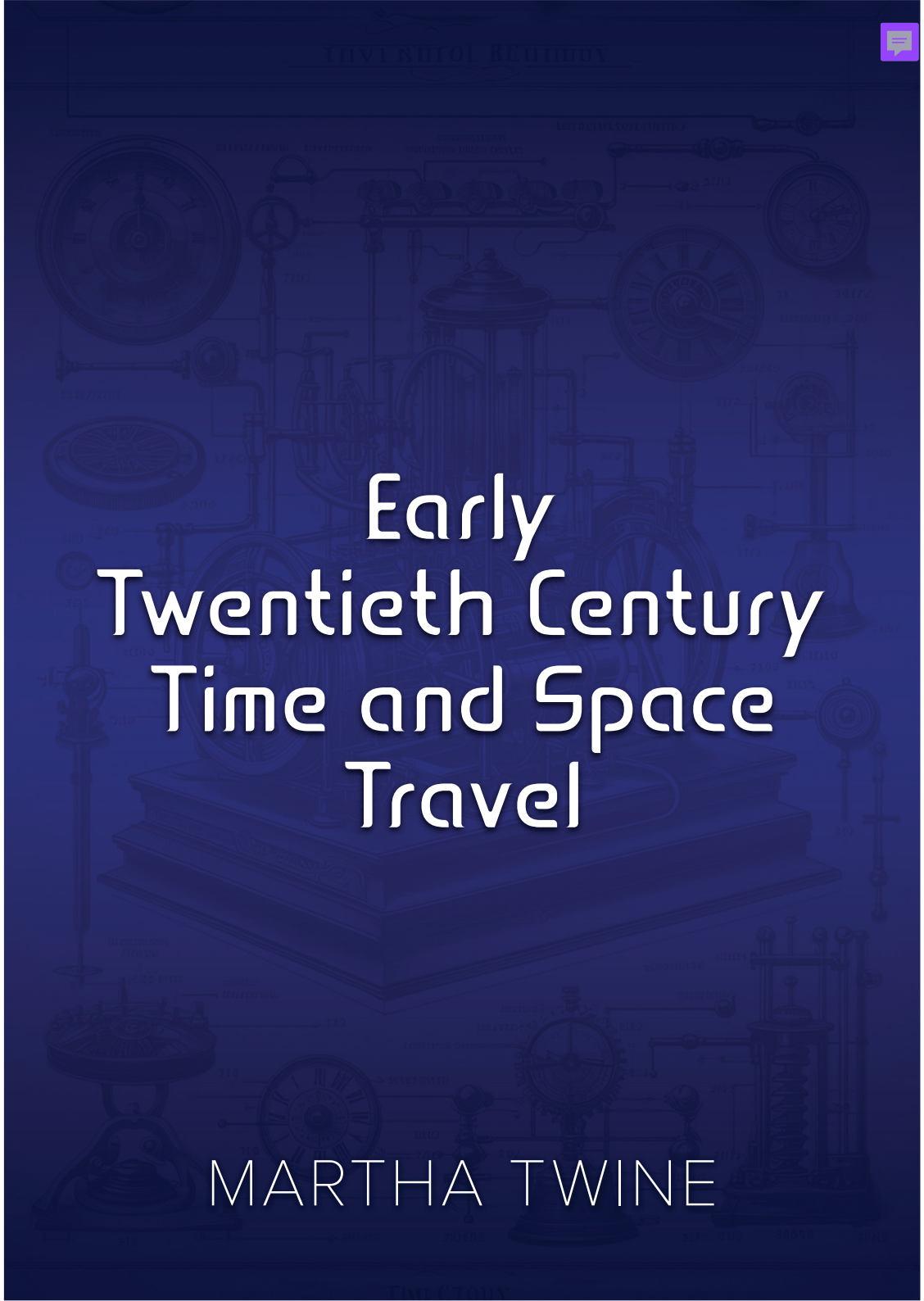
**EPILOGUE**

And that's as far as we can go with the British space research project. We started by looking at French science research into time travel and moved into space-time research, using related technologies. The British may have started work on the Mars base, but it was the Americans in the 1960s who took space development to another level. To find out more about that, see the chapter called '*Red Planet*' in my book '*Kiss Terror Goodbye*', and further episodes in my third book, '*Beyond Terror's Reach*'.





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Another man was already stretched out asleep.

I wondered how long it would take to build an underground base, and equip it for modern use. The base would have to be adapted for scientific and military use, and working in those conditions, it could take up to twenty years.

