

# Crash-landed UFO near Mendoza

by Charles Bowen

PETER J. KELLY, the Southampton schoolmaster who has had articles published in recent editions of the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW, is also on record with some interesting observations on the two great circle orthotonic lines. These were made in a letter which was published in the March/April number of 1964.

As a result of his attempt to determine *experimentally* the paths of the lines (Bayonne-Vichy, and Po di Gnocca-Southend) on a globe, Mr. Kelly confirmed that the lines seemed to be at right angles to one another, that they made an angle of  $60^\circ$  to the equator, and that the Po di Gnocca-Southend line appears to pass over the South Magnetic Pole. He then speculated briefly on the possibility that extraterrestrial visitors have thus fixed these two great circle lines as a basis for their global activities.

## South American "UFO Alley"

Mr. Kelly has made a very interesting point. We have seen in the March/April 1965 issue of the REVIEW (*The Most Amazing Case of All, Part 2*) that the extension of the Bayonne-Vichy (BAVIC) line traverses those areas of Southern and Central Brazil, Paraguay, Northern and Western Argentina, and also Chile, where the flying saucer situation has been "on the boil" during the last ten years or so. Magnetic plots for direction finding, or guide lines: the idea appeals. The obvious attractions which the vast South American continent must have for alien visitors was discussed in *South American Trio* (see January/February number of the REVIEW). If by any chance Mr. Kelly has hit on the truth of the matter, small wonder that with such a combination we have a host of incidents and activities on a broad band on either side of the BAVIC extension. This great corridor is nothing more or less than a UFO ALLEY.

## A January 1965 confirmation of BAVIC?

Our efforts to reproduce a map of the "busy" parts of South America on a projection likely to show the BAVIC extension as straight as possible (see page 8 of the March/April edition of the REVIEW), also showed that the line, or corridor, passed very near indeed to Mendoza in the Andean foothills in Western Argentina. It was precisely from this place that we received late in January, the first details of a strange new case. We immediately asked Señor Oscar Galíndez, our representative in Argentina, to obtain further

details for us. Señor Galíndez worked wonders, and we are particularly indebted to him for obtaining a photograph.

Here then is the story, the first intimation of which came in a newspaper cutting from Señor Galíndez. Gordon Creighton has provided a translation of the extract from *La Crónica* which runs as follows:

"A mysterious artefact, presumably part of an artificial satellite, has fallen at San Miguel, 4 km. from San Rafael, which lies north of Mendoza, and near to the Provincial frontier with the Province of San Juan.

"The news was brought in by herdsmen from that region, and at first no important details were available as communications between Mendoza and San Rafael have been cut for the past four days."

This alone is cause for wonder. Why were the communications cut? January is the height of summer in the Argentine. The newspaper item continues:

"San Miguel is a small place with a church, a medical first-aid post, and a school with one teacher. Scattered for miles around are dozens of herdsmen's farms. The region is almost totally arid, and at night it resembles the surface of the Moon.

"The local inhabitants declare that the strange object is a flying saucer, and many of them also declare that they have seen little individuals walking about around the craft in strange uniforms like divers' suits that gave off a green phosphorescence! One thing is quite certain: the people of the district are terrified and nobody ventures out of doors."

## Photographs suppressed

When the news of the scare got through to Mendoza, the Provincial Aeronautical Bureau sent an aircraft to investigate the object, which was reported to have landed in a place which was not easily accessible. The newspaper report continues:

"The aircraft . . . flew over the area and found the object, which was reported to be shaped like a cigar, and estimated to be 8 metres long and 1 metre in diameter. It can be seen from a long way off as it is giving out an intense brilliant white luminosity.

"In the rear part, the capsule has what seems

to be a turbine or something of that kind: it seems to be half buried.

"The aircraft flew over this 'saucer' many times and several black and white photographs were taken, despite the tremendous reflection of sunlight from the dunes and cliff-faces. The pictures were not published in the local press, by special order of the Chief of Police of Mendoza, Commodore José María Ramos. Today a *committee of police* and a government photographer went up to San Rafael to try to clear up the mystery."

After writing to Señor Galíndez, and in between various other REVIEW tasks, there was just time to ponder this business of a *police committee* and the ban on the photographs. Why wasn't a scientific committee sent to the site? Is the curtain of silence beginning to fall in Argentina as well?

#### Further details

We were delighted when our representative's letter arrived in mid-March, and it contained a photograph—a photo of a photo, so to speak, with no indication as to how it had been obtained. We learn furthermore that the cylinder-like object actually slowed down as it fell towards the ground (*lingering* is the word used by Señor Galíndez) as though arrested by some unseen force.

When the police went to see the object, they contrived to land a DC-3 Dakota aircraft nearby, and removed it by air to the Argentine Air Force H.Q. at Mendoza. From thence it was taken to the Centre for Space Investigations at Córdoba, for detailed study. It should be noted that the Argentine Rocket Research Area is situated near Córdoba. Perhaps this is a contributory reason for the intense UFO activity in the region.

The strange capsule was found to be just over 4 metres long, and 1.30 metres in diameter. Numerous perforations were found along the sides, which Señor Galíndez suggests could have been made from contact with cosmic particles. The outer covering was not that which is usually associated with a rocket, and is made of material which, according to reports, has not yet been identified.

