

# THE BAKER SIGHTING: A RETROSPECTIVE INVESTIGATION

*Richard Bonenfant*

THE following case is new to the literature. It is based upon the investigation of a sighting that occurred over nine years ago. A newspaper article briefly describing the event was published in May, 1966<sup>1</sup>, but apparently news of the sighting was never sufficiently publicised to alert regional UFO investigators. Since the sighting had not been previously documented, an investigation was conducted by the author in May, 1975.

This report pertains to the landing of a UFO in the proximity of a six-year-old girl, and to the observation of an occupant within the craft. According to Hynek's classification<sup>2</sup>, it may be characterized as a type III close encounter. Though unusual, similar cases have been frequently reported in the past decade<sup>3</sup>. The remarkable aspect of the following account is that the event was successfully documented nine years after it had taken place.

A conscious attempt was made to solicit information from the witness in a manner that would not force her memory. Undoubtedly many details have been lost through the attrition of time, but the main features of the girl's experience were still recalled during the investigation. Additional information was obtained from secondary witnesses who participated in events after the sighting. The following reconstruction is based upon signed statements contributed by these individuals.

## A Review of Events

On a warm, overcast, Saturday afternoon in the spring of 1966, a six-year-old girl experienced an unusual event.

It was April 23 in the small, rural town of Bingham, Maine, U.S.A. Kimberly Baker and her

## *Bingham Girl Says She Observed UFO*

BINGHAM — She's just six years old but states she saw a UFO on the afternoon of April 23 and nobody has been able to "shake" her story.

Of course, Kimberly Baker doesn't call it a UFO or flying saucer. To her it looked like a "big ball" or a "bubble."

Kim, with her blonde hair, blue eyes and restless energy, told her mother, Mrs. Wesley (Joyce) Baker, she saw the object in a field at the southerly end of this town, back of Kennebec Mill. As near as can be determined, this occurred between 1 and 3:30 p.m.

The UFO had red lights near the bottom, a single green light on top that blinked off and on.

Kim said she walked right up to it although she was afraid because she feared someone might come out of the door.

Questioned as to the appearance of the door, she stated it was "sort of a door." The girl added; "It started to spin around and then went right up and over the house" (later determined to be that of Mrs. Paul Matheson).

Kimberly observed that the object had a window, "half of a window." The outside was shiny in color.

Her mother asked her Thursday: "Did you see anything?"

"Yes, it looked like a bubble."

"What else did you see?"

"I saw a man in it with something on or over his head. He took it off and smiled at me. He said something for I saw his lips move."

Later on Kim added that the man wore a white suit with buttons down the front.

"A dog saw the bubble and barked at it." (Mrs. Ann Matheson has a chow and it was heard to bark at about that time on the afternoon in question.)

Kim has three sisters and two brothers. Her mother said the girl "never has been the imaginative type."

On the afternoon of April 23 she went to the outskirts of Bingham to find and pick pussy-willows.

The little girl took her mother and two members of the press to the field where she said she saw the ball or bubble. While there were no signs of burns on the grass, the area appeared as if some object might have landed on it for grass and close-to-the-ground greenery was flattened.

Original cutting from the *Morning Sentinel Waterville, Maine* Friday, May 6, 1966 Vol.63, No.56, page 20.

two cousins, Wendy and Bruce Higgins, were attempting to pick pussy willows in a large field south of the Higgin's household.

They soon discovered that the willow stems were too elastic and tough to be broken off by hand, so Wendy and Bruce went

to their house to get a pair of scissors. While waiting for her cousins to return, Kim noted a large, shiny object descend toward her from the direction of the Kennebec Mill. Startled and frightened, she froze as the object silently landed several yards from where she stood. Kim quietly faced the object for over a minute before it departed over the roof of a neighbour's house.

When Kim returned home later that afternoon she crossed the main highway which divides Bingham and separates the Baker's house from their hardware store diagonally across the street. Kim was not in the habit of crossing the highway alone, and the irregularity of this liberty later struck Mrs. Baker as being unusual. Kim went directly to her mother, tugged on her skirt, and said repeatedly, "Mommy, mommy, I saw something!" However, that same day Mrs. Baker had just received news of the death of an old school friend so she did not give her daughter's excited comment much attention. Later, Mrs. Baker remembered that Kim had kept unusually close to her that day, as if wanting the security of her mother's presence.

