

dot which appears in a number of saucer photographs? This dot is always close to the UFO and is especially noticeable in the illustrations in *The Flying Saucer Story* by Brinsley Le Poer Trench.

—A. S. Robotham, 14 Freemantle Road, Rugby, Warwickshire.

Suspicious roused

Sir,—With reference to the interesting article written "The Moon and Mars" (FLYING SAUCER REVIEW May/June 1966) surely the most arresting fact is not the similarity in the crater distribution but the incredible correlation implicit in the result of the calculation. Such a result can only make one highly suspicious of the manner of its derivation.

—Alan W. Sharp, B.S.c., F.R.A.S., 35 Radstoke Road, Liverpool 6.

Those "Canali"

Sir,—I was very interested in your recent article concerning the elusive Martian canals and thought the photographs were really excellent proving that these mysterious lines do exist and are not either figments of the imagination or broad dusky regions.

However, the true nature of the "canals" is still a debatable point and open to much argument when offered as a form of proof as to a highly developed Martian civilisation. So little is the definite information we have on the canals that even now, 50 years after his death, Lowell's original theory is still quite feasible, (i.e. that the actual canals are comparatively narrow water channels flanked on either side by a strip of irrigated land). It is of course quite possible that the lines have some completely different purpose to the one which we usually attribute to them, but here again we are falling into the trap of assuming that they have a purpose and are not merely freak Martian conditions.

Regarding the celebrated Mariner IV pictures and the pock-marked surface photographed, already grave doubts are being raised as to what the frames actually show. Besides, there must be thousands of spots on this fertile planet of ours that would appear just as inhospitable and non-life supporting.

Despite years of constant research and multi-million dollar space probes, Mars is still as fascinating and mysterious as ever; only now are we beginning to break down the barriers which prevent us from knowing the truth behind many of

the Martian mysteries, including the number one enigma, the famous canals. Perhaps the words of one of the first canal observers, G. V. Schiaparelli, are the wisest at this point. "Their singular aspect has led some to see in them the work of intelligent beings. I am very careful not to combat this suggestion, which contains nothing impossible."

—Peter Coleman, 7 Sleaford Road, Hall Green, Birmingham 28.

Highland sighting

Sir,—I have rather a strange tale to tell; it is about events which took place on Thursday evening, July 21, round about 10 o'clock or possibly a few minutes later. They were witnessed by two persons, (1) my nephew, Charles Ogilvy MacLean, who lives in Glen Prosen, about 12 miles from here, and (2) his farm hand Grieve. They are both reliable and responsible men, and had had no alcohol whatever! They had driven over earlier in the day from Glen Prosen to Auchterarder in Perthshire to see about a sheep dog, and were on their way home on the road between Perth and Blairgowrie, about three miles this side of Perth. The sky was clear except for a few small wisps of cloud over the hills about five or six miles to the north.

Looking to the north they both saw what they thought must be several (perhaps 3 or 4) helicopters at a distance of three to five miles from them. My nephew was driving and could only take his eyes from the road at intervals for a moment, but Grieve was able to keep a continuous watch. They did not stop at this period but to their astonishment the appearance abruptly changed to what my nephew could only describe as a flock of something, he did not know what. They were both very interested and puzzled.

They drove on through a rather twisty road for another five miles or so and then stopped to see what was happening. To their astonishment the "things" had all disappeared, and in their place was what they took to be a large cloud.

I showed my nephew the picture on the front cover of the March/April issue of the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW and asked him if it was anything like that. He said "yes, the same shape, but rather shorter, and there was another smaller roundish cloud to the right of it, which appeared to be "growing" in size. At the left end of the large cloud there was something like a short pillar rising out of it, the top of

which was roughly level with the centre of the cloud."

At this point another car with a number of rather rowdy people on board came up and passed them, and they turned to watch them go down the road for a hundred yards or so. On looking back to the north they were astounded to find that the whole "cloud formation" had completely disappeared, and the sky was clear where the objects had been. They both came to the conclusion that there was something very queer about it all! My nephew had told me briefly about it some days ago when talking to him about other matters on the telephone, and I asked him to come over and give me some more details which he did yesterday. It struck me as having some resemblance to the Cappoquin sighting, and I thought it might perhaps interest you.

—John Ogilvy, Inshewan, Forfar, Scotland.

The 1897 Airship

Sir,—With respect to Jerome Clark, I suggest that the 1897 "airship" was probably a UFO of the kind for which the designation "Deltavolant" has been coined in recent years. Most of the anomalies in published accounts of the time are explicable as errors arising out of the preconceptions of witnesses whose only acquaintance with flying machines rested upon the fictions of such as Jules Verne.

The "contactee" narratives centred around the 1897 craft are not more confusing or contradictory than those which afflict us today. Perhaps the UFO-denizens have some method of inducing hallucinatory experiences in the minds of terrestrials who approach a grounded UFO too closely. Furthermore, it must be assumed that publicity-hounds, "nuts" and seekers after the easy-money-that-cometh-by-a-colourful-hoax, were, then as now, quickly in the field.

I am inclined to place Captain James Hooton in one of these latter categories. The object which decorates the cover of your July-August issue looks like the result of a working collaboration between Heath Robinson and Dr. Strabismus of Utrecht, (Whom God Preserve)! I would question the ability of the UFO-denizens or anyone else to coax such an aerodynamic outrage off the ground, much less fly it all over the United States.

—J. Cleary-Baker, Weeke, Winchester.

[Dr. Cleary-Baker is editor of BUFORA JOURNAL.]