone who refers to orbs because this is a recent entry to the archive, some examples provide a sometimes striking yet timeless witnessing of what contemporarily refers to orbs and experienced during the following situations: after bereavement with continuous presence(000031) and spontaneous and repeated occurrences(000264), during sleep in a dream and a religious crisis during a vision (000252), during the experience of physical trauma (003123), and after physical trauma (300318). Again I have chosen to present the complete account for its embedding in the context and highlighted the parts that directly may refer to orbs. The first account, no. 000031 was already brought to my attention by Mark Fox (Fox, 2008, pp.86-87) and can be found by the search term "flame-light" in the search field "Text" in the database). The other search terms employed referring to the next accounts were respectively "ball of light" (NO.000264), "circle" (NOs. 000264, 000252 and 003123), "disc" (NOs. 003123 and 300318) in the "subject" field of the database.

(RERC ACCOUNT NO. 000031, DATE OF WRITING 1969)

On 11th November, 1963, about twenty-five days after the bereavement, around 2 o'clock p.m. while resting after dinner, completely alone in the house, I heard a voice, clear, loud, distinct, authoritative, masculine, apparently about ten feet away from me, high up near the ceiling. The Voice said, "I am going to leave you now, a new and better man". Nothing more. Just those twelve words. On 4th December, 1963, twenty-three days later, about 5 o'clock a.m. on awaking and about to get up, the same Voice was heard by me, at apparently the same approximation location, although in a different room, loud, clear and plain as before. The Voice said, "Give him my love. Tell him it's all right". Nothing more. Nothing incidental. On 27th December, twenty-three days later, I heard the voice of my wife. The voice was quiet, a little sad, but distinct and clear to me. It said, "Take me to see him now". Again nothing more. Nothing incidental. This was around 5 o'clock, a.m. Early in February 1964, *strange lights*

began to appear in all parts of the room where I happened to be. Beautiful pale blue, slowly fading-in, and staying for a few seconds, then slowly fading out. They were at their best in a darkened room while I was by myself and thinking of her. Sometimes they came singly, very bright and large, sometimes numerous and smaller. In about the middle of February, just before settling down for the night, the lights were extra numerous, fifteen or twenty, but more numerous than previously. [While contemplating them and wondering as to their significance, a different light appeared, more like a flame of light, about as large as my hands, golden flame-colour, high up in the room, approximately ten feet away. This startled me and brought an exclamation to my lips, unfortunately so, as the flame-light immediately vanished and has never returned.] The other lights are now a daily experience. Over the five years from my bereavement no day has passed but that they appear. They come at all times of the day and night, in any and every part of the flat where I happen to be. They come when I am thinking of the ordinary business of life or doing the most mundane of things - a perpetual reminder of whatever it is they signify.

(RERC ACCOUNT NO. 000264, DATE OF WRITING 1969)

About 3 years ago as I lay in bed and was about to pass from waking to sleeping I saw before my eyes an extremely {sic} brilliant ball of light - a very intense light in a black background. The room was dark and I think my eyes were open; I saw the light for between 5 and 10 seconds. It was not caused by any physical condition of myself - I have very good health, nor light from outside, it was far too intense. About 3 or 4 weeks later I had the same experience under just the same conditions but this time *the ball of light was surrounded by an equally intense line of light round the circumference*, just a short distance from it. That is all my experience but it seemed and still does seem of significance.

-1978 Alone, after 40 years of joint decision making, I found that *a ball of light, or part of one*, has unexpectedly appeared a few yards away as soon as I had made a decision, lasting a second or two.

-Sept 1978 *My ball appeared again, bright, but less intense in the garden*, through the N. window as I sat alone thinking of what a friend had told me that afternoon, of her having been once aware of a presence. (SAME RERC ACCOUNT NO. 000264 including multiple experiences, DATE OF WRITING 1980)

(RERC ACCOUNT NO. 000252, DATE OF WRITING 1969)

At about this age I was tormented by religious doubts (I was baptised into the C. of E. at the age of 5) I remember the mental torment & misery caused by this one wet winter day when helping to load & cart dung on a farm. A few nights later *a vivid dream* put an end to this unhappy state. *In a circle of brilliant light something or someone who loved me said, or intimated "Beauty is Truth; Truth is God. You love beauty; trust in it."* I woke happy & perfectly satisfied with this simple explanation, & have seldom been troubled since.

