

The Los Angeles Basin Sightings

1: From April 1 to April 4, 1973

Ann Druffel

For 13 years Mrs. Druffel was a member of the Los Angeles NICAP sub-committee. She now devotes much of her spare time (from being a housewife) to investigation for MUFON, NICAP and DATA-NET, and as project co-ordinator for her SKYNET group.

FOR a period of eight days beginning April 1, 1973, the Los Angeles Basin area experienced an unprecedented number of sightings. If one considers colours and general appearance of the objects, there may well be an inter-relationship between them, the nature of which is not presently known.

With the exception of the Shackman sightings (which follow in Part 2) they were all referred by the Griffith Observatory in Hollywood to SKYNET #3 Druffel. Since sighting forms have not been returned yet by most of the witnesses, we have not permission to use many of the names.

Plate-like, oscillating UFO

This minor "flap" began at 6.00 a.m. on April 1, when Mr. W— happened to glance out of his twelfth-storey apartment window in a fashionable section of Hollywood. His front window commands a beautiful view of the city of Los Angeles to the east, south and west. He was startled by a glowing, round yellowish-white sphere which flew "directly over his head and disappeared toward International Airport to the south-south-west. It was brightly luminous and he had the impression it was "flat like a plate," though he could not be sure. The edges were clear cut against the still-darkened sky, even though the sky was slightly overcast.

The object travelled at tremendous speed, and it travelled from his location out of sight in about two seconds, but he was left with a vivid impression because of its high degree of strangeness. The experience he described as "eerie." There was no sound. He was most puzzled by its motion which put him in mind of "an object in water." Although the object travelled in a straight directional path, it oscillated back and forth "like a cork bobbling on an ocean."

He called an Air Base in San Bernardino, and then the Air Force Office in Los Angeles, where he spoke to a Miss Osako, who could give him no information. He is employed in "finance and banking" and requested anonymity because of his position. He stated he wished to report the object because he felt it should be known to some responsible source.

Sky formations: first report

Two days later, multiple witnesses viewed a most unusual sight in the Los Angeles skies, a sight which left all, without exception, uneasy and puzzled. The first to report this occurrence were Mrs. M. W— and her teenage son. At 7.10 p.m. on April 3 they viewed a

series of white lights flying from west to east. Most of them were in pairs, the progression between each pair being regular and with the same spacing between each pair. They were all the size of "smaller stars," faster than high-flying jets, and flew very "smoothly." There were about ten in all, seemingly very high with the appearance of satellites, but much faster than, for instance, the *Echo* satellites. First they saw a group of three, then a pair, then one flying northward by itself, then two more pairs.

They were first seen in the west about 75° high and disappeared from view in the lights of a train track about 35° high in the east. The W. family live in Glendale, about nine miles north of Los Angeles Civic Center. Both commented on the strangeness of the objects, unlike anything they had ever seen.

Second report

The next report was from Mr. and Mrs. B—, who live in Lake View Terrace, about twelve miles northwest of Glendale. It is a small isolated community with a clear, dark sky. The B—s say, with their five children, five pairs of white lights flying from the west-north-west to south-east. Duration of sighting was "from a few minutes after 7.00 p.m. to 7.15 p.m." They had been impressed that each pair seemed "the same height, speed, and flying on the same plane." As each pair disappeared into the distance, another would come up from the north-westerly horizon and follow the pair ahead. They also saw two single lights which resembled the pairs in size, speed, and trajectory. During the passage of the pairs, a single, bright and seemingly lower light crossed the sky from south to north, and passed "almost directly overhead," as did the smaller objects.

Each object gave a "glow," and the appearance of a "round light," though not really showing a disc. They all seemed the size of bright stars, except the south-north object, which was even brighter. Only Mr. B— could determine that some of the lights were blinking. Their passage was fast, though there was time to "stare at them as they crossed the sky." Each group took about 30 seconds to complete its passage.

