

# SOME THOUGHTS ON "THINKING GLOBES"

Gordon Creighton

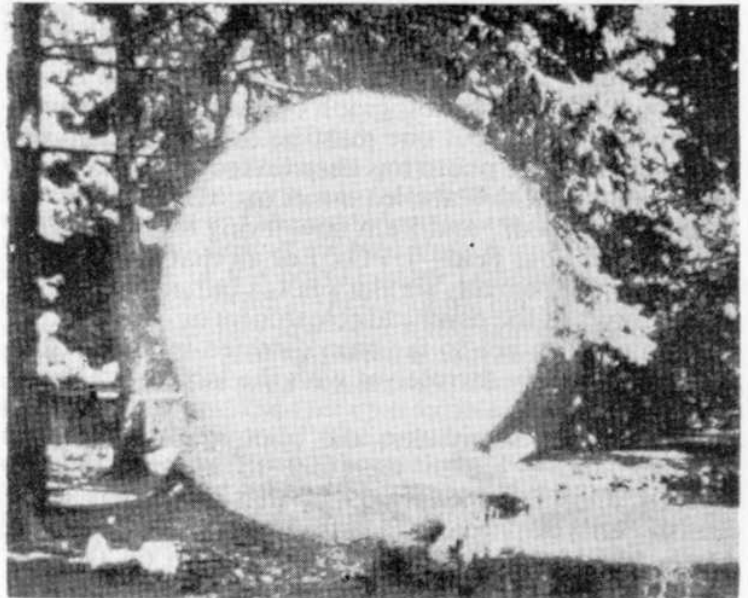
FOR years past a whole series of nominally or apparently unrelated fields of study or enquiry—ufology, parapsychology and psychical research, seismology (piezo-electrical phenomena), ball-lightning, cases of the terrifying "spontaneous combustion," etc.—have yielded curious accounts in which witnesses or percipients speak of "fire-balls," "luminous globes," "luminous balls" or "thinking lights," these latter being often (as the term "thinking lights" indicates) seemingly endowed with some kind of intelligence or obeying some kind of guidance and direction. I am not suggesting that *all* these phenomena have necessarily anything in common, and if there is any man who can tell us precisely what they all are I have yet to hear of it. I do suggest, however, that there may be areas of similarity or of overlapping. Lack of space prevents further general discussion of these matters here. Those wishing to pursue the problems further will find abundant material in the existing literatures of the various fields of enquiry mentioned above.<sup>1</sup>

There are however a number of points which it may be profitable to discuss here, and there is even a good photograph of a "luminous globe", as I shall show below.

Nobody, I feel sure, will be able to call to mind a case more remarkable than the one recently reported from the Aveyron Department of southern France where, in June 1966, a farm was the scene of a visitation by numerous luminous globes which, according to the account, certainly seemed to possess an intelligence of their own or to be intelligently controlled, since they were evidently quite capable of anticipating and forestalling the next move that a human percipient might make.<sup>2</sup>

In the Aveyron case the globes were associated with a large, upright, luminous object shaped like an artillery shell, which may perhaps have been their "base" or "mother-craft". And another most curious and possibly extremely important element in the Aveyron story is the fact that, just at the moment when one of the witnesses, while driving in his car along a lonely country road, in pursuit of one of these mysterious globes, a flat "flying saucer" swooped down from the sky and, as so often happens, stalled the engine of his car. The witness was able to see that, upon its upper surface, the "saucer" bore two transparent domes, each of which seemed to him to contain a human or a human-like being.

At this point in our discussion one is inevitably induced to consider the possible relationships which might exist between these "thinking globes" and the saucers. Are the globes—as some folk believe—simply



Psychic sphere—taken in 1907 in the zoological gardens at Basle, Switzerland

devices that are carried by the saucers and are put out by them? In other words, the equivalent of "foo fighters" at ground-level?

Alternately, however, is it possible that the "thinking globes" have nothing whatsoever to do with any of the UFOs, or, it may be, with only certain categories of UFOs? Could it be, for example, that the "thinking globes" are intruders, extraterrestrial themselves, or demonic, alien to this world and to all life here, and hostile to the UFOs (or some of the UFOs), in which case the UFOs (or some of them) might conceivably be engaged—for all we Earthlings know—in some sort of programme aimed at hunting down the globes and destroying them?

We have to recognise that we do not know the answers to any of these questions or to so many others that inevitably come to mind when we try to speculate about such themes and about the position occupied by our own species within the Cosmos and within the biosphere and ecosphere where we dwell.

I would add that the luminous globes have not only been seen on the ground or moving through the air. (The latter category would of course relate to a large proportion of ordinary UFO reports). The globes have also been encountered *upon the surface of the sea*. *Lumières Dans La Nuit*<sup>3</sup> recently reported a remarkable case [to be included in a future issue of *FSR Case Histories*—ED.] involving three French fishermen who,

in June 1958, were out at sea in a small boat when one of these great globes, estimated by them to be at least 8 metres wide, came rolling across the surface of the water towards them, creating great waves, and passing very near to their boat. They felt a powerful blast of heat from the globe, a strong displacement of air, and they heard coming from it a loud buzzing sound, "like the buzzing of a swarm of cockchafer". The accompanying illustration in *Lumières Dans La Nuit* shows that, whatever this thing may have been, it was seemingly identical with the luminous globes seen dodging and jumping around so nimbly on the paths and roads near the farm in Aveyron.