(RERC ACCOUNT NO. 003123, DATE OF WRITING 1974)

THE HEALING DISC Earlier in the evening I had a fall which had left me with two wounded knees. The next day I was due to take a journey I emphatically did not want to fulfil; so apart from cleaning the knees, I applied no curative ointment or fluid. That night as I lay in bed, out of the depths of the darkened room, *I saw a disc the size of a small plate and shimmering with light-colours. Grooved rings circled towards the centre and between each, a space, which formed a raised band. The darkness around the disc seemed to have greater depth than I felt to be normal and I sensed a distinct feeling of intensive movement, although I could see no objects. The disc began to move straight towards my face and then dissolved between my eyes.* The next day I woke expecting to find the usual re-action to my knees, i.e. bruises and stiffness but this time there was little trace of scarring or ache. I undertook the journey.

(RERC ACCOUNT NO. 300318, DATE OF WRITING 1986, experienced in 1986)

The night following the operation, when I was best described in a semi coma, I had an amazing and ever lasting experience. I seemed to be drifting through brightly coloured clouds, but unlike anything similar seen on earth. The nearest I can describe them is akin to the colour of old church glass windows with the sun shining through. This seemed to go on indefinitely until I became aware of *a small opaque object, like a paperweight coming toward me. Within the glasslike disc appeared the figure of an old Aunt who had passed on a couple of months previous.* She looked very sad, there then appeared above her a shadow which looked like the head and shoulders of a nun. My old Aunt then smiled and both images drifted away. Two days later we heard that a close friend of my Aunt had passed away at the same time as my strange experience.

Preliminary findings and Conclusion

Accounts found in the RERC archive may demonstrate the occurrence of balls of light long before any mentioning of the term “orb” in their contemporary sense, comparable to the term near-death experience which is also a relatively recent term (Moody, 1975; van Lommel, 2010, p. vii; Greyson, 2014, p.333). In particular, the description in RERC accounts numbers 000264 and 003123 describe the “classic” orb: the round shape, often with concentric circles and mostly white. Notably in no.003123, the second account, which the experiencer calls ‘the healing disc’ is especially precise in describing the orb (see Figure 1). Contemporary interaction with the orb is demonstrated in account no.005479 during bereavement, and concerns observation only respectively in the accounts nos. 005509, date of writing 2011 and 400032, from 1999.

What my literature research revealed and my interviews are suggesting is an emerging pattern that has yet to be closely examined. Considering the RERC-account of the

bereaved widower (000031), this is not a mere anecdotal example. It is in fact exemplary for the sudden occurrence of orbs in someone's life after a loved one has died (see for example Hummel, 2017; Underwood, 2014). Somehow bereavement may serve as a trigger or an invitation to orb companionship. Likewise, seeing faces in orbs of deceased loved ones, human or animal has become a common, yet deemed 'paranormal' feature in orb lore. It seems that after the loss of a loved one, be it a spouse or a child, people become acutely aware of orbs popping up in their photographs, in the gardens and their homes and they even travel with them wherever they go. Other triggers may be personal or religious crisis, serious illness or inflicted physical and mental trauma as RERC accounts demonstrate as well. Case number 000264 stands out as the experiencer mentions that the brilliant balls of light turn up spontaneously and for none of the abovementioned triggers, however, she also notices in a second occurrence that they seem to pop up whenever she has made a decision and refers to it as 'my ball', thus personalising the orb.

From the above examples from the RERC archive it may be suggested that this preliminary search only yields results from touching lightly upon the vast wealth of accounts presented in the RERC archive. Many more may stem from it for future research to elucidate the spiritual experiences with orbs, past and present.

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Suggestions for historic examples of (possible) orbs are to be found here, and interpretations of these orbs might be highly suggestible and speculative:

"Orbs in a 1910 photo" available at: <https://hollowhill.com/orbs-issue-one-1910-photo/>; retrieved on 18 April 2020.

