

WELSH MOUNTAIN EXPLOSION

Eileen Buckle

A DEAFENING explosion was heard over North Wales on the night of January 23, 1974 which shook houses and buildings for 60 miles around. It led to a fruitless search by police and RAF patrols for a "mystery object," thought to have been a large meteorite and to have crashed on the slopes of Cader Bronwen mountain, one of the Berwyn range in Merionethshire. Police switchboards throughout North Wales were jammed with 999 calls as people reported the loud bang and, in many instances, a streak of light falling to earth.

Edinburgh University's seismological department recorded an earth tremor at 8.39 p.m. (the explosion occurred at 8.30 p.m.), and there would also seem to be good reason for assuming a large meteorite had entered the earth's atmosphere, especially as exceptionally brilliant and active meteors and fireballs had been reported early in the year.

It if were not for certain other circumstances, the above explanations could be readily accepted. One of the anomalies was the sighting of a luminous sphere by Mr. Ken Haughton of Betws-y-Coed about 90 minutes later than the other incident. At first he and his wife saw what looked like sheet lightning behind a cloud, and then a sphere, without a tail, coming down at a speed estimated between 1,000 and 1,500 m.p.h. It seemed to be about 15,000 feet up and 300-400 feet across. Mr. Haughton reckoned the object would have come down in the sea in the area north-east of Rhyl or in the Dee estuary. He pinpointed the time of the sighting because when he went back into the house, the ITV programme "News at Ten" was starting. (*The North Wales Weekly News*, January 31.)

The *Border Counties Advertiser*, Oswestry, of January 30, was most informative. From it we learn that mysterious lights were seen by police immediately after the rumble. Also, coastguards at Holyhead saw a flaming object shaped like a tadpole about an hour later. A farmer, Mr. John Lewis, is said to have seen a hedgehog-shaped object hovering in the sky the day before the bang, but strangest of all is that same newspaper's full report of the sighting of a UFO over the Berwyn range on the evening following the explosion while the search was on for its cause. The object was first seen by 14-year-old David Upton of Gobowen, and according to the account:

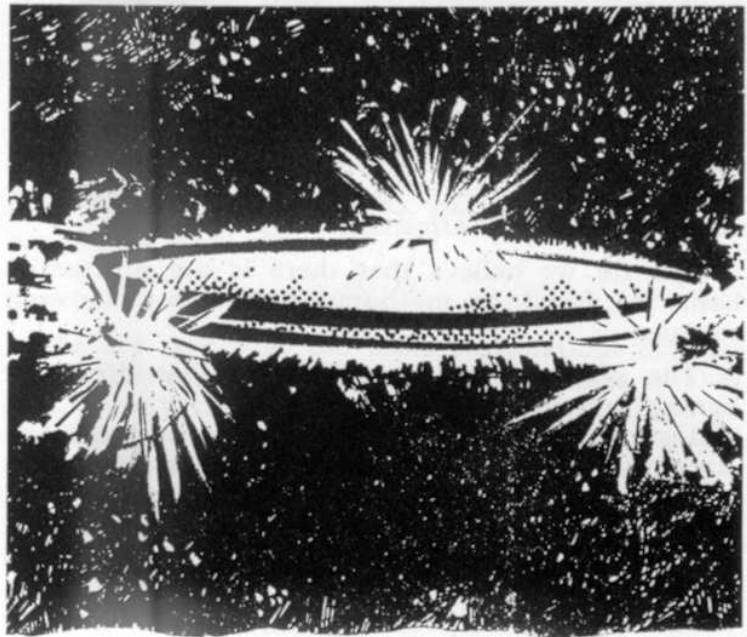
"As he went out of the back door of his home at about 7.15 p.m. he was struck by the brightness of an object in the westward sky. He ran into the house for a pair of field-glasses. To his astonishment, these revealed a disc-shaped object divided up into four sections, each section a different colour — red, green, yellow and purple. His sister Elizabeth, a 20-year-old bank clerk, took over the field-glasses and then her mother, Mrs. Mary Upton, examined the object. All verified David's description.

" 'I had been watching it for about ten minutes and thought perhaps I should tell someone about it,' said Elizabeth. She telephoned the local police and they said they would come and have a look. A minute after the call, the disc slid behind a cloud. We waited for the cloud to pass and when it did the disc had gone too' said Elizabeth.

