

# **THE MARTIAN DIARIES**

**BY**

**H.E. WILBURSON**

**A sequel to The War Of The Worlds**

**VOLUME 1. THE DAY OF THE MARTIANS**

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This is a work of fiction. Any similarities to real people, places or events are entirely coincidental.

## **My free gift for you**

Before you begin reading I'd like to offer you an ebook free gift: the personal diary entries from Ogilvy the astronomer for the whole momentous year of 1913 and the second Martian invasion. It's a supplement to this book and is best read afterwards to avoid spoilers. I'm sure you wouldn't want to miss the exciting story of how the Martian cylinder is removed

from the mountain in Wales and transported to London. Ogilvy also reveals how he eventually got the cylinder open and used alien technology during Operation Thunderbolt. You can read the diary in the print version of this book or download the free ebook here:

<https://books.martiandiaries.com/ogilvy-free-book>

## Author's Note

When I wrote this first volume in my sequel to *The War Of The Worlds*, it was imagined purely as an audio with my own bespoke music and sound effects. For that purpose, I wrote the chapters in visual 'scenes' some of which are quite short. I deliberately kept descriptive passages to a minimum as the music was designed to create setting and atmosphere. For this reason you will find *The Day Of The Martians* a quick read of around two hours. As I got towards the end of writing this story I knew that the next two volumes in the series would be much longer and in comparison they are each more than double the length of volume one. However it was always my intention to closely follow H.G. Wells' style and storyline and I hope you feel I have succeeded.

Perhaps you might like to check out the award-winning audio versions of this series, featuring original music and sound effects. Described as 'a movie for your ears' by some, they will enhance your immersive experience and take you to another level of enjoyment. Entered together, volumes one and two of *The Martian Diaries* won five awards in the Los Angeles Science Fiction Film Festival 2020–Audio Drama category. You can find out more

at my website where you can purchase the audiobooks direct from me or at a variety of digital retailers via the links here:

<https://www.martiandiaries.com>

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## **Prologue**

Life—who can consider, or fully explain, exactly what it is? Who can give a definition to something that has no barrier as to its choice of habitation, colour, shape or size? Once started, life has a persistence, a way of unexpected continuation, that is a surprise and a wonder to all who encounter it—none more so, than to the inhabitants of the red planet, Mars.

So it was, that a Martian cylinder was found—cold, un-stirring, buried deep in the rubble of the Welsh mountain it had crashed into.

The astronomer Ogilvy was summoned—commanded to find out everything about this particular cylinder, as so different it was to all other Martian projectiles that had invaded

our planet. It had remained silent, unmoving, entombed deep in a layer of dust and rock, with its primary screw cap still in place....

## **Chapter 1**

**1913**

The terror of the coming of the Martians was all but a distant memory, a bad dream that had faded with time. Amid the tinkling of the tea cups and the boiling of the kettle, I sat contented as I finished my breakfast with Laura. Unfolding the Daily Chronicle I read, and realised to my horror, the discovery of a Martian cylinder. It had been found complete, intact and as yet unopened, in a remote region of Wales, and carefully transported to London. I thought then of my wife's fortunate escape from the town of Leatherhead, just before a lone Martian fighting machine descended upon it with a heat ray. My stomach began to churn and to knot with a sickly unease and I knew for certain that my breakfast was over.

The very thought that I could encounter a living Martian again was awful, the worst possible news I could ever imagine. This would herald nothing but chaos, tremendous hardship and the likelihood of death. I glanced at Laura momentarily. She silently sipped her tea from across the table, still gently waking up it seemed, blissfully unaware of any renewed Martian threat, just as I had been only precious moments before. The very idea that my wife, sitting here with me now so safe and cosy in her dressing gown, could shortly be struggling again for her own survival against the elements and Martian monsters, was

unthinkable. And yet less than thirty miles away, hostile Martians still very much alive, could be lurking in the newly found projectile, ten years or so since their arrival on this planet.

I could not comprehend why Ogilvy had brought the Martian projectile back with him, and so recklessly placed it on the outskirts of London in his exhibition. It made no sense. Surely it would have been far safer and less of a risk to have examined the projectile where it was found, in the sparse wilderness of Wales. I knew then I had to go to London, to Crystal Palace, to find out more and to be there when they opened up the alien cylinder.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Train Journey**

My first concern was much more personal to me—Laura. The Martian invasion was solely responsible for the death of all her family, and it was a subject we rarely spoke of. The thought of her being here in this house alone, combined with a new Martian threat, proved too much for me. I asked Laura if she would like to go with me to Crystal Palace, and after a lot of gentle persuasion, she went upstairs to change. While she busied herself getting ready, I managed to read the front page entirely. I felt no better as I folded the headline, 'Is This the End of the World?' out of sight and carefully hid the newspaper away.