'Not really a place with good business prospects, where a man could raise a family,' I thought, remembering Josiah's words.

The men all looked and sounded British. But I knew from my space explorations described in the book '*Beyond Terror's Reach*' that the intergalactic astronaut community would soon be predominantly from North America, reflecting the fact that the British had to leave suddenly in the middle of their space projects, when government funding ran out.

Because they were working in an electronic environment the scout ships didn't need huge rocket boosters to leave the ground. Once out of planetary orbit, they simply altered their space position co-ordinates on their navigating equipment in such a way that the electromagnetic envelope which contained them now resonated as being in an entirely different location, and they were in the new location an instant. So, they didn't need to sleep over on Mars. They could get back to Earth easily at the end of their dual shift.

## CHAPTER FOUR

I left the early Moon explorers to their work, and returned to my desk.

'So, Brits are involved on the Moon and on Mars by the start of the twentieth century,' I thought, 'And they've been using mining equipment, which was already being used by governments and commercial companies in the UK, Europe and the US at that time. If they are on Mars, could that be a combined US/UK effort at this stage?'

I tuned into the universal resonance, and searched for human activity on Mars in the early twentieth century.

A pleasant bare orange desert landscape appeared, with filtered light from the distant sun falling through hazy skies. A scout ship was parked in the foreground. It's loading bay was open, and a number of packing cases were standing on the ground beside it, as if they had just been unloaded. Nearby a tall man in an orange spacesuit, with a helmet and breathing apparatus was standing in front of a square dark metallic building which looked as if it was made out of glass and scaffolding. Inside another man in an orange spacesuit was sipping coffee. He was wearing his helmet, but the visor was up. The first man came in through two sets of metal doors, presumably to prevent the oxygenated atmosphere from escaping.

'It's nearly time for our shift now. I suppose we'd better go down,' the first man said.

The two men, helmets in place, left the building via the metal doors. They walk towards a deep trench, and descended down a ladder to where two other men in spacesuits were operating mining equipment. The men were on their own out there, and had to be able to troubleshoot if anything went wrong with the machine. Once the first shift was over, the first two men went and sat in the oxygenated capsule inside the makeshift building, until they were joined by the second shift. Then all four men returned to the scout ship. Inside the scout ship the pilot and co-pilot were waiting. They stayed there the whole time, keeping in contact with their base on Earth. So that was six people for each visit.

'I'm knackered,' said one man.



## CHAPTER ONE

I read a book that started me thinking about time travel. It was called 'An Adventure' by C.A.E. Moberley & E.F. Jourdain. It contains a controversial description of some visits to Paris made by two English ladies from Oxford University, starting in August 1901, in which they reported that they found themselves in the time of Marie Antoinette. It is hard to know what they experienced, but what they described made me wonder whether behind the scenes, some French scientists from the private sector could have been carrying out experiments in time travel, with the financial support of the French Government.

Tuning into the resonance of the narrative in the book, I focused on the year 1901, which was when the events were said to have occurred, in a French botanical garden, created by Louis XV. I arrived at the site, and searched the area for any signs of scientific activity nearby. I soon found a nineteenth century building in a quiet street, with a bay window facing towards the gardens. Inside was a bare workroom, with tools and equipment at one end. At the other end of the room was a raised wooden platform, supporting what looked like a tripod, with a very large lens, about a foot wide, pointing out of the window. There was another lens on a tripod in the corner of the room. Two men dressed in late nineteenth century work overalls were operating the equipment, while two men, whose names were Maurice and Henri, wearing dark suits with tails, and top hats, looked on.

'Start the machine', ordered Maurice.

The two men ran around connecting pieces of equipment to a battery power source. There was a quiet whirring noise as the light came on. A wide beam of light extended out of the window and across the gardens. I saw women in long dark outer clothing consistent with the early twentieth century, hurrying along the paths. One stopped, knelt down and searched on the ground, as if looking for something she had dropped. A park keeper came towards her.

'Hurry Madame,' he said, 'It is time to leave the gardens.'

Start the second machine,' ordered Henri.

Now there were two intersecting light beams, and where the beams overlapped, in the centre of the Venn diagram, pulsed light was introduced. Suddenly the scene changed. The weather was brighter, and there were gardens with mown lawns. Ladies in rich colourful clothing and extravagant feathered hats strolled on the grass. Was this what the English academics had witnessed?