I come finally to the principal purpose of this short article, which is to introduce the photograph. So far as I know, it is the first photograph of one of the luminous globes to turn up, but one must be extremely cautious on this point. The photo has been linked, hitherto, with one nebulous field—labelled either as "the psychic" or "the unexplained," and I am now trying to link it with another nebulous field—UFOs. For all that one knows, there may yet be many similar photos buried in the files and archives of the psychical researchers or of Fortean, and which have not so far been detected by the people who now identify themselves with the label of "Ufologists".

To some British readers the photograph will look familiar, and I hasten therefore to explain that it recently appeared in Part 39 of that somewhat slick British "encyclopaedic conglomeration" entitled *Man, Myth And Magic* where, under the section on *Ghosts*, it is described simply as a "ghost light", photographed in 1907 in the Zoological Gardens at Basel, Switzerland.

I understand that the photograph was taken in daylight by a gentleman named Giraudon, and the rights are now held by my friend Mr. Raymond Lamont Brown, whose permission I have received to reproduce it now in *Flying Saucer Review*.

Mr. Brown admits that not too much is now known about the circumstances in which the photograph was taken, and it occurs to me that some of our friends in Switzerland may be able to dig out further details for us, particularly about Monsieur Giraudon, and pinpoint the precise spot in the Zoological Gardens where it was made. My impression is that there are two white birds (possibly pouter pigeons; or perhaps ornamental waterfowl?) on the left-hand side of the picture, just beneath the lower left-hand side of the globe, and there is clearly another, darker bird, perhaps a moorhen or wader, right in the centre, below the globe. So the scene shown may be in one of the large aviaries usually found in zoos.

In view of my recent catalogue on the reported effects of UFOs on animals, birds, and smaller creatures, some readers may no doubt find it astonishing that these birds in the Basel Zoo seem to be showing no concern or alarm whatever, and may conclude that the photograph must therefore surely be some kind of trick.

Since I did not take the photograph myself and was not present at the time, I must admit that I do not know the answer and that such an explanation is always possible. On the other hand I must point out that my catalogue of animal and bird cases has contained quite a few in which the creatures seem to have remained

unperturbed. And I must also point out that, at Aveyron, when the farmer told his two dogs, in the local French *patois*, to "go seek 'em, go seek!"<sup>4</sup> the dogs showed no alarm whatever but at once chased one of the globes right up to the railings, in a corner of the vineyard, and were as close as no more than 1½ metres from it. So, at the word of command from their master, these dogs chivvied a globe, and seem to have displayed no fear, and we cannot therefore assume that the Basel photograph is faked just because it seems to portray some unruffled birds in the close vicinity of a luminous globe.

From all accounts, our own days are seeing an extraordinary resurgence of interest in the "Fortean", the "unexplained", and the "supernatural" or "supernormal". The publishers of *Man, Myth And Magic* appear, on the whole, to be at pains to find nice tidy conventional explanations for everything, and so when they come to conclude their last Instalment, with *Zombie or Zululand*, we may be pretty sure that little will remain still unexplained or capable of disturbing the minds of their readers. We have already seen the masterly fashion in which, in their Part 36, their Expert on Flying Saucers, my friend Mr. Patrick Moore, disposed of the irritating UFOs.<sup>5</sup> They do not however appear so far to have found any rational explanation for the spooky sphere seen at Basel in 1907.

One may, alas, suspect that, long after *Men, Myth And Magic* and its pundits and glib explainers will have passed into oblivion, there will still remain an uncomfortably wide range of subjects on which our all-sapient species is "stumped" and that "UFOs", "luminous globes", and "thinking lights" may very well be among them.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> On Ball-Lightning and cases of combustion of human beings, see in particular the excellent study by C. Maxwell Cade and Delphine Davis: *The Taming Of The Thunderbolts* (Abelard-Schuman, 1969). See also the books of Vincent H. Gaddis: *Survey of Mysterious Disappearances* (1965); *Mysterious Lights and Fires* (1967); *UFO Mystery: Fire-bolts from Space* (Saga, May 1967); *Invisible Horizons* (1965).
- <sup>2</sup> See F. Lagarde: *The Aveyron Enquiry*, in FSR September/October 1970, November/December 1970, January/February 1971. (Translations by John C. Hugill from the original French in *Lumières Dans La Nuit*, 1970.)
- <sup>3</sup> See *Lumières Dans La Nuit* (January 1971), article entitled *Sindbad Le Marin*.
- <sup>4</sup> See FSR, November/December 1970, p. 6 (Article 2 on Aveyron).
- <sup>5</sup> See Charles Bowen's Editorial: *The Art of Debunking*, in FSR November/December 1970.

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