

LOW-LEVEL UFO AT MYTCHETT

Omar Fowler

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ON the evening of Wednesday, January 11, 1978, two fifteen-year-old boys, Ron Hills and Ian Hoole, were returning home after visiting their local Youth Club at Mytchett, near Camberley, Surrey. The time was about 9.35 p.m. It was a cold, windy and blustery night. They decided to run home together, just for a bit of sport and hoping to achieve a better time than that of the previous week. As they explained, they also needed to keep fit.

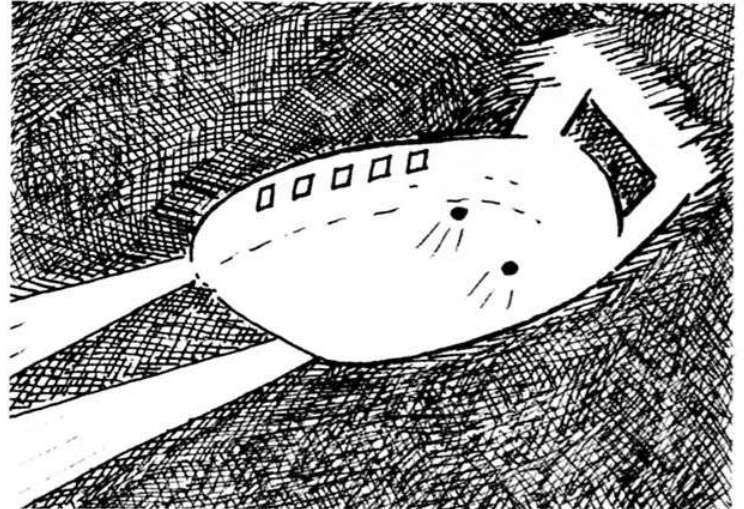
As they ran towards the top of a bridge over the railway along the Mytchett Road, close to the Miners' Arms public house, they became aware of what they described as a large object "flying over the top of them." At first they thought it was an aircraft as it passed overhead but it had what appeared to be two headlights shining in front of it which lit up the clouds. There were also two red lights underneath which were flashing on and off alternatively.

Ron had been leading, but Ian caught up with him and, at the top of the bridge, they stopped to take stock of the thing. This was now getting lower and was travelling over the fields of an old farm to their left. They could see a rather large oblong shape with rounded edges, but at no time, said Ian, could they see a definite shape. (A drawing which they did later depicted what seemed like a sort of super-structure, with a device like an elevator at the "rear" and there were also "shiny strips" running vertically on the side that they could see.)

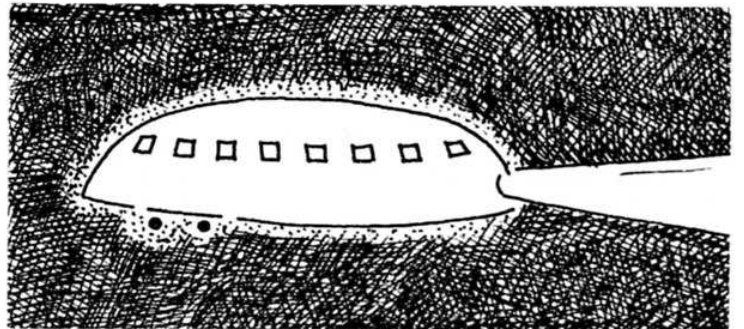
As the object got lower they could hear a faint noise, and they were quite sure by this time it was not an aeroplane because, as they commented later, it was by that time so low that if it had been a 'plane the noise would have been tremendous. As the object moved off into the distance they were momentarily speechless and more than a little scared. As Ian put it they both felt as though they wanted to cry.

Recovering their composure they continued on their way home discussing what they had seen and keeping a wary eye on the red lights, still flashing in the distance. They were now walking briskly with less than half a mile to go. When they reached Loman Road, Ian says he again drew Ron's attention to the lights which were now stationary, whereupon they started to run. Ian continued (in the report which he wrote for me): "... as we did so it began to move. I told Ron this but as he looked, a house roof blocked his view. I then told Ron to look at the space between the roofs and sure enough he saw it again."

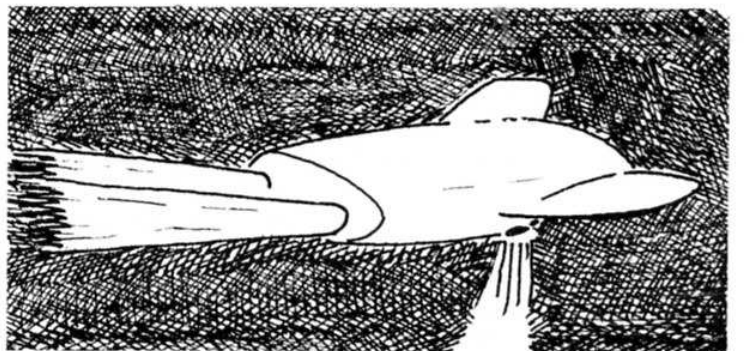
The boys started running again as they could hear the noise of the thing getting louder and getting nearer. It appeared to be following them... they continued running, and stopped by Lynwood Drive



The object as first seen: based on Ian Hoole's sketch



Appearance of object when seen over Salisbury Grove



For comparison; the object seen around the Surrey and Hampshire borders in January and February 1974

Estate where they confirmed that the object was following them. They ran for another hundred yards and stopped.