"Victorian octagonhouse-family-dog,cat,front porch-ORBS –antique cabinet photo" available at: <https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/victorian-octagon-house-family-dog-400483206>; retrieved on 18 April 2020

"Cranberry Specialty Hospital – Where Ghosts Walked And Light Orbs Floated". Available at: <https://www.abandonedspaces.com/hospital/cranberry-specialty-hospital-where-ghosts-walked-and-light-orbs-floated.html> ; retrieved on 18 April 2020

Hill, S. (2014)"From scary specters to silly orbs: What happened to ghosts?" Available at: <https://web.randi.org/swift/from-scary-specters-to-silly-orbs-what-happened-to-ghosts> ; retrieved on 18 April 2020

"Arthur Conan Doyle in Spirit Photograph". Available at: <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDMDC-ACD-PHOTOS-BOX1-FOLDER1C&R=DC-ACD-PHOTOS-BOX1-FOLDER1C> ; retrieved on 18 April 2020

APPENDIX 1 - ILLUSTRATIONS OF ORBS OUTDOORS

NOTE: All Figures are taken with the same compact camera, a Canon Canon SX280 HS set on automatic mode using the flash and all are taken in our back garden. Examples concern the classic orb: which is of a circular form with a variety of colours, size, density and patterning.

Figure 1: DAYTIME: Single orb during the early afternoon of January 3, 2020 during a mild rain shower. Figure 2: cropped, enhanced sharpness and contrast with coloured inverted version of the orb in Figure 3. An example of an orb with the cat's eye effect, resembling to have two eye sockets in the orb.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Figure 4: OUTDOORS EVENING- Picture taken in very humid conditions on December 31, 2019 of multiple orbs although the mist was not visible with the naked eye, yet the camera picks up the tiny droplets. *Figures 5 (below) and 6 (next page)* show the cropped, non-enhanced versions of orbs in close up. The orbs appear as loose particles.



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

Figures 7 (below) and 9 (next page) demonstrate multiple orbs taken during a dense shower on December 8, 2019 in the evening possibly containing hail stones. The misty haze at the bottom of Figure 7 probably is caused by a water droplet on the lens as subsequent pictures show the same cloudy patch. Figure 8 (next page) is a cropped version of the two brownish orbs in the left hand side of the photograph, as is Figure 10 (page following next) the cropped version of the “shooter” orb in Figure 9.