They were viewed from about 25° above the West-North-West horizon and disappeared into the distance at about 25° above the south-easterly horizon.

Mr. B— is a pilot, working in military aircraft, and for this reason requests anonymity for the family. He is convinced the lights were not from airplanes. He stated they "were much too fast" and gave the example that a

shooting star is $2\frac{1}{2}$ orders of magnitude faster than the fastest commercial jet. In his estimation, these lights were 1 order magnitude faster than our faster commercial jets.

Third report

Another call on April 3 was received from H. F. Penfold, a counsellor at an outdoor educational centre above La Canada, about seven miles north-east of Glendale. He and another adult counsellor were teaching a class in astronomy in a clearing among the mountain forest (20 sixth-grade students). A few minutes after 7.00 p.m. all viewed four pairs of two lights each cross the sky on a north-west to south-east trajectory. They came into sight above trees and out of the sky glow of the city, 50° - 60° high, crossing the sky at about 80° in the south at their highest point, and traversing about 45° - 50° of sky before disappearing in the south-east. In all, the passage of the pairs took about 10 minutes, and 30 seconds to one minute passed between each pair. Each pair took about five minutes to cross the sky, and Mr. Penfold was convinced they were neither aircraft nor satellites because they moved too fast.

Mr. Penfold is knowledgeable in astronomy, and estimated that the two lights in each pair were about 7° - 8° apart, and the second of each pair followed the first precisely. To him, each succeeding pair seemed to be dimmer. They were all white, and about magnitude +2, and some were flashing on and off in a fairly fast rhythm, one to two flashes per second. They impressed the group of witnesses as very strange indeed.

A brighter light, about -1 magnitude, seemingly lower than the others crossed in a northerly direction during the procession. This was first seen about 70° - 80° above the southern horizon and moved "very fast."

That evening the weather was checked. There was unrestricted visibility in the Los Angeles Basin, with north-east to easterly winds at one to three knots. Presumably, then, the lights were moving against the wind.

Fourth report

A fourth report the same night was from P. M—., a young man who was reluctant at first to leave his name, but was truly puzzled at the procession of lights he had viewed from 7.10 p.m. to 7.20 p.m. from his home in La Crescenta, approximately 5 miles north-west of Glendale. To him the pairs of lights came approximately one minute apart and travelled west to east. In some pairs one light would be shining brightly while the other was "muted." In some groups both shone brightly, while in other groups both were dim. He saw some of them through binoculars and could determine that they seemed "egg-shaped" with their greater length parallel to the horizon. They seemed to him to "be made of metal." In the binoculars they were the size of Venus at its maximum or larger (-4.4) with a hazy outline.

Fifth report

E. W—, lives one mile west of the Los Angeles Civic Center, and saw the lights pass "directly overhead." He, too, viewed a procession of small white lights, travelling from west to east, about 7.05 p.m. to 7.25 p.m.

the same evening. They seemed very high, and the two in each pair were "right behind the other," two to three full moons apart. He, too, viewed a single, brighter, larger white light flying south to north at 7.15 p.m.

The pairs appeared about 75° above the western horizon, and disappeared at about 60° above the horizon in the east. They disappeared behind buildings, and became visible above city lights. Each passage took about "10-15 seconds," and they "seemed to be travelling very fast."

He was not interested in having a sighting form sent to him and preferred not to give his address and phone number. I detected a touch of fear in his reaction to the experience. However, he was puzzled enough to call several days later to see what I had been able to find out about them, and scoffed at the Air Force story that they might have been "landing lights on aircraft."

Official theory

On April 4 I queried the Air Force Public Information Office spokesman, Miss Joan Osako, who "handles this kind of call." She called FAA at International Airport, who informed her that at the time of the sightings the normal east-to-west landing pattern for commercial aircraft had been reversed because of the unusual north-easterly wind conditions. Planes had been landing in the Los Angeles Basin from west to east, and it was theorised by the FAA, and Miss Osako, that the lights reported could be landing lights on aircraft.