Maurice and Henri watched from the window, taking notes, as tea was served on a white garden table, with a white cloth over it. There were matching chairs, but some of the ladies and some gentlemen in mustard and brown silk coats and trousers decorated with brocade preferred to sit on the grass.

The machines whirred on. Then, Maurice completed his observations, and indicated to the technicians that the session was over. The lights were switched off and technicians start to pack away the equipment. A policeman came in and saluted the two technicians, who saluted back. Then he turned to Maurice.

'Everything is in order, Sir. The operation went well. But one English woman tourist stumbled in on it, and started asking questions.'

'Oh, I don't think we need worry about that,' said Maurice. One woman on her own with a strange story is never going to be believed.'

'Yes,' laughed Henri, 'No doubt her trip to the Eiffel Tower will pale in comparison, and she will return to her country greatly refreshed by her experience!'

Maurice turned to the policeman.

'Thank you, officer, we are packing up now. Everything can go back to normal.'

The policeman left, and Henri turned to Maurice.

'I think we are getting somewhere,' he said, 'But we must redouble our efforts. The British have greater investment, and our American colleagues are catching up fast.'

'Yes, that reminds me,' said Maurice, lighting a cigar, 'I wonder how old Smithson is getting on?'

I wondered which Americans Henri had been referring to, and



here. Not like some of those pesky foreign navvies. No, we've heard that there is a better life on a red planet.'

'Gracious! On Mars? But people can't breathe there,' said Fletcher.

'No sir, that's what I said myself, when I first got wind of things, so to speak,' replied Gideon, 'But apparently they can transfer things out of this environment, and they've been using mining equipment up there.'

'Really? Well, well,' muttered Ambrose. 'So, they put it into this environment, took it up there, and transferred it out again.'

'Yes sir, that is, according to my mate on the other ship,' Gideon explained. 'He helped get the equipment up there.'

'Oh, so I suppose they are going underground?' Fletcher asked.

'That's right sir,' said Gideon, 'And my mate says they have a right old time up there, plenty to drink, and time off. So, we were thinking...'

Josiah interrupted him:

'Yes sir, we were thinking, that if you were looking for a place with good business prospects, where a man could raise a family. Well, I'd look no further.'

At that moment, the scientists on Earth began to guide the energy field containing the scout ship back down onto the landing pad.

'Ah,' said Fletcher, greatly relieved, 'I see we are coming in to land. Well, you have certainly given us food for thought, and thank you for the excellent moon trip. Magnificent!'

'Yes,' Ambrose echoed, 'Quite magnificent!'

them into another room with table and chairs where they sat down. Star Trek fans will realise that what is needed is to beam up in a Perspex body tube. That fixes the falling over problem. But at this stage, it hadn't been invented.

'Magnificent! Quite magnificent!' Gasped Ambrose, leaning on his cane.

'How soon do you think we can get back to Earth? I feel unsafe in this form,' said Fletcher.

'Oh, that's nothing to worry about, Sir,' Josiah, the first technician replied. 'We've just signalled to return. It's quite safe. Why, me and my crew spend a lot of our time like this. Our first trip was on the Spanish Main, but when we heard about this, we decided we'd like to try it.'

He was clearly a former British military technician.

'Have you been to the Moon's surface then?' Fletcher asked.

'No such luck sir, that's just for the tops,' sighed the other technician, whose name was Gideon.

'But won't you be needed if they are going to build a base there?' Ambrose wondered.

'Ah,' said Josiah, putting a finger to his nose, 'That would be telling, wouldn't it? You see sir, it's like this. I and my mate have a good life on Earth. The wages are paid, and we have wives. Now if we were to always be up there,' he added, pointing to moon, which by now was visible from the window, 'What would happen to our wives? They might meet other men.'

'Oh, I quite see.' Fletcher nodded.

'Besides,' added Gideon in a confidential tone, 'I've heard there are better places a man could live, not so far away as the crow flies if you get my meaning.'

'What do you mean, man? You are British, aren't you?' Ambrose erupted.

He obviously didn't get Gideon's meaning, and thought he was planning to go and work for the Americans or the French.

'Of course, sir, it's all right,' Josiah reassured him, 'We are all Brits



tuned into what was in his mind. I saw a light spacious room looking out onto a street in New York. Two men in smart nineteenth century suits, Smithson and Brant, were at a large drawing board, constructing diagrams.

A servant looked in.

'Some tea, Sirs?'

'Not now thank you, we're busy,' said Smithson.

'You see,' said Brant, drawing a tube between two sets of parallel lenses, 'This is what I mean, you can adapt to a wider range by constructing a connecting passage like this.'