Two days later, on Monday, April 25th, Mrs. Baker recalled her daughter's comment about having seen something remarkable on the previous Saturday. When Mrs. Baker queried her daughter about the observation, the following conversation ensued<sup>4</sup>:

**Mrs. Baker:** "What did you see?"  
**Kim:** "A big bubble."

**Mrs. Baker:** "How big was it?"  
**Kim:** "Like daddy's car but higher." (After looking about until she spotted her father's station wagon.)

**Mrs. Baker:** "What colour was the bubble?"

**Kim:** "Shiny." Kim looked around the house until she located the family toaster; then pointed to it and said, "like that!"

Further questioning revealed that the object had a "sort" of door, and a window. The window was later determined to be rectangular in shape and approximately eight inches high. Three distinct lights were observed. On either end of the craft were steady red lights which seemed



**Mr. Allie King, Kimberley Baker and Mrs. Joyce Baker. This photograph, taken by Mr. Richard Plummer at the witness's home on May 4, 1966 accompanies the newspaper article describing her sighting.**

to emanate from the body of the vehicle. A flashing green light was stationed just above the centre of the object. This light appeared to come from a source slightly elevated from the main body. After answering her mother's questions about the craft, Kim proceeded to make some crude drawings of the "bubble" (see original drawings).

Mrs. Joyce Baker was unnerved by her daughter's account of this strange encounter. Almost for assurance, Mrs. Baker notified a family acquaintance, Mr. Allie King, of the sighting. Mr. King was a representative of the Gannett Publishing Company and made weekly visits to Bingham in order to make collections for the *Morning Sentinel*<sup>5</sup>. On Wednesday, April 27, he visited the Baker family and reviewed Kim's account first hand. That afternoon Mr. King repeatedly tried to shake Kim's story by deliberately confusing details. These attempts were invariably corrected by Kim so that no inconsistencies could be detected. It was at this time, however, that another aspect of Kim's experience came to light.

During the flurry of questions that ensued that afternoon, Mrs. Baker chanced to ask her daughter

if she had been afraid. Kim immediately replied, "At first I was, but not after the man smiled at me." Stunned by this new revelation, Mrs. Baker pressed for details:

**Mrs. Baker:** "What did the man look like, Kim?"

**Kim:** "Like daddy or Renee." (Renee was a friend of Mr. Baker.)

**Mrs. Baker:** "What did he do?"

**Kim:** "He winked at me, and smiled."

**Mrs. Baker:** "Anything else?"

**Kim:** "He said something to me."

**Mrs. Baker:** "What did he say?"

**Kim:** "I don't know, I only saw his lips move."

**Mrs. Baker:** "What was he wearing?"

**Kim:** "He had a bubble on his head, but he took it off before he spoke to me."

**Mrs. Baker:** "Could you see what else he was wearing?"

**Kim:** "When he stood up I could see that he had lots of black buttons on his chest."

**Mrs. Baker:** "How do you know he stood up?"

**Kim:** "Because his head moved up, above the window."

**Mrs. Baker:** "What was the colour of his clothes?"

**Kim:** "Shiny-white."

The introduction of a "man" into Kim's narration only in-

creased her mother's anxiety over the event. Seeking an explanation, Mrs. Baker and Mr. King asked to be taken to the landing site.

Kim led her family and Mr. King to the spot where the object had landed. When they arrived at the site, physical traces were still evident exactly where Kim had seen the object land. A circular area of compressed greenery about 15 feet in diameter stood out from the rest of the field. Where irregular patches of pussy willows usually grew to a height of one or two feet, the stems within the circular area were broken off a few inches from the ground. A thorough examination of the surrounding area revealed no tracks that would account for the circle. Mrs. Baker noted that the broken branches within the circle were dark in colour rather than the usual whitish-yellow.

By this time even Mr. King had begun to entertain some sympathy for Kim's experience. He in turn contacted Mr. Richard Plummer, a newspaper reporter for the Skowhegan branch of the *Morning Sentinel*. The following Wednesday, May 4th, Mr. Plummer, Mr. King, and Mrs. Baker once again reviewed the account of Kim's sighting. No flaws in the account could be

detected but an additional fact came to light. When asked by her mother if anyone else had seen the "bubble," Kim answered "yes." Mrs. Baker excitedly asked her daughter who it was. Kim answered seriously, "A dog saw the bubble and barked at it." Mrs. Baker was later able to identify a mongrel husky as the dog named by Kim. A neighbour verified that the dog had been barking the Saturday afternoon of Kim's encounter but that no attention had been paid to the commotion.