Making our way to the station, Laura said that before the end of the day she wanted to know what was bothering me. On the platform I stood directly in front of the newspaper stand, blocking and shielding my wife from countless headlines of doom and the end of the world, hoping upon hope that she would not see any of it. Hearing the whistle of the approaching locomotive I held her close, as the 10:05 to Clapham Junction pulled in.

After boarding the train the doors slammed shut, the guard's whistle blew, and I wondered then if I was doing the right thing. The train juddered and began to move. Any sense of self preservation or deep held concern was crushed as my stubborn curiosity got the better of me. I had to know what was happening in order to prepare for the worst, and should the worst happen, I knew I had no plan.

The journey itself was unremarkable. The engine chugged along happily, occasionally blowing its whistle, as rhythmically the carriages clanked, rocked and rattled over rails, points and under bridges. The frequent stopping at the stations along the line became a blur. Passengers got on and off, and I found myself trying to be normal, smiling, nodding, being polite, but completely lost in my own world. I had no plausible answers, just the frustration of many thoughts and questions.

As the train puffed closer to London the more my apprehension grew. The scars of the Martian invasion could still be seen in almost every direction I looked. We began to slow to a gentle stop and the train halted momentarily at a junction. In amongst some scorched trees I noticed a cluster of gaunt houses, mere burnt out shells of brick and stone. I pondered where the families of all those ruined homes could be, and if any survived.

The train began to move again, edging slowly forwards. I wondered then, what the Martians inside the cylinder were up to at this particular moment. Perhaps the projectile

was a Trojan horse, its only purpose a sudden and surprise attack. My hope for any sort of answer was Ogilvy: he must have had a good reason to bring the Martian projectile here to London, but I could not think of any. The train, it seemed, was in no particular rush, choosing today to be extra slow and unhurried. I grumbled, but Laura—wonderful Laura—not knowing the truth behind our destination or its importance, simply smiled, entertained by my lack of patience.

At last we arrived at Clapham Junction and keeping pace with other passengers, Laura and I walked along the platform under the warm, dappled light of summer that was streaming through the glass in the roof of the station. An express train came rattling through at another platform, noisily and quickly. The urgency at which it passed was soon forgotten amid the slamming of carriage doors and the whistles of guards and trains, all suddenly hissed into silence by the sudden release of steam and pressure in this cathedral of the locomotive.

The heavy puffing and pulling away of a noisy goods train out of the station, now drew my attention, and as the last of the wagons disappeared from view, I became aware that my wife was no longer beside me; someone else, a smaller woman—a stranger—had taken her place. I looked behind. Laura had picked up a discarded newspaper. Her happy, carefree mood had changed to one of panic, as she fearfully read the headlines, and all I could do was watch helplessly as I hurried back to her.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Crystal Palace**

We caught the connection to Crystal Palace and once there we could hear sounds of brass bands playing and the thumping of bass drums, coming from the bandstands. Steam engines spat as they furiously boiled and whistled, slowly turning a tall Ferris wheel lit by weak electricity bulbs, all flickering randomly and painted in different colours. The horses of the Merry-Go-Round, their faces agonized, chased each other up and down as they

went, much to the delight of screaming children, as others stood by and waited their turn excitedly with their parents. In the air, amid the heavy smell of burning wood and coal, came a sweet and light aroma of freshly made toffee and fudge.

Just before we left the train, I had told Laura that we were here to see Ogilvy because I wanted to interview him for a possible article about his extensive Martian collection. I soon regretted doing so as all the talk of Martians left my wife in a state of shock. Sombre and silent, Laura nervously gripped my arm as we approached the Great Exhibition of Martian Artefacts, knowing that the Martian cylinder she had just read about was here at Crystal Palace. We paid and entered the exhibition. To one side there was a protected area surrounded by a unit of armed soldiers with cannons. An enormous marquee had been placed in the middle and it was clear to me that the Martian cylinder had to be inside that structure.

Taking Laura out of the queue, we gained entrance to the cordon and into the restricted area. I asked to see Ogilvy in person and once inside the marquee I stood in awe of the huge, bulky object that loomed in front of us. There was none of the expected black staining, charring, or clinker anywhere on the alien cylinder; in fact, it was actually beautiful. On its perfectly clean and very shiny surface there was only the finest powdering of dust. It gleamed in brilliant silver and shone like new. Apart from its size, there was nothing sinister about this Martian cylinder. Thoughts of it being a Trojan horse concerned me greatly, and I began to worry now, more than ever. A small dog wandered into the enclosure; it seemed to be lost, yapping continually as it went. It allowed Laura to pick it up and she went to look for its owner.

## Chapter 4

### Ogilvy

Ogilvy appeared and greeted me warmly. It quickly became clear that he had no idea or any explanation for what had happened to the cylinder, or why it shone like new. I demanded to know why he had brought the Martian cylinder here to London, and so recklessly placed it into the midst of human habitation. He told me there was no detectable sound or movement coming from within the projectile and he was convinced that no living thing was still inside. He assured me that the risk posed to London was minimal.