'Quite right,' said Smithson, 'We can do better than that, why don't we merge the two by joining them along the same side?'

'No that won't work,' said Brant. 'It needs more space between the two.'

The men were deep into the detail of the technology. After a while they stopped.

'We can't do any more on this till tomorrow, when the workmen come,' said Smithson, referring to their technicians. 'Let's go out for a walk. It's hard trying to make this operate in theory, when we can soon find out if it works tomorrow when we apply it in practice.'

The two men left the building, and strolled down the pleasant tree-lined street.

'I wonder how old Maurice is getting on in Paris,' said Brant.

'Poor chap, he's had no help from the British,' said Smithson.

'Without more funds, we can't help either of them, can we?' said Brant. 'We'll just have to carry on alone.'

They reached a café and sat down at a table outside, looking out across the city below.

'I doubt if we will ever do it, you know,' said Brant.

'Nonsense!' said Smithson, 'We have all the time in the world. Of course, we'll do it.'

'Pity we can't go back into the past and find out how they used to do it then,' said Brant.

‘You reckon they could do such things in ancient times?’ said Smithson.

‘Not sure, really,’ said Brant, as a waiter brought two coffees.

The men sat staring at the view for a while. Then a well-dressed young man with dishevelled hair came running up to them.

‘Gentlemen, there you are! You must come. We have news!’

The three men left the café and headed down the hill. Halfway down they reached a one-story building that looked like a warehouse, and went round to a side door. Inside were two men in smart suits, Aitken and Philips and several men in working overalls.

‘Good, you have come,’ said Aitken. ‘Close the doors and draw the curtains,’ he ordered.

The room went dark. At one end of the warehouse was what looked like a theatre stage. Lights went on around the stage.

‘We are going to see something,’ said Aitken.

‘What are we going to see?’ asked Smithson.

‘Watch,’ said Aitken.

The stage curtains were pulled back, revealing a projection screen, with a table pushed up next to it. On the table was a vase of flowers. At the other end of the hall, in line with the projection screen, a light beam using pulsed light was switched on. As the machine whirred, the flowers were bathed in light. Then the vase seemed to shimmer... and then it completely disappeared. Smithson and Brant gasped. Several men in overalls cheered.

‘You see,’ said Aitken, ‘It works every time.’

I realized we were watching the early stages of ‘beaming up’ technology under development. The technology looked similar to that used by the French for time travel, but there were differences. The French used two lenses which had to be activated at the same time, with intersecting beams to create a Venn Diagram. In the French case the location inside the light beams changed to a different time period. In the American case, an object went to a different place. It seemed as if the technologies were altering the speed of light, slowing it down, by analogy like a prism slows down light, although this can only be spec-



Using the by-now established technologies, the scientists beamed up two technicians to pilot the craft. Because they were inside a specific energy field, the technicians did not need oxygen to breath. Exposure to energy fields without protective clothing would not be permitted now, but health and safety regulations for space exploration were in their infancy at this stage.

The technicians operated technologies within the ship to focus a light radiation beam onto the Moon, which looked like a spotlight, and also acted as an energy field. They then notified the location of the radiation beam to the scientists on Earth, who beamed up their wealthy backers onto the Moon’s surface inside the spotlight area.

What I saw was two men in shiny top hats and black canes and black coats walking on the moon.

‘Magnificent isn’t it! Quite spectacular!’ said the first backer, whose name was Ambrose.

‘Pity we can’t live here, but it wouldn’t be safe in the longer term to operate in electronic form without returning to full form, and if we did that we couldn’t breathe,’ replied the second backer, whose name was Fletcher.

‘No, perhaps we should signal that we want to return,’ said the Ambrose.

They were both a little concerned about their safety, and they needed to make contact with the technicians in the ship. They were equipped to send a light signal from a lamp, but when they tried to light the lamp, nothing happened. Without oxygen, this was hardly surprising.

‘I’ve got the lantern, but it doesn’t seem to be working,’ said Ambrose.

‘Well, we’d better try waving,’ said Fletcher.

Both men wave frantically at the yellow scout ship above them. A wide beam of light emanated from the scout ship, brightening up the Moon’s surface within the spotlight area. The two men stepped into it and immediately disappeared. I followed them up into the scout ship.

