

UFO SEEN FROM EAST HAM

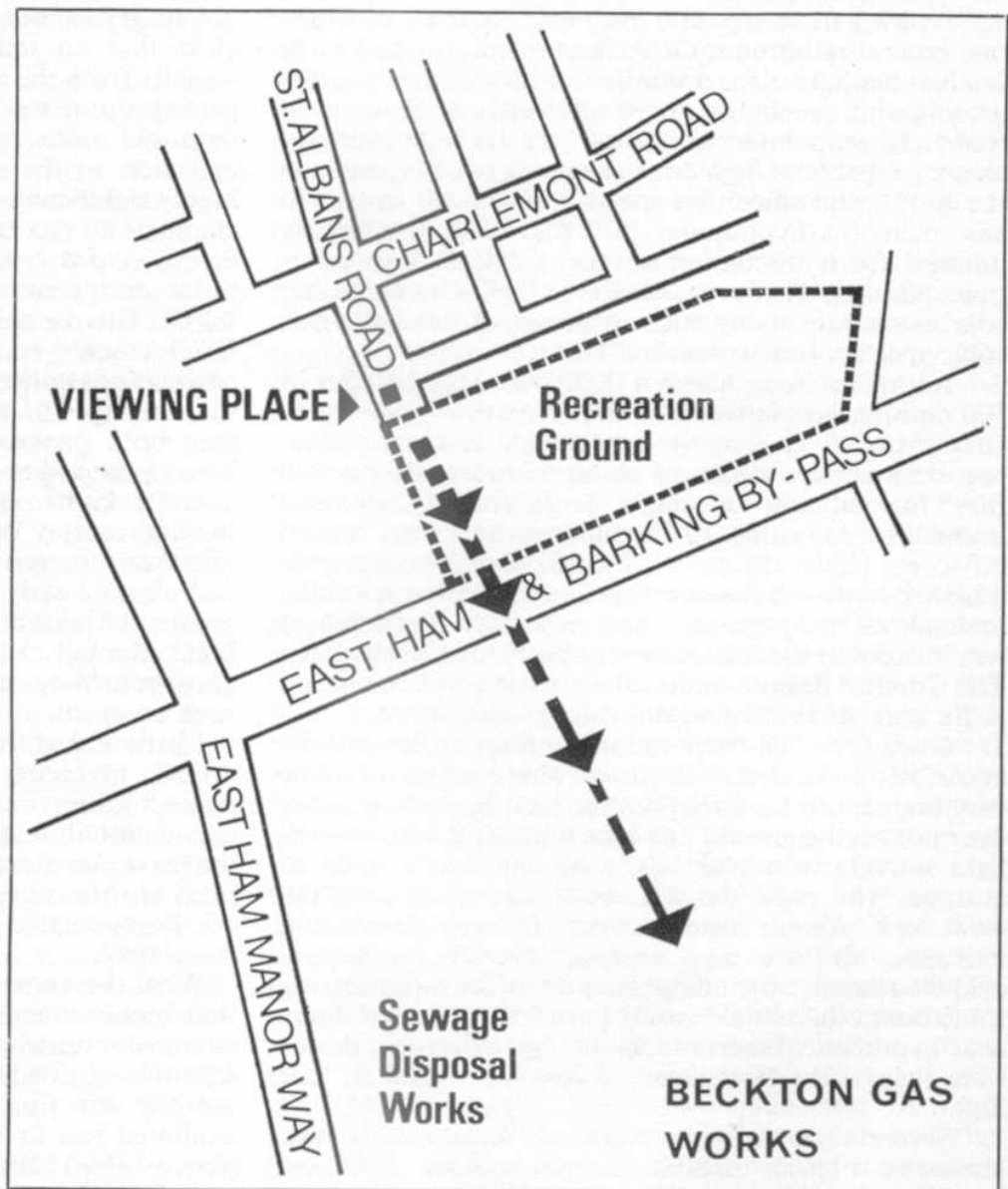
Charles Bowen

EVERYTHING militates against the witness in this case right from the start; everything seems wrong with it. I am sure a 'purist' wouldn't touch it with the proverbial 'barge pole'. And yet . . . I am convinced the witness has given a reasonable account of something that happened on November 26, 1969, that was very, very real to him, and very exciting, and that this case is typical of many we may well have to be prepared to examine.

First intimation that there was a new case to investigate came in a short letter from Robert Chapman: "Here is another one which I think will interest you. I have written to Mr. Oram to say that I am passing it on." With warm memories of the case of Mrs. Bomford's experience at Reading which had also been 'passed on' by Mr. Chapman, I arranged to meet Mr. Michael Oram, a baker's roundsman from Ingrebourne Road, Rainham, Essex. The meeting took place over supper in the house of Dr. Bernard Finch on December 17, 1969, and the doctor and I had a long and interesting session with Mr. Oram.