The story of Kim's experience was eventually published in a newspaper article by Richard Plummer on Friday, May 6, 1966 in the *Morning Sentinel*, but no further investigation of the incident was undertaken until the author's, nine years later.

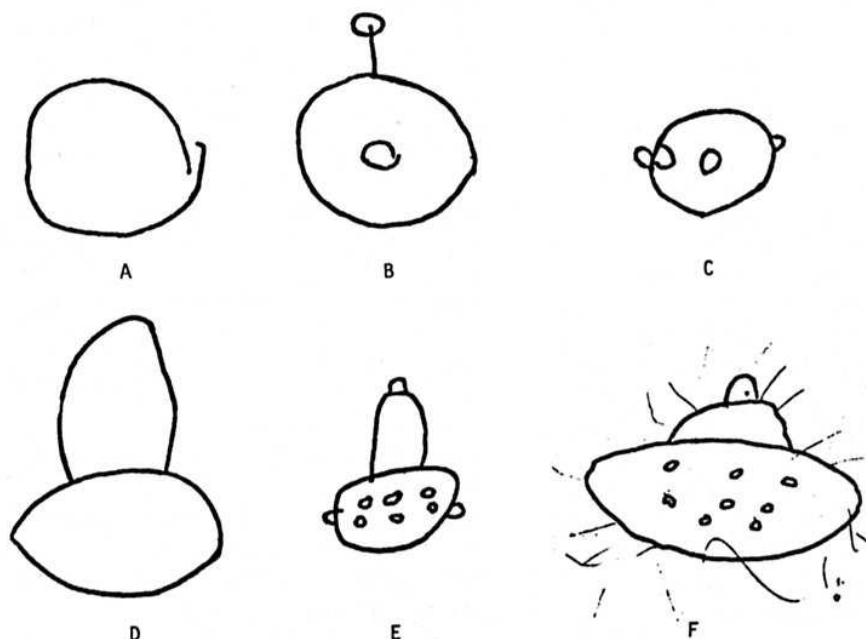
#### A Question of Reliability

The crux of this report lies in the witness' reliability. Can the testimony of a six-year-old girl be accepted at face value, especially when it concerns such an unusual event? Two legitimate objections may be raised against acceptance: first, that there were no other witnesses present during the encounter, and secondly, that the girl's age at the time suggests

either exaggeration or misinterpretation. These are valid considerations which must be weighed in evaluating the case. However, there are also several factors which tend to support the witness' description of her experience.

One of these factors is her own history of reliability. The witness' mother impressed upon the author that her daughter was not "the imaginative type" and had never entertained the habit of exaggeration. This trait was additionally acknowledged by non-related witnesses who were acquainted with the girl. During the author's questioning, the witness presented the appearance of being modest, conservative and quite sincere about the event she had experienced. Therefore, the question of exaggeration would have been strikingly out of character. The witness had also consented to being placed under hypnosis in order to verify her account.