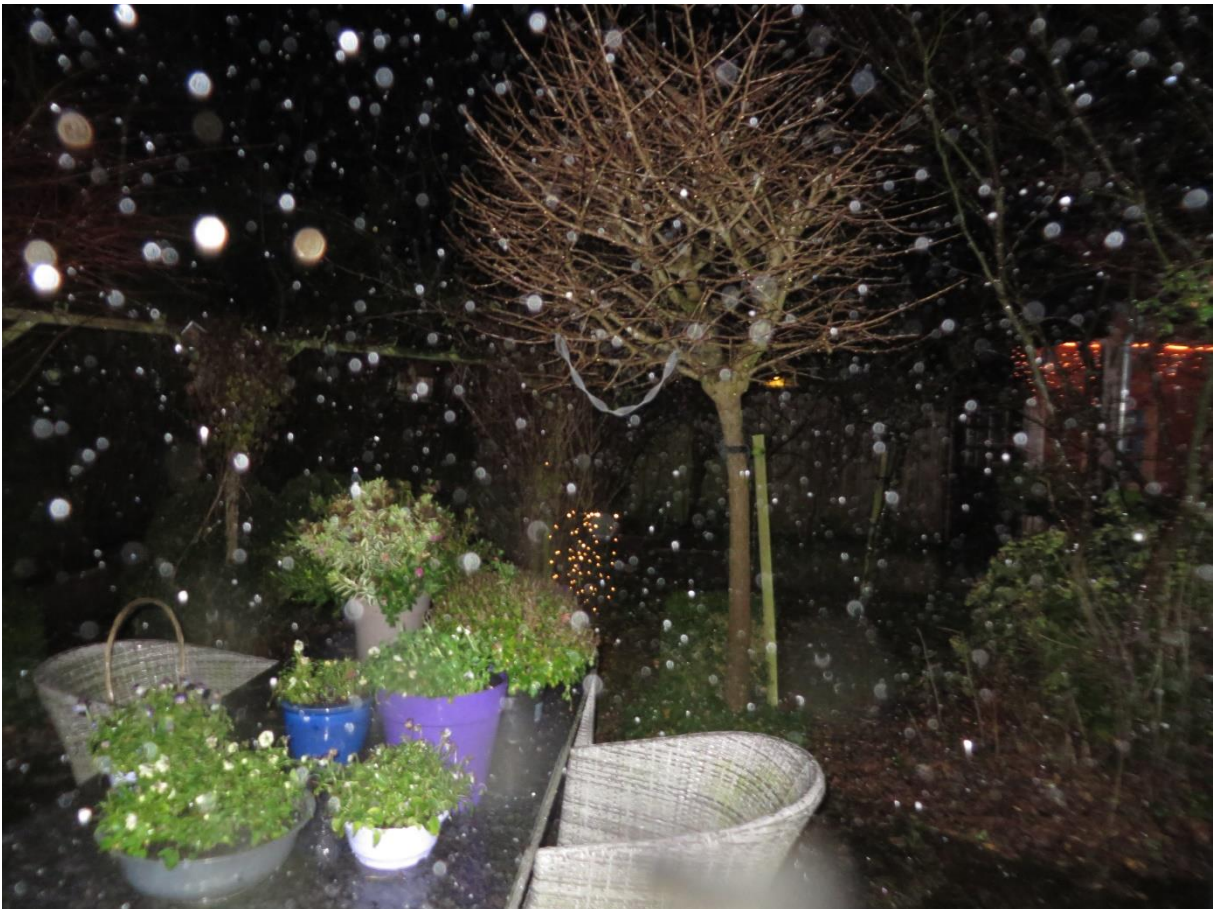


Figure 7

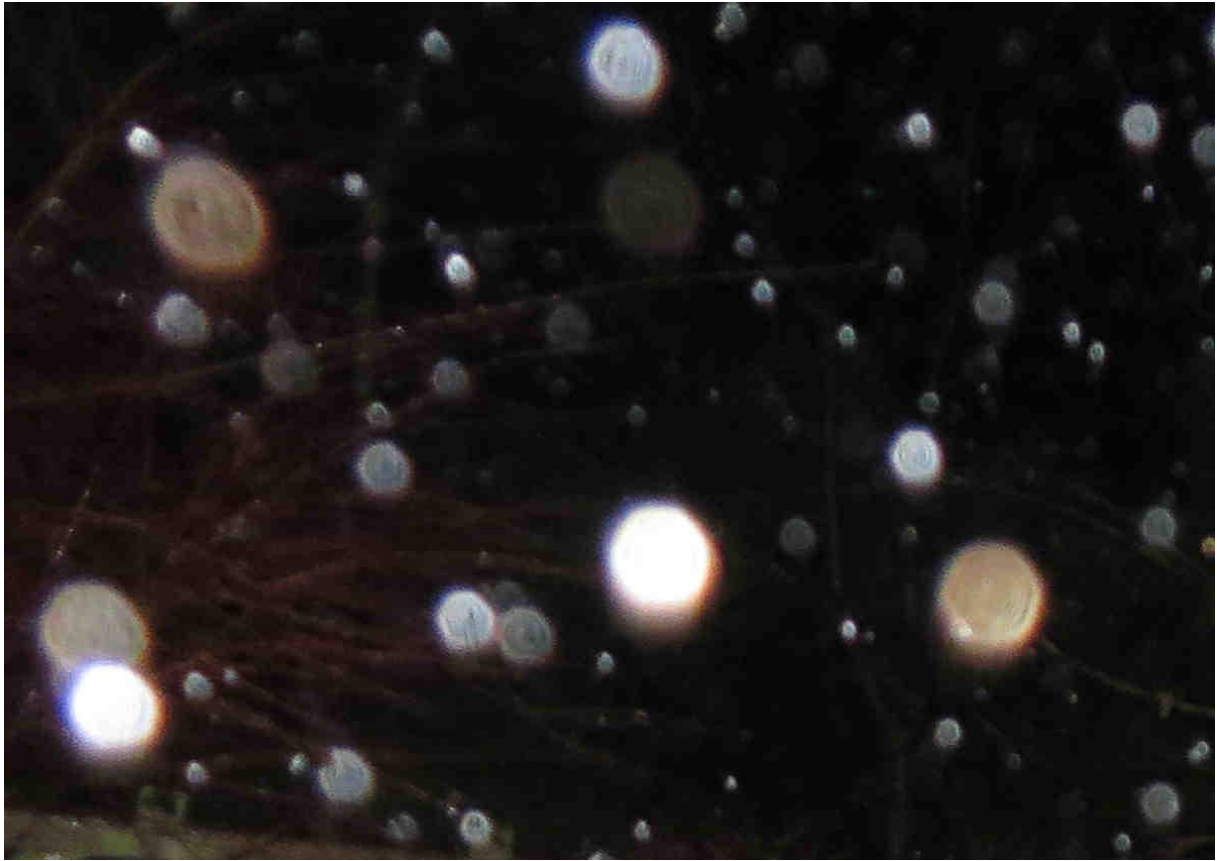


Figure 8

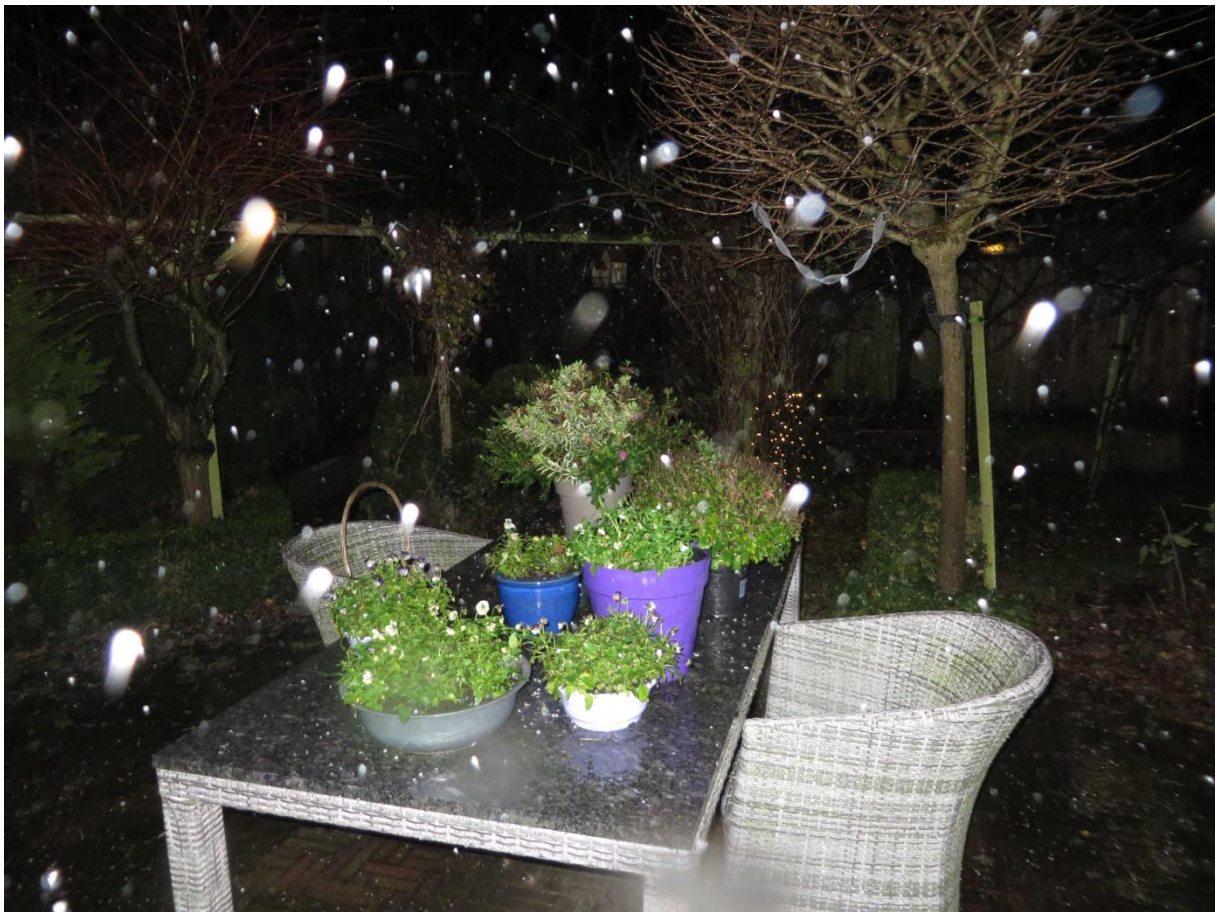


Figure 9



Figure 10

Figure 11 (below): Single orb taken early evening at dusk (19.00 hrs CET) of 13 October 2019. It was not raining although it had been predicted for the evening. In *Figure 12* (next page) the cropped, non-enhanced version of the orb shows the features of the orbs with the particular concentric rings.



Figure 11



Figure 12

Figures 13 and 15 are photographs taken during the rain shower that occurred that same evening 13 minutes later on October 13, 2019. In *Figure 13* note the light phenomenon, in a cropped version in *Figure 14*. As well as *Figure 16*, resembling the “rainbow” orb variety. (All remaining images on next two pages.)



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16