"Elizabeth said: 'When I first came out of the house the light from the object was dazzling, like a street lamp. When we looked through the field-glasses we could define its overall disc-shape and the four sections.' "

To cap the sighting at Gobowen, here is another one, reported in the *Sunderland Echo*, Co. Durham, of January 24, and although occurring about 150 miles from North Wales, it has some striking similarities to that of the Upton family. It was seen by a Sunderland housewife, Mrs. Margaret Naylor, and her son Michael, aged 11, as it hovered over Barnes School on the night of January 23. Mrs. Naylor watched the object through binoculars for six minutes and described it as "a long black oblong, rounded more on the top than underneath." Her description in the *Echo* continues:

" 'I saw a red light come round it, then green, yellow and orange, and it seemed as if it was going to go up in flames. Then the lights died down and it became black again and buzzed around. It hovered



The UFO sighted by members of the Upton family — reconstructed from their descriptions by an artist for the *Border Counties Advertiser*

over Barnes School and then disappeared. I have never seen anything like it in my life before.'

"Earlier in the day when her son returned home at lunch-time from Thornhill School he said he had seen four UFOs together. Then on his way home from school last night he saw another. 'I didn't really believe him until he called me outside and showed me the one by Barnes School,' said Mrs. Naylor."

I find it hard to believe that the above sightings could all have been meteors, and equally hard to believe, assuming they were UFOs, that their appearances around about the time of the explosion could be mere coincidence, even if the explosion was due to a natural cause — which as far as I know has not been proved.

STRANGE AFFAIR ON THE KIMBA ROAD

Keith Basterfield

ON February 4, 1973, approximately 32 miles from Kimba, South Australia, a young man and a young woman, Mr. Brian Hunt and Miss Sharyn Finckler of Kimba, were travelling from Iron Knob to Kimba on Highway 1 (Eyre Highway) that evening. Mr. Hunt, who was driving, noticed what he at first called a "red flare" to their right, just off the road in a clearing. It was about 9.50 p.m.

Brian Hunt looked back and saw a rectangular shape, orange-red in colour, 10 feet high by 5 feet wide, with a sharply defined figure, in what he called a "white spacesuit," floating in the middle of it. This figure, looking like an ordinary human figure, appeared to be motionless some two to three feet from the ground, surrounded by the orange-red glow, with its hands and legs pointing slightly downwards, covered all over in white.

Realising "just what it was" he had seen, Brian Hunt accelerated the car from the steady 55 mph he had been doing, and motioned to Sharyn Finckler. It was a few seconds before she realised that he wanted her to look out of the car. When she looked back she saw in the clearing a deep orange-coloured glow rectangular in shape, with a white blob on top of it. She turned around to comment on it, and upon looking back again, observed that the orange glow now appeared to extend right across the road behind them. Several seconds later she again looked back, but this time there was nothing to be seen in the darkness.

Mr. Hunt, meanwhile, had concentrated on driving. He did not notice any unusual effects on the working of the car, and the witnesses themselves experienced nothing unusual, and noted no strange noises or odours.

They drove at speed to the house of Miss Finckler's parents in Kimba, and told them of the incident. Shortly afterwards they got in touch with the local police, and Constable Peter Summerton later drove out to the clearing with them. By 11.10 p.m. they were at the site of the observation, and they took a good look at the ground, trees and scrub in the area. They found no evidence to suggest a hoax, or to indicate a recent fire. There were no signs of any vehicle or pedestrian tracks.

The following day a Ceduna truck driver related to

Mr. Basterfield, whom we thank for this interesting Australian report, informs us that when Dr. J. Allen Hynek was in Australia last year the opportunity was taken to tell him about it and that, in view of the fact that it is a multiple-witness case, Dr. Hynek suggested that the full story be forwarded to FSR. We are happy to publish this account, especially in view of the similarity between the observed object in this case, and that reported by Miss E. Clappison at Rosedale, Alberta, Canada (see *FSR Case Histories*, Supps. 10 and 16 of June 1972 and August 1973 respectively).

Mr. Basterfield's investigatory organization, known as UFO Research, is, as he informs us, scientifically orientated, and has been in existence for six years, and aims to conduct deep probes into cases of this kind.

EDITOR

the Kimba police that he had passed the same spot [what *transpired* to be the same spot—? EDITOR] at about 10.00 p.m. on February 4. He had seen, inside the fence line, what appeared to him as a brightly lit caravan doorway, except that it was much taller than a normal door, and had a rectangular shape, twice as high as wide. It had a shape outlined in white inside it. He did not stop to take a closer look.

Brian Hunt recalled that a car had passed them just prior to their reaching the clearing. The driver of this vehicle was located, and stated that as he passed the clearing he saw "...a glow of light, rectangular in shape and orange in colour" which was a chain or two* outside the fenceline.

The investigation

The case first came to our notice through a news clipping from the *Whyalla News* of February 16, 1973, which reached us by February 24. That evening we tried to telephone Mr. Hunt at Kimba but he was not available. We then despatched a reply-paid telegram. A reply was received, and arrange-

* A chain = 66 feet, or 22 yards,—EDITOR