This "theory" does not hold water for the following reasons:

1. The pairs of lights each had its two individual lights spaced too far apart.

2. For those witnesses near a landing strip, there was no sound and the lights were too faint. (Only the B—s, the husband being a pilot, live anywhere near an airport, and he is adamant in stating the lights were not aircraft.)

3. The most important fact refuting this Air Force theory is that the same lights were seen too high in the sky by separate groups of witnesses living miles apart. To confirm this opinion, SKYNET plans to have the information studied by mathematicians, so that an approximation of height, speed, and possibly of size can be determined.

Polar satellite?

On April 4 the sightings continued. P.M., a witness of the previous evening's procession, called to report that he had seen a white, bright light pass from south to north at 7.10 p.m. It was similar to the object he had seen the previous evening crossing against the procession of smaller lights. The son of Mrs. M.W—, also called to report that he had seen the same object which he and his mother had viewed the previous evening crossing from south to north. He first saw this single object about 75° high, disappearing in the north about 75° above the horizon. It was in view about $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 minutes and was flashing like a fast flicker or regular pulsating, about 2 to 3 times faster than the pulsating objects seen the evening before.

(Continued on page iv of cover)

UFO with Light Beams near Vitry-en-Artois

Near-landing in the Pas-de-Calais, N.E. France

Taken from *Lumières dans la Nuit** for February, 1973, this account is prepared from the report on an investigation conducted by Messrs. M. Lecat, J. M. Bigorne and J-M. Bavay. Translation by Gordon Creighton.

At 6.00 p.m. on July 20, 1971, Monsieur F. Laisne, a 32-year-old building worker, was in his garden when a sharp whistling noise made him look round towards the next-door house. There, to his immense surprise, he beheld, at a height of just about 8 metres above that house, a great luminous ball travelling along at no more than 30 km. or so per hour. It seemed thoroughly real and solid, of a milky-white colour with greenish touches. It seemed flattened at top and bottom, and appeared to have a slight pitch in its movement. From the under-portion of it, powerful green beams of light were pouring down steadily on to the ground and illuminating the whole area below (although it was still broad daylight at the time). Furthermore, it was enveloped in a greenish halo. It was not rotating. His impression of its size was that it was a little over 2 metres in diameter, and that its surrounding halo was another 50 cms. wide.

The object then flew over his house. He heard no sound from it. It carried straight on ahead, on a horizontal course, until it came to a large poplar tree, whereupon it stopped dead for a few seconds, just a few metres from the tree. Suddenly it gave out a tremendous burst of blinding flashes of light in all directions. Then it climbed rapidly towards the top of the tree, its light blinked a few times, it gathered speed, and flew off, still climbing, towards Notre-Dame-de-Lorette. The witness watched it until it was out of sight.

At the moment when it let out its vivid burst of dazzling beams, a branch of the poplar broke clean off

the tree and fell to the ground. This branch was 15 cms. thick and 2.5 metres long. It looked as though it had been "grilled," but did not catch fire. On the poplar tree itself there remained a stump, 30 cms. long, from which the branch had come. The witness picked up the charred branch and used it in his wood-burning stove.

At the foot of the poplar tree, the grass was yellowed over an area of several square metres.

At the time of the occurrence, the witness was standing at a spot 120 metres from the tree and 60 metres from the line of flight of the mysterious globe. He felt no physical or other effects, either at the time or since. He was simply dazed by the brightness. The sky was overcast at the time, with fleecy clouds, and there was very little wind. The Arras-Douai-Lille electric railway

(Continued at foot of page 10)

* L.D.L.N. address: Mons. R. Veillith, "Les Pins," 43400 Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France.