As the men arrived, they fell on the floor of the sparsely furnished scout ship. The two technicians helped them to their feet, and escorted

## CHAPTER THREE

I withdrew my attention and considered what I had seen. It looked as if, by the turn of the century British, French and American private commercial companies had all developed energy field technologies to the point where exploration of both time and space travel were underway. As mentioned earlier, the French and British governments were collaborating initially, but the British did not want to continue working with the French because the French wanted to study time travel, while the British and Americans wanted to focus on space travel.

As becomes clear later in my third book, '*Beyond Terror's Reach*', the British dropped out of space exploration at an early stage, probably in the 1920s. I tuned into the universal resonance, which contains everything since the Big Bang, to try and understand why... The year was 1916 during the First World War. I saw a British General in private talks with the British Prime Minister, Lord Asquith. He was asking for further funding for the British space exploration project. Asquith said:

'Absolutely out of the question. I have men dying on the front line, and you are asking me to divert scarce resources to this costly operation. It cannot be approved.'

The General left disappointed. He did not really expect Asquith to agree to his request, but he knew that if further funding was not granted, the entire British space mission was likely to close within ten years, and there was little chance of it being started up again after that.

But that didn't stop British private sector companies from continuing their research in the short term. I caught up with them in the early 1920s already testing the possibility of landing on the Moon. The way they did it was to project an electronic field into space just above the Moon's surface. They had already developed an airship. It had a basic fuselage, a cockpit and a seating compartment for up to six people, more like a scout ship. Navigation was not required for this model, which just needed to stay put in space, and beam people up and down. Surrounding the airship in its own electromagnetic envelope, the scientists projected the ship into the waiting energy field where it remained motionless.



ulation. In my first book '*Terror in Britain*' I noticed similar technology being used by modern terrorists, where an ultrasound energy field was created, and lenses were used to slow the speed of light. It seemed to be a trade-off between slower speed of light and faster speed of sound to move people within an energy field from one environment into another electronically.

'So, what were the British doing?' I wondered.

I connected with two British Foreign Office employees, called Allan and Falkirk, who had been stationed in Paris, and knew the research scientists Henri and Maurice. The Brits were now back in London. They were entering a large Victorian red brick building, still looking somewhat downcast.

'Come along, chaps,' said their host, and they went into a large dusty hall.

'Now I know you have questions,' their host continued, 'But just sit here quietly at the back, and you will see why we couldn't let cooperation with the French go ahead.'

At that moment, a man in a top hat and smart suit, whose name was Cooper, came in through another door. He was accompanied by an eight-year-old boy, wearing a red and white check shirt, and dirty grey trousers. The man put his hand in his pocket and gave the boy a penny-halfpenny. Then they both went upstairs. I followed them up the wooden staircase to a smaller room, where another man in a smart suit, whose name was Wilson, was standing beside the now familiar projector screen and light beam tripod device.

'What do I have to do?' asked the boy.

'Just stand on that platform while we shine a light on you,' said Cooper.

'Right now, watch this,' Cooper said to Wilson, as he switched on the equipment.

The boy stood blinking in the light. Then he began to shimmer, and a minute later, he was not there.

'Capital! Well done!' cried Wilson. 'I suppose you know how to bring

him back now?'

'We're working on that,' said Cooper. 'I'm sure he'll be alright, wherever he's gone. Soon as we know how to find him, we can fetch him back.'

'You're sure of that?' asked Wilson.

'All in good time,' said Cooper.

He went to the back of the room and picked up a large travelling bag, packed with equipment, including batteries, leads, tripods and lenses.

'Now Wilson,' Cooper continued, 'You know how to operate this equipment, don't you?'

'Yes,' replied Wilson, 'But what are you planning?'

Cooper picked up the bag and stood on the platform.

'I want you to send me up.'

'I hope you know what you're doing Cooper,' muttered Wilson, as he started to activate the equipment, 'I don't fancy the idea of having to break the news to your family that you were lost in action.'

'Oh, do get on Wilson,' said Cooper impatiently.

A moment later, he was inside a large dry cave which looked out on a calm sea. The boy had just stumbled his way outside, and was breathing in the fresh air on a hill above. Wasting no time, Cooper unpacked the bag, constructed a wooden platform and assembled the equipment, powered by a set of batteries. Then he strode out to the entrance of the cave.

'Boy! Boy! Are you there?' he called.

The boy looked down and saw him.

'Come here, boy,' said Cooper, 'It's time to go home.'

The boy picked up some stones and threw them at him. They missed.

'Go away,' the boy shouted, 'I don't like you. You tricked me into this.'