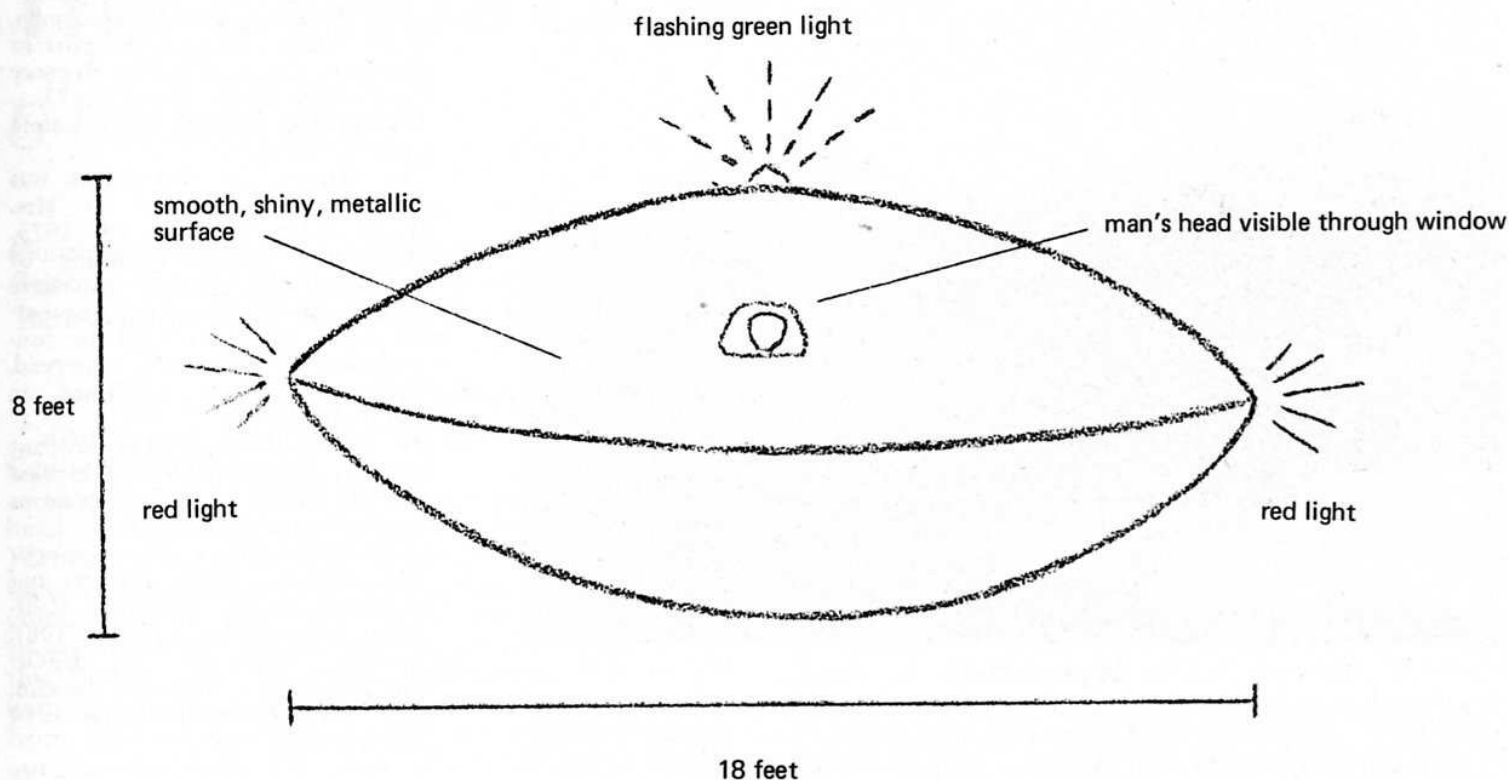
The probability of misinterpretation also seems quite remote. A helicopter is the only vehicle which even vaguely resembles the witness's description of the craft. However, a helicopter does not operate silently or leave ground traces of the size and shape described above. In addition, the



Drawings A—E were efforts by the witness to represent the object and lights she had observed.

Drawing F was made by Mr. Allie King in an attempt to consolidate the girl's impression.





### Reconstructed drawing of UFO

landing of such a vehicle in the proximity of an individual would certainly have produced a remarkable propeller blast. The witness has also denied the possibility of having confused a helicopter for the object in the sighting.

If we approach the question of validity by accepting the reality of the witness's experience, then the naive description provided in her account certainly falls into the category of a UFO phenomenon. The size, shape, colour, light positions, and motion of the craft described here are characteristic of a certain class of UFOs. The presence of human-like beings in or near these unknown objects had also been previously noted<sup>6</sup>. Ground traces of similar shape and size are well recognized by researchers. Even animal disturbances with dogs, cats, horses and other domesticated animals have been noted in other sightings. In fact, every detail that has been reported here is in harmony with the attributes associated with the UFO phenomenon. While this does not explain what the witness actually saw, it does place the

event within a recognizable framework.

The points which favour acceptance of the witness's testimony are thus:

(a) the description of both object and occupant correspond extremely well with similar reports from around the world, (b) independent testimony verified the existence of unusual ground traces at the exact spot where the witness claims to have seen the object land, and (c) that the witness has agreed to undergo testing which would ascertain the reality of the event she claims to have experienced.

While the witness's credibility could not be definitely established, there is surely ample evidence to warrant further consideration of the case. Perhaps we should remember that in Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale *The Emperor's New Clothes*, it was a child's observation which eventually corrected society's view of reality.