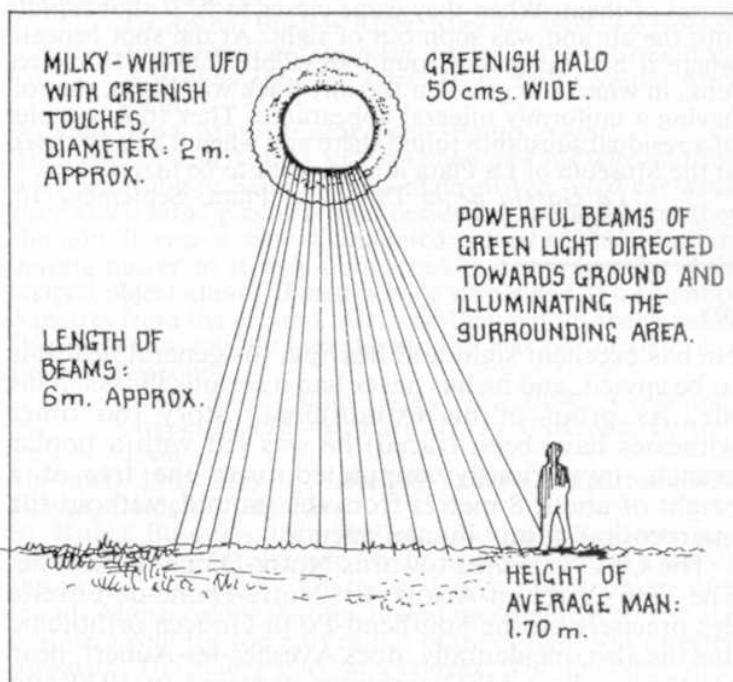


Figure 1

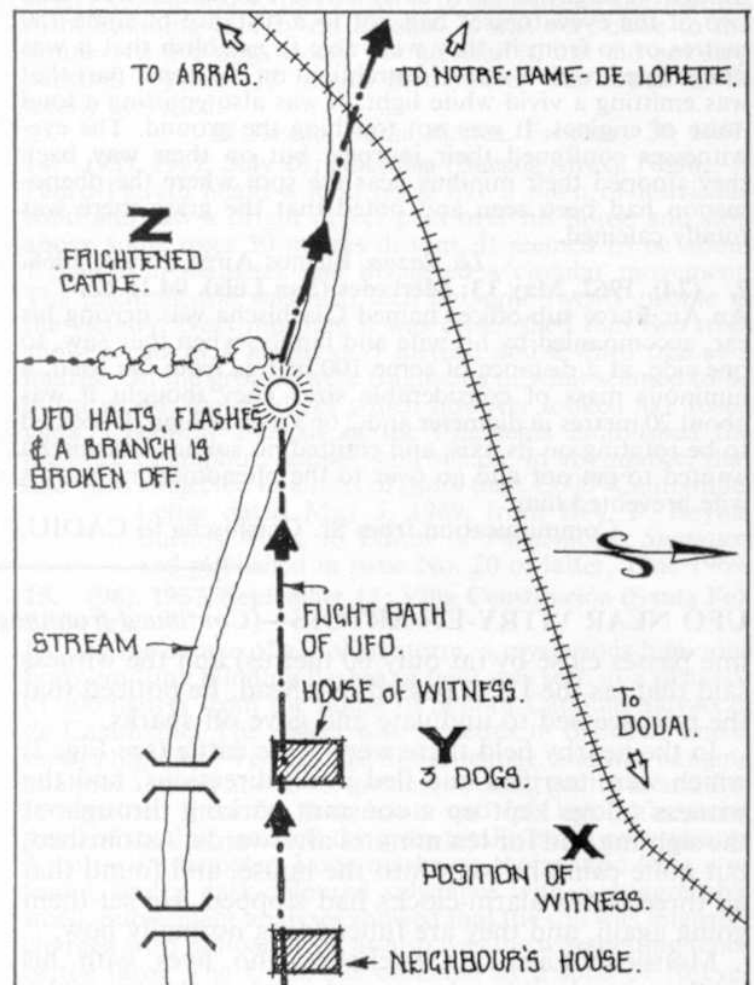


Figure 2