'But now I've come to take you back. You want to go back, don't you?' said Cooper, extending his hand. 'You won't get back without me, and I'm going in a minute.'



'Oh, well in that case, I think we ought to go,' said Falkirk. 'We don't want to intrude into things that are not for us to hear. We just dropped in for a general chat. We can come back some other time.'

They retrieved their hats and coats, shook hands and left.

'How very strange. They don't seem to be interested,' said Paul.

'No, they don't, do they, said Charles. 'That suggests to me that they already know what they need to know.'

'Well, I get the impression that they prefer to co-operate with their American cousins,' said Paul.

'The Americans are far in the lead on all that. I gather there's been a mass exodus of people from the British Empire to work across the pond,' said Gregoire.

'Well, we also have our own business expansion area in Quebec,' laughed Paul.

A servant knocked at the door again.

'Excuse me Sir, your guests for lunch have arrived.'

'Splendid!' replied Gregoire. 'Let's go and greet them.'

are too valuable,' said Pierre

'Well, we could send volunteers...' murmured Etienne, wondering if there could be further work for him in that direction.

But his comment was ignored.

'The military applications are obvious,' said Gregoire. 'If you want to know what the Germans are up to, you can attend their private meetings, and be warned of any hostile plans in advance.'

'And then there is the commercial angle,' added Charles. 'We all know how good the Germans are at airships. We need that technology. Some of our men might be beamed down in the right location, where some of their top-secret facilities are.'

'Yes, but what if they are caught. We can't just pull them out,' said Paul. 'Some people say the Germans already have this advanced technology, and could detect us.'

'Well, there is plenty of room for our scientists to work on how to pull our chaps back,' replied Charles. 'Perhaps that is the angle we should pursue.'

'Yes, I agree,' said Gregoire. 'After we receive our scientists' report on this project, I will make a presentation to our military at the appropriate level.'

At that moment there was a knock at the door.

A servant announced:

'Two English gentlemen from the British Foreign Office, a Mr Allan and Mr Falkirk to see you, Sir.'

'Ah yes, of course,' said Gregoire, 'Do bring them in.'

The two English men came in looking a little bedraggled, as they had been caught in a rain shower. The servant had taken their mackintoshes to the drying room.

'Hello Allan. Good to see you,' said Gregoire.

'We seem to have interrupted your meeting, said Allan, 'I must apologise.'

'Oh, don't mention it old chap. We were just celebrating the successful completion of our latest project,' Gregoire replied, smiling expansively.



Cooper turned and walked back into the cave. Reluctantly the boy followed.

'Now, just stand on the platform, there's a good boy,' continued Cooper, 'And we'll have you back in no time. Look I'll come with you.'

The boy stood on the platform, and Cooper activated the equipment. At the last minute he jumped across and stood next to the boy, just as the boy was disappearing. A few moments later, both he and the boy were back in the grimy London upstairs workroom, where Wilson was still operating the equipment.

'Cooper! Thank heavens!' cried Wilson, taking his colleague by the arm, 'I was seriously worried for a moment. How are you my good fellow?'

Neither of the men took any notice of the boy, who raced down the stairs and disappeared. Cooper stood for a moment, a little dazed by the sudden turn of events. Then his faced brightened.

'We've done it!' he said, 'And we can do it again. Wilson, it's time for us to meet our backers. I think they will be pleased.'

The two men went down the wooden staircase. In the hall downstairs, the two Foreign Office men were being presented with a similar show, only this time, it was a stray dog that had been used for the experiment, and no one bothered to rescue it. This technology was going in the direction of space travel, while the French were focussing on time travel. Evidently the British favoured research into space rather than time technologies, and did not want to go into partnership with the French.

## CHAPTER TWO

So that was the situation in 1901. I wondered if these technologies had fed into any military activities during the First World War. The French had clearly started developing time travel technology, but it was at an early stage. I fast-forwarded to the year 2016, to see how things were going with Henri and Maurice. By now their laboratory had expanded to the size of an aircraft hangar, with more modern equipment. Maurice and Henri now employed several more technicians and had set up an amphitheatre, within which they had created a force-field.

'Ready to go?' asked Maurice.

'Fire away,' Henri replied, giving a wave to the technicians.

As I watched, the amphitheatre started to glow.

The scene changed to the Egyptian Giza plateau, with the sun beating down on the shiny surface of a glistening pyramid. But it was not the Giza pyramid as we know it. It was a much smaller step pyramid.

'We must have arrived before the Great Pyramid was built,' I thought.