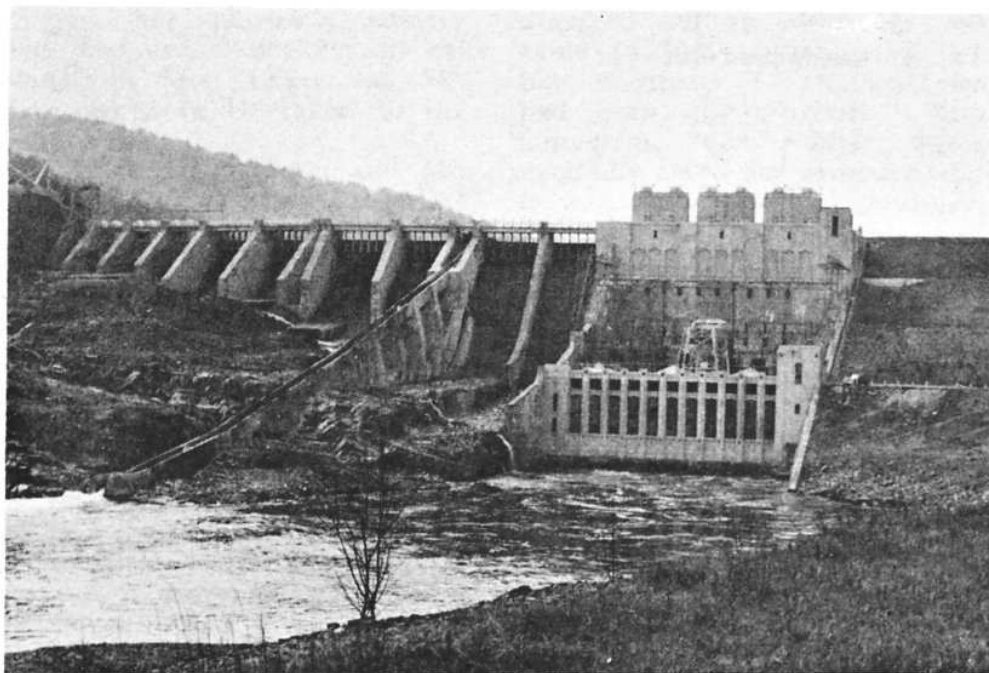
### Wyman Dam

During the author's visit to Bingham on May 19, 1975, a

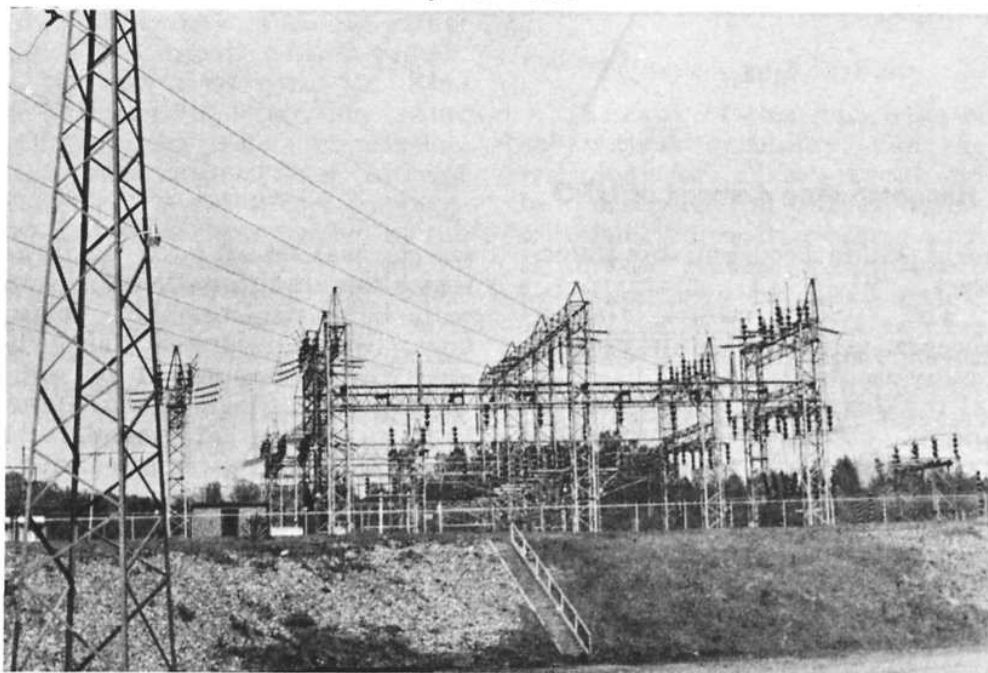
search was made for features which are traditionally associated with UFO sightings, i.e., power lines, water reservoirs, airports etc. With a population of only 1,200 people, Bingham was found to be an unremarkable small, rural town. However, there is a facility situated near the town which is exceptional. Wyman Dam, a large hydro-electric power plant, is located approximately 2.5 miles north of the landing site. The dam is of strategic importance because it supplies the main source of electrical energy to towns and cities located along the Kennebec River. There is also a large man-made reservoir immediately behind the dam, Wyman Lake, over which UFOs have been frequently reported. The presence of Wyman Dam near the sighting is considered significant because of the previously reported association between UFO activity and electrical power lines<sup>7</sup>.

