

## Mystery Aeroplanes

Sir,—John A. Keel's articles in *Flying Saucer Review* on "Mystery Aeroplanes of the 1930s" brings to mind an experience which my brother, I. F. Sloane, and I had on Sunday, August 23, 1914, at Savernake, New South Wales, 18 miles north of Yarrowonga on the river Murray. We were then 11 and 12 years of age, and were among the few people in the district who had seen an aeroplane, having been taken to Melbourne by our parents the previous December to see the late Harry Hawker fly his Sopwith biplane.

Savernake, being heavily timbered, is named after the forest in England, and, although much of the district is now cleared for farming, our home, where my brother still lives, is situated on a 30ft. sand dune surrounded for a mile on every side by a 60ft. forest.

At sunrise we suddenly heard the sound of an aeroplane coming from the South-East and we ran outside to try to see it, but it was flying too low among the trees. For several minutes we heard it passing, going North about half-a-mile away, and then it came into view in a clearing to the North-East. We both saw it as a biplane, turning away to the East, half-a-mile away, at an altitude of about 100ft. The rays of the rising sun did not reflect from it, but the two wings appeared black against the sunlight which made observation difficult.

There were several farms, and a township of 50 people, three miles away in the direction in which it went, but no one else in the district heard or saw the plane. The weather was thundery

and it could have gone up into clouds. Our parents heard the engine from inside the house, and called out: "What is that." We shouted back: "It's an aeroplane."

The Australian Flying Corps at that time consisted of five aeroplanes stationed at Point Cook, on open plains near Melbourne, where it was considered safer for flying. It was absurd that one of these precious craft would be flying recklessly at sunrise 180 miles from its base [beyond its range?—ED.]. There were no civil planes in the district, and so people generally were sceptical of our sighting. John Keel has given us an explanation which makes the incident seem even more mysterious.

Howard Sloane, Mount Clear, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia, 3350.

## Mystery cyphers

Sir,—Mr. Creighton's letter (*in FSR 16-5, September-October 1970; pp. 29-30*) takes Domnul Florin Gheorghita and myself to task for, apparently, failing to observe the discrepancies between the 7th letter of the Russian (Cyrillic) alphabet, Ж, and the five reported variants of the emblem, seen on the lower portion of the UFO allegedly photographed at San José de Valderas, in Spain (*cf. the French review Phénomènes Spatiaux 22; Paris, December 1969; pages 20, 21, 23, 24, and the front cover-picture*). These variants are, admittedly, puzzling; however, even Mr. Creighton—whose erudition is now beyond doubt—may not be aware that countless people use the reported variant )+(, especially

in careful script style, as opposed to regular cursive styles. (Being in the midst of a Russian lexicographical project, I handle a good deal of written Slavonic material; and my acquaintance with certain variants began a very long time ago, when I was editing a small handbook for students of Russian.)

It is unprofitable to make an issue out of a minute difference, especially when the latter (as here) does not affect the total meaning; in any case, the existence of five variants reported shows that the actual symbol is still in some doubt. One wonders—next time a witness says that a UFO showed "some resemblance" to the full moon—whether he should be reminded that it is, nevertheless, *not* the full moon, since the Man-in-the-moon's face was not seen on the UFO.

I think Mr. Creighton's humour did not react to the somewhat flippant mood of my letter. Does he believe, I wonder, that I really imagine UFOs originate in the Soviet Union? Would that the solution were along some such simple lines.

P. M. H. Edwards, Victoria (B.C.), Canada.

[It is difficult to understand why Dr. Edwards poses a problem for many of our readers by quoting an article which appeared in *Phénomènes Spatiaux*. The piece in question was a translation of Antonio Ribera's article which was published, with photographs on which the cypher is clearly shown—including the cover illustration—in *Flying Saucer Review for September/October 1969*—EDITOR.]

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