On one side of the pyramid was a main doorway of white stone. Outside in the sand were several pairs of sandals. The plateau was surrounded by canals, with palm trees growing on the banks. Near the doorway was a camel on a leading rein, guarded by a camel driver. The driver had a hat with a central cone, like a fez, but pointed, with a circular brim, both covered in white turban material. He wore a long beige tunic and suede breeches, with suede boots which had leather soles.

Inside the doorway of the pyramid was a corridor, which ran right round the building. There were niches in the walls of the corridor, and basins built into the niches filled with water. Tall lamps on lamp stands were placed at intervals around the corridor. We know that the ancient Egyptians understood battery technology, and this might have been the source of the lights. There were lampshades in the shape of a V, open at the top, giving a dim light upwards.

The centre of the building's interior was basically like a two-story house, with a flat roof, and with stones forming the familiar shape of a



elled meeting room. Several bearded men in suits from the French Ministry of War were sitting round table.

'Right gentlemen, shall we begin?' he said 'Well Etienne, what have you to tell us?'

Etienne's job was to discretely shadow the activities of Maurice and Henri, and make sure that they were spending their modest research grant appropriately. He looked round at the assembled company and began:

'I understand that our scientists have achieved a coup. They can now turn back the clock at will. Their latest project to visit the Egyptian pyramids was a success.'

'So,' said another man, whose name was Charles, 'Where does this leave us?'

'Yes, precisely,' said his colleague, Pierre. 'Our friends across the way will be asking "Where next?"

'Oh, by the way,' said Gregoire, 'They are coming to lunch, I thought it was better for us to meet first, as we need to present a united front.'

'Obviously they are looking for further work - new applications,' said Charles, 'But are there any?'

'Of course, it is nice to be able to do it, but where is the demand for this technology?' added Pierre.

A man sitting at the other end of the table, whose name was Paul spoke up:

'Well, there is space.'

'My dear man,' cried Gregoire, 'The Americans already have everything they want up there. They can go from A to B, manufacture whatever they want, teleport. Really, this is only an adaptation of that.'

'Well Egyptologists would give their eye teeth for that,' laughed Paul.

'Yes,' said Charles, 'But there are certain dangers. It's one thing to go in an electronic form, as they do in space, but this literally turns the clock back, and there you are, wrongly dressed, unable to speak the language. The ancients might not be friendly.'

'And we can't afford to let any of our scientists take such risks, they

He left the room, removing his hat, and went into a large sitting room across the corridor.

'Messrs Allan and Falkirk,' announced the servant.

The two English men arrived, looking less than smart in crumpled brown suits. They had come from the British Embassy.

'Gentlemen, please sit down,' said Maurice.

'We really can't stay,' said Allan, 'We only looked in to see what was going on and if everything was going all right.'

'Everything is going very right,' said Maurice, 'But are you sure you can't stay, it seems such a pity not to stop for some refreshment.'

'I am glad to hear that the work is going well,' said Allan, ignoring the offer of hospitality, 'You see, we are on our way back to London, and we felt we ought to update ourselves on the situation, before we went.'

'My dear fellows, why the hurry, we can sit and talk all day about what has been going on. Please say you will change your mind,' said Maurice.

'We would love to,' said Falkirk, 'But there have been some developments, and we thought we ought to let you know that the advice from London is that in future, we will be taking a back seat on all this. Our country will be relying on the Americans to take it forward. That is why we have to leave. We came to say goodbye.'

Maurice's face fell.

'That is a great disappointment,' he said. 'May I know why thing have changed?'

Falkirk's shoulders slumped. He looked despairingly at his colleague.

'We are at our wits end to know why,' he said.

Maurice shook the men by the hand sympathetically and led them out. This was not the news he had been expecting. Neither he nor the British Foreign Office officials knew that the funding for the British research project was starting to be reined back, because of expenditure on the First World War.

In the French War Ministry, after Gregoire finished his conversation with Henri, he put the phone down and walked into a large wood-pan-



step pyramid built over it. There was a grand staircase in the middle of the front hall, leading to the floor above. There was a hand rail running round the floor above, presumably to stop people falling into the lobby below.

A brown-skinned man, naked from the waist up, and wearing a white cloth tied round his lower body, walked up one side of the stairs from the corridor, where he had just completed the necessary washing rituals in one of the basins provided. On the first floor, the man turned right, passing a door leading into a good size room with a bed in it. The bed looked as if it was made of plywood. A thin beige material was stretched over the bed. There was a canopy frame over the bed, but no curtain hung from it. On the other side of the room were two low chairs, made of the same material as the bed, and upholstered with the same material. On the right of the door as you went in, was a grey stone statue of a seated king or God.