What was the San Miguel object? It seems most unlikely that it was part of an Earth-launched rocket device. As far as we know, most of these burn up on atmospheric re-entry: there have been no reports of heat-shielded manned devices being lost, and if it had been a Russian one, I think we would have heard something about it. Again, there is the matter of the blinding luminosity: could this have been a form of "mayday" beacon—which in turn would explain the disappearance of the beings reported in the first instance. It is hardly likely that crash-landed earthmen, aviators



**One of several photographs of the San Miguel object, taken from a "Cessna" aircraft of the Dirección Provincial de Aeronautica, Mendoza. Because the copy sent to us is obviously a photocopy of a print, some retouching has been necessary to make it suitable for reproduction.**

or astronauts, would have disappeared silently into the night if they had found themselves to be within a stone's throw of an inhabited village. Any attempts by earthmen to rescue fellow earthmen from the air, would have been a noisy affair, and would surely have been witnessed: the terror of at least a few of the local people would have been overcome by natural curiosity.

This disappearance of the "little individuals", phosphorescent uniforms and all, brings me to another point, and that is the disappearance of part of the "artefact". When the aeroplane returned from the first reconnaissance, complete with photographs, it was reported that the object was 8 metres long, and about 1 metre in diameter. It is the matter of the four missing metres that puzzles me. The airman's estimate must have been good: he was very nearly correct with his estimate of the diameter. But when the capsule was recovered by the police, it was only 4 metres long! Did the missing section depart with the "little individuals"? We can only wait to see if Señor Galíndez can obtain a few more details for us.

Whatever we make of the San Miguel object, the fact remains that there have been more objects from the skies.

For instance, a similar unidentified capsule has fallen 10 km. from San Miguel—a report so far

unconfirmed, as also is a report of a "fantastic" object which has come to earth in San Luis province, Argentina. Again, on January 30, a strange device 16 inches in diameter, with four wing-like flaps, was seen to come down in a deserted Andean valley near Luján, Mendoza province. When recovered, this object was turned over to the Air Force unit at Mendoza.

There has also been a brisk delivery from "upstairs" of a number of unusual metallic spheres! (Here we would refer our readers to the preceding article about the Virginian "flap", in which a "sort of fireball" is reported to have been dropped to the ground; to the "Whitby UFO" reported in World Round-Up, January/February issue of this REVIEW, and to the 1954 object mentioned by Mr. Tim Dinsdale, see Mail Bag on page 26). Is there any connection, we wonder, between this

spate of UFOs with detaching and falling star-like objects, and the spheres recovered in South America?

Most noteworthy spheres to have fallen recently in Argentina were on December 25, 1964, and on February 23, 1965. In Buenos Aires, a few weeks ago, Dr. Olavo Fontes said that he had made an analysis of the metal of the sphere which fell on Christmas Day (at Tíu Pujio, Province of Córdoba). He went on: "This object is extraterrestrial! I have never been so excited over an investigation as I am on this occasion. There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that we are now face-to-face with the most extraordinary fact that anyone could ever have imagined. This spherical object was manufactured outside our planet, inasmuch as it contains magnesium of a density and purity unknown on Earth."

## ORTHOTENY—A LOST CAUSE

by Dr. Donald H. Menzel

**Director of Harvard College Observatory and Professor of Astrophysics at Harvard University, and one of the best known opponents of flying saucers, the concept of which he attacked in two books, FLYING SAUCERS, published in 1953, and THE WORLD OF FLYING SAUCERS, which appeared in 1963.**

IN a recent issue of FLYING SAUCER REVIEW (March-April 1964) I presented a straightforward, scientific study of Orthoteny. The analysis clearly demonstrated that Aimé Michel's straight lines are only accidental alignments of randomly dispersed points. I further demonstrated the incorrectness of Michel's statistics. I did not, as Waveney Girvan implied, impugn Michel's good faith or accuse him of deliberately falsifying his figures. The mistakes he has made are those of an honest, but incompetent statistician.

In the same number of FLYING SAUCER REVIEW, Michel attempted to reply, be-clouding the issue with a foul fog of sarcasm, and insults, well calculated to deceive the non-mathematical reader into believing that Michel has neatly disposed of me. Waveney Girvan had warned me to expect some "cut and thrust". But it seems to me that Michel transcends the bounds of decency. Having no logical answer to my criticism, he falls back on the well-known technique of wildly attacking my scientific competence. His note scarcely merits a reply, but Girvan urged me to answer lest the readers take silence as a concession that Michel is right.

Michel objects to my calling the narrow strip in

which an alignment of sightings occur, a "corridor". He had, in fact, spoken of it as a "rectangle". If we denote by  $f$ , the fraction of the total area occupied by the rectangle, Michel gives (*Flying Saucers and the Straight-line Mystery*, page 79) the probability of finding  $m$  sightings out of a total of  $n$ .

$$P(n, m) = f(n-2)/(m-2),$$

from which he calculates for the now famous BAVIC line, with a 6-point line, 9 observations, and with an assumed  $f=1/45$ , that "the odds must be . . . 26 to 1, that the Bayonne-Vichy alignment is *not* the result of mere chance but of something else." Contrast this figure with Mebane's statement (same book, page 258) that the odds against the accidental occurrence of the 6-point BAVIC line is about 500,000 to 1.

No wonder Michel refers to his own "poor and amateurish method." His formula, quoted above, is meaningless, Mebane's formula is much nearer the truth. Although Michel attacks my derivation as juvenile, based on equations well known to 18-year-old schoolboys, he was certainly not aware of them. This discrepancy, *made in the same book* must certainly raise serious doubts concerning Michel's abilities as a statistician.

Because of growing interest in the statistics of