Then for the young witnesses came the most frightening part of the encounter for they realised that the object was now right above them. They

could see that it was massive and shiny with what seemed to be "small windows" (with an orange light, said Ron) around it. Ian said the whole object glowed with a misty light as though producing terrific heat. Again the two beams of light at the "front" could be seen and the red flashing lights. Without more ado, and with all thoughts of keeping fit long departed, they ran as hard as they could for Ian's home, now less than 100 yards away. While Ron kept watch on the aerial intruder, Ian shouted to his mother to come out. By the time she reached the door Ron said the

object was descending behind some trees. Nevertheless Mrs. Hoole said she could hear the unusual noise.

When I spoke to Ian's father he said the boys were on the verge of being in a state of shock; they were white faced like ghosts, and were clearly terrified by what they had seen. For some time afterwards they were shaky and jumpy.

Could this have been a return of the mystery object seen extensively throughout Surrey and Hampshire in January & February 1974?

A PROBLEM FOR THE ITALIAN MINISTER OF DEFENCE?

Gordon Creighton

WE are indebted to Dr. Roberto Pinotti, Vice-President of C.U.N. (Centro Ufologico Nazionale — Italian National UFO Centre, Milano) for the text of an article published in the Milan illustrated journal *Gente* of November 19, 1977. I give below my translation of the gist of the story, which we understand is to receive fuller treatment in a forthcoming issue (No. 77) of the quarterly magazine *Notiziario UFO*, published by C.U.N.

The event which has produced some sort of flutter in Italian ministerial circles took place at 5.35 p.m. on October 27, 1977, over the military airfield at Cagliari Elmas, at the southernmost tip of the island of Sardinia.

Three helicopters of the Italian Army's Light Aircraft Corps (A.L.E., *Aviazione Leggera Esercito*) were on training flights over the Air Force Base when, for a period of five minutes the crews of two of them saw a luminous orange "circle." Scores of observers on the ground also witnessed the phenomenon.

The same sort of "luminous orange circle" was again observed over the Cagliari Airfield on November 2, 1977, but this time the matter did not become known until an "official leak" had occurred. (Evidently the Italian military authorities were anxious to prevent the second case from becoming known, "in order to avoid unnecessary alarm.")

On the occasion of the first incident, October 27, the luminous circle was seen and tracked by both military and civilian witnesses on the ground and by personnel in the Elmas Control Tower. The Commander of the Office of Operations of the Air Force Base, Colonel Giomaria, ordered a jet interceptor aircraft to take off and investigate. But the jet was unable to intercept the UFO.

In their official report on the affair, Major Francesco Zoppi, chief pilot of the *Orsa Maggiore* Squadron of the A.L.E. 21st. Helicopter Group, and his co-pilot, Lt. Riccardelli, said that they had been at a distance of less than 1,000 ft. from the luminous circle.

Colonel Mario D'Angelo, Commandant of the Cagliari Air Force Base, made no attempt to deny

what had occurred. Interviewed by the journalist Giuseppe Randazzo, author of the article in *Gente*, the Colonel said: "We are by nature habituated to keeping our feet firmly on the ground and not letting ourselves be impressed by happenings of this sort, but it is undeniable that the episode of October 27 is difficult to explain. I made a personal investigation, and I ascertained that there were definitely no other aircraft in the air in that area at the time. The only conceivable explanation might be that it was a machine that had come from somewhere lying off the island of Sardinia — for example, from an aircraft carrier. Such an aircraft might have been in some sort of difficulty, and might have suddenly lost height without being able to communicate with the Control Tower. And of course it must also be borne in mind that the light often plays funny tricks at sunset."

(This very weak attempt by the Colonel to find some sort of explanation formed part of the official statement which he released immediately after the sighting had occurred. When subsequent enquiries had shown conclusively that the possibility of a plane from an aircraft carrier had to be ruled right out, since no aircraft carrier had been anywhere near that area of the Mediterranean, a report on the affair was forwarded to the Italian Minister of Defence who, it seems, is now to have an official investigation made into the sighting.)

The published statement of the two pilots, Major Zoppi and Lt. Riccardelli, was as follows:—

"We had taken off in the helicopters for a normal training flight when, at a distance of about 300 metres, I saw, in front of me, an extremely bright orange-coloured circle. My first thought was that it was an optical illusion, but as soon as Lt. Riccardelli, who was sitting beside me, also saw it, we at once contacted the Control Tower by radio. They replied that nothing was visible from the ground. Meanwhile, the fiery circle continued to be there, right in front of us, and moving at a speed almost identical with our own. Then I asked the other two helicopters of our squadron whether they could see it.