The man passed this room and ascending a short flight of stairs, entered a similar but smaller room. The stairs continued up a few feet to a tall niche containing a black stone statue of a figure wearing a high crown. The room which the man entered was similarly furnished to the first room. The man knelt on the ground, and flattened his body onto the floor. It was as if he had folded himself in half. The he began chanting prayers.

A small wiry older man, wearing a white cloth around his lower body, came up the stairs. The wall at right angles to the niche with the statue had an entrance to an attic room. The room was too low to stand up in, and you had to climb into it. On the floor was a large papyrus scroll spread out, with a religious scene painted on it, and some kind of writing at the bottom. It did not look like hieroglyphics. The man sat down cross-legged. He picked up a ceremonial feather made of paper in one hand, and held a ceremonial flail in the other. He studied the picture in front of him, and flattened his upper body on the floor in front of it. Then he took some ceremonial clothing from a pile to his left, and put it on. He was now wearing a short yellow jacket with black seams,

and a small black hat, like an upturned paper boat.

Sitting cross-legged he chanted a religious song. Then he returned the clothes to the pile on his left, and descended from the attic room. The man in the other room also finished his prayers. As he left the room, he made a hand gesture a bit like the sign of the cross. I looked into his mind to try and get the meaning of it. First, he touched the space between his eyebrows, where the third eye is thought to be. Then he touched the central heart area of his chest, and finally he touched each shoulder. The words he was thinking were:

'I honour the God with all my mind, all my heart and all my strength'.

The two men descended the grand staircase. Behind the staircase, at the bottom, was a ground floor room, identical to the ones on the first floor, but larger. This room had a trap door in the floor, which led to a basement, where there was another room with a bed. There was a sarcophagus lying at the foot of the bed, painted with brightly-coloured scenes of gods and the after-life. I looked inside the sarcophagus. A dead man wrapped in cloth bandages was lying it. His only ornament was a metal breastplate.

In the ground floor room above the tomb, stood an elderly man. He was bald, and somewhat overweight. His role appeared to be that of high priest, as he had the task of saying prayers in the main room. He looked tired, and having completed his duties, he walked heavily, as he left through the main door, stopping to put his sandals on. His white skirt was crumpled and creased, and limp with sweat. Not at all like the crisp white cloths you see on Egyptian wall paintings. The camel was waiting, and sat down for him as he clambered wearily onto its back.

The camel driver led the camel away from the sandy plateau, and across a bridge over one of the canals. He passed some one-story mud houses with flat roofs. Outside the houses there were clothes lines, with large white cloths like the ones worn by the men hanging out to dry. The road widened and wound through an avenue of trees growing next to the canal. Another camel coming from the opposite direction, came into view, carrying another priest whose shift was about to start.



The two priests waved as they passed, but did not stop to talk.

I looked back onto the plateau. On the other side of the pyramid, was the Sphynx, facing away from it. It was covered in smooth grey limestone. Its tail curved round its body, just like the tail of a lion. The back of its head was covered with a short headdress. I moved round to get a glimpse of its face. It was the face of a human-headed sphynx, exactly like so many others we associate with the culture of ancient Egypt. But it was great to see it in its complete state, before time had eroded it.

The scene faded, and the lights went out.

'Great progress! Henri, we should congratulate ourselves,' said Maurice.

'I suppose we ought to go and talk to our friends across the way,' said Henri. Shall I make an appointment?'

'Yes,' Maurice replied.

Henri went over to a telephone on the table and picked up the handset. He asked to be put through to a senior official in the French War Ministry. At the other end of the line, a government official answered the phone. At that moment, a man in a dark suit whose name was Gregoire looked into the room.

'Who's that?' he asked.

'It's for you, Sir,' the official replied, 'I think it's those scientists.'

'I'll take it,' said Gregoire.

He walked over and picked up the phone.

'Oh hello. Yes, I was wondering how it went, good. Well, we're just about to start a meeting, that will go on till 11.30. Why not come to lunch afterwards. 12.00? Fine. See you then.'

Henri put down the phone.

'Good. That's fixed. It's lunch at 12.00.'

There was noise in the next room, and a servant knocked on the door:

'Excuse me sir, two English gentlemen are here to see you.'

'Do show them in,' said Maurice.