Taking me to one side, so as not to be overheard by any of the guards, Ogilvy explained off the record, that this Martian exhibition was indeed a charade; it was a public exercise to gently raise awareness of a new Martian threat, in an attempt to prevent a large scale panic of the people. He had observed through his telescope vast clouds of green, luminous vapour, dissipating high up into the atmosphere of Mars. My heart sank deeper as Ogilvy revealed that he had also detected a moving object in the form of a comet, heading towards our planet. He believed that in a matter of a few short months, the Martians would indeed walk again upon the face of the Earth.

“A comet coming from Mars? You mean a projectile, surely?” I questioned. “But a single projectile would be far too small—almost invisible—to be seen at such a distance. When is this comet of yours expected?”

“You have a very fine scientific mind. It’s a shame you waste that intellect of yours, writing for journals. I am of the opinion that all of the Martians are coming this time, in one massive fleet, or an armada of projectiles if you like. I find it remarkable that they were able to launch so many of their projectiles that they actually look like a fair-sized comet. It won’t be long before its unusual green colour will become visible to the naked eye, and every Tom, Dick and Harry will know exactly what it is. The comet will arrive just before the 25<sup>th</sup> of December.”

“Christmas? As soon as that? But, that’s barely three months away....Why does this cylinder occasionally shimmer green, slightly? Look, it’s doing so now.”

Shrugging, Ogilvy replied, "The shimmering started when we tried to remove what we thought was the screw cap, a few days ago. I believe it is sending a signal. To where? I'm not sure."

"Could it be a homing beacon? Or simply a distress signal?"

Ogilvy's eyes widened. "That's the best hypothesis I have heard today, and one that would explain the slight deviation we detected in the course of the comet." He hurriedly removed some scribbled notes out of his pocket. "Yes, of course. Then that can only mean one thing: the Martians are coming here to rescue their friend!" Ogilvy seemed distracted and suddenly worried as he stepped back from the Martian cylinder, as if to observe the shimmering in its entirety.

"Maybe it's an advantage," I gently suggested. "We could set a trap for them and force them to our terms."

"They are not coming to negotiate. Once they start using their heat rays, their only terms will be the extinction of us all. They are coming here to conquer the Earth!" Ogilvy drew a deep breath and sighed deeply. In the previous invasion he had survived the glancing blow of a Martian heat ray, but only just, and pain from that encounter seemed to bother him still. He reached into his pocket for some medication, and taking it, appeared to relax. Then he explained in detail that the government wanted him to officiate at the Observatory in Greenwich, to monitor and study the approach of the comet. Ogilvy wanted to concentrate on opening up the cylinder, in the strategic hope of retrieving a viable Martian generator, the quintessential component needed to create a heat ray device of our own. "The cannons and guns we have now will not do. We must have fire, in order to fight fire!" he warned.

To my mind, Ogilvy appeared to be wasting his time. Martian machinery was an advanced technology that no human had yet considered or conceived. Any scientific knowledge as to its theory did not exist. It was probably dangerous, or could even be fatal, to tinker with the mechanics of the projectile. I suggested to Ogilvy that something unforeseen had caused the demise of the cylinder. It had been rendered harmless in an accidental mishap or malfunction that was certainly serendipitous to our cause. The secrets of how the alien

came to be disabled had to be known and scrutinised in every detail. He gave no response, deciding instead to elaborate on his latest ideas and plans to get inside the Martian cylinder.

Laura returned without the dog, and we sat together with Ogilvy in a noisy cafeteria and drank tea. I now believed as Ogilvy did, that the crew of the alien cylinder, less than one hundred yards from where we sat, had indeed perished. My natural instinct suggested that the answer to this Martian riddle lay not here in London, with this shiny projectile, but in the desolate mountains of Wales. Ogilvy had mentioned Tryfan, the Welsh mountain where the cylinder had crashed. On hearing the name, I found that I had written it down, unsure of the correct spelling. I decided to go to Wales to investigate for myself and the sooner it was done the better I would feel.

Half an hour later we thanked Ogilvy for the refreshments and bid him farewell. Taking Laura's arm, my suggestion of travelling far from this Martian object was met with her instant approval. At the nearest train station we bought tickets out of London and England, bound for the north-west of Wales.

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I hope you enjoyed reading this sample of The Martian Diaries: Vol. 1 The Day Of The Martians. You can get the rest of this story as an ebook here:

<https://books2read.com/thedayofthemartians>

Or perhaps you might like to check out the award-winning audio versions of this series, featuring original music and sound effects. Described as 'a movie for your ears' by some, they will enhance your immersive experience and take you to another level of enjoyment. Entered together, these two volumes won five awards in the Los Angeles Science Fiction Film Festival 2020—Audio Drama category. You can hear samples, find out more and purchase all my books at a variety of digital retailers via the links on my website:

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