### Summary

The Baker Sighting provides an example of a retrospective invest-



Wyman Dam



Electric power lines at base of Wyman Dam

igation. Specifics of who, what, where, and when were documented through signed statements, photographs, drawings and maps. A casual explanation for UFO activity in the area was also attempted. Only the skeleton of this body of information was reported in the newspaper account. And, lastly, the witness has agreed to undergo hypnotic examination.

At a more general level, the case presented above suggests that retrospective investigation could be used more extensively to

enrich old data. Hope is encouraged that selective cases could be similarly investigated before they are entirely lost to inspection.

#### Notes and References

1. Plummer, Richard, "Bingham Girl Says She Observed UFO," *Morning Sentinel*, Waterville, Maine, Friday, May 6, 1966, Vol.63, No.56, p.20.
2. Hynek, J. Allen, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry*, Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1972 (pp. 22-31).
3. The following sources contain extensive catalogues of occupant

cases: Bowen, Charles, *The Humanoids*, London: Neville Spearman, 1969. Vallée, Jacques, *Passport to Magonia*, Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1969. Webb, David, 1973 — *Year of the Humanoids*, privately printed, 1974.

4. The dialogue in this article was elicited from memory by Mrs. Joyce Baker on May 19, 1975. While the original wording of questions and answers may have varied slightly from that presented above, the essence of the conversation is accurately conveyed.
5. Daily newspaper published in Waterville, Maine.
6. An examination of 217 occupant cases by James McCambell revealed that 85 (40%) of the observations were of human-like beings. McCambell, James, M., *Ufology: New Insights from Science and Common Sense*, Belmont, California: Jaymac Co., 1973 (p. 106).
7. Fowler, Raymond, E., *UFOs: Interplanetary Visitors*, Jericho, New York: Exposition Press, 1974 (pp. 92-110).

#### Editor's Note

Mr. Bonenfant's article was also supported by attested statements by Messrs. Allie King, Richard Plummer of the *Morning Sentinel* and Francis Gould.

Richard Bonenfant, who has an MA in Anthropology, is a scientist engaged in the study of birth defects with the New York State Department of Health.

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# THE CYRUS CASE

*G. Cattiau et al*

Monsieur Cattiau, and his colleagues R. Gayral and D. Lacenal are members of the Toulouse Research Group. Their report appeared in *Lumières dans la Nuit* No. 153 of March 1976. Translation from the French by Gordon Creighton.

THIS case occurred in August 1975 in a country district near Muret in the Département of Haute-Garonne (S.W. France).

Monsieur R. Cyrus is aged 48, a man with a sound head on his shoulders, and no nonsense about him. Formerly a gendarme, he is now in business and his mind is more likely to be on his shop than on "queer goings-on." If he considers himself to have been successful in his life so far, it is precisely because of this direct, realistic, even materialistic, side to his nature, for which indeed his wife takes him to task from time to time as he laughingly confessed during our investigations. However, Monsieur Cyrus is not known in Muret simply as a reliable and responsible businessman, but also as the president of the town's group of majorettes. So the witness is well known, and very honourably regarded. He even went so far as to confess to us later that it wasn't the first time that he had seen this sort of "thing", that it had not worried him over much except perhaps on this latest occasion, when he had been pretty close to the "thing."

## The facts of the case

As stated, it is August 29, 1975, and the time is 10.45 p.m. The witness, at the wheel of his car (*Peugeot 404* — petrol engine type) is on the departmental route D 10 which runs from the village of Longages to National Highway (Route Nationale) No. 125 to the south of Noé.

When three-quarters of the way along the D 10, the witness suddenly perceives — about ten metres distant on the right hand side of the road, in a field slightly above the level of the latter — a dark mass, an aluminium-grey coloured "machine." (It was a moonlit night, and the moonlight seemed to be reflected by the "machine," giving it a metallic appearance.)

M. Cyrus estimates the object to have been about seven metres long, a bit more than that in width, and about three metres high. At this stage the body of the machine is dark, emitting no light.

Just as he arrives abreast of the machine, however, the underpart of it lights up (up to about one-third of its height), with a phosphorescent glow, and it



The dark mass glides towards the car at bonnet level, and then there is a blinding flash.

Illustration taken from the cover of *Lumières dans la Nuit*.