A Letter

After the UFO sighting incident, which I will describe in detail later the young man (aged 18) said he was in a 'state of shock.' When he had recovered sufficiently he made a telephone call on impulse to the *Daily Mirror*. His comment about the conversation he had was: "I don't think they believed me," and he said he almost burst into tears. Later, after returning home, he remembered Robert Chapman's book *Unidentified Flying Objects*, parts of which had been serialised in the *Sunday Express*, and he wrote a letter to him. This was the letter that Mr. Chapman sent on to me, and I had it with me when I interviewed Michael Oram in the presence of Dr. Finch three weeks after the alleged incident. The story which unfolded was more detailed, but was identical in all other respects, with the account given in the letter.



Familiarity with the subject

Michael, educated at a Comprehensive School, is keen on astronomy; so keen that he owns a 4in. refracting telescope. He told us that for some five years he had also had an interest in reports of UFOs and had read both Robert Chapman's book and *The Flying Saucer Story* (Brinsley le Poer Trench)

A baker's roundsman, he is called upon to start work at 6.30 a.m. He stated that for about a week before the sighting he had "had a premonition" that he would see a UFO, and each morning, before leaving home, he told his

mother that he still had the "feeling." In fact he had a strong urge to take his camera with him, but thought that "that was taking it a bit far." So the camera stayed at home, particularly on the morning of Wednesday, November 26, and that was a pity!

The incident

That Wednesday dawned cold and clear around Rainham and East Ham, a fact to which I can testify, for I had given a lecture at Southend-on-Sea the previous night when there had been some snow and frost; I returned by train and

passed quite near to the district of the alleged incident probably about half-an-hour before it took place.

In the course of his delivery round Michael halted his van in a dead-end spur of St. Alban's Road, East Ham (see sketch map), looking across a recreation ground, past the Beckton Gas Works, and out over the widening River Thames. He was sitting in the van having a drink from his flask, when he saw a 'cigar-shaped' object, a brightish yellow in colour, apparently over the gas works, or "maybe about a mile away." He estimates that he watched the object for some 15 minutes; at first it moved from left (NNE) to right, then stopped. After watching it as if transfixed for about 2-3 minutes he told us: "I came to my senses and jumped out of the van still holding my cup in my hand. I just stared (at this thing) in the sky, watching it move." A while later the local Co-operative milk roundsman came by, and Michael remembers thinking: "This is it, I'll tell him and I'll then have a (corroborating) witness."

Unhappily it was not to be. It seems the milkman started to speak, 'passing the time of day' as it were, but Michael was struck dumb. Words just would not come, although he knew what he wanted to say. In fact, he says he was quite unable to do anything other than gape at the thing in the sky until it had gone off to the 'left', out of view, by about 8.45 a.m.

Once the object had gone, Michael drove around again, hoping to catch another glimpse of it, but there was nothing to be seen. It was then, when passing a phone box, that he telephoned the *Daily Mirror*.

Back on the round it seems Michael was in such an emotional state (he describes his condition as 'shock') that he barely knew what he was doing. He gave out the wrong bread, and had to retrace his steps to make corrections: one customer saw him and said he looked 'all in', just as if he'd seen a ghost. This lady took him indoors, and telephoned his employers, who thereupon sent out a relief roundsman; Michael was taken home.

In his letter to Bob Chapman Michael says he is not a 'silly person' and is adamant that he was

Photograph from the viewing point, taken in colour late in December 1969 by M. Oram. The line gives the apparent size of the object when stationary near the gas works



not joking, that all he wanted was to be able to speak about the incident to someone who would understand and would not laugh at him.

Questioning elicited that the object was seen at an angle of about 30° elevation, and appeared (quite enormous—CB) to be about 2-2½ inches across Michael's fist held out straight. At first Michael did not quite understand what Dr. Finch and I were getting at, and said the object appeared to be some 40 inches across. When we pointed out that that would cover a vast arc of the sky, and that the diameter of a full Moon is only about half that of a sixpenny piece held at arm's length, he revisited the scene, took the photograph you see here, revised his estimate, and wrote to me accordingly.

A "Communication"?

While he was standing staring at the object, he says he imagined "to himself" the beings inside, and the rows of "windows" and "men" looking down. He *felt* (thus he described this part of his experience) as though he was being told: "You wanted to see us, but now you see us we do not want you to tell anyone else, and we're going."

Premonitions

We asked Michael about his

premonitions. It transpired that this was nothing new—with events other than UFOs. Furthermore, he says his grandmother is a sensitive and "very psychic". He often has premonitions, in a minor way, about the visits to the house of a friend or relative, or, for example, of the breaking down of a car. Once, however, when he was working as a tea taster at Bethnal Green, something much bigger occurred: he was suddenly aware in his mind that a colleague was about to jump from a window and was quite prepared when the man suddenly jumped up and climbed on to the sill. Michael was there to grab him and hold him until he could be hauled back. The after-effect of this incident on Michael was devastating, and he was off work for about three months.

Unhappy at being "indoors", the young man, who says he cannot stand heat, took the baker's roundsman job so that he could be in the open. He was always on the lookout—so he says—for 'them', which I presume means UFOs.

Conclusion

Was this merely a case of wish fulfilment, or, bizarre thought, was the earnest wish of a *clairvoyant* deliberately stimulated, and deliberately fulfilled? Perhaps some
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