AL BENDER—and After

by John Lade

THE International Flying Saucer Bureau was first on the world stage (I hold membership card 450 for the year ended July 31, 1954), and there were already branches in Canada, France, New Zealand and Australia when I wrote to Captain E. L. Plunkett in Bristol, its British representative, who replied on July 10, 1953.

"It was started in April, 1952, by Mr. Albert K. Bender at Bridgeport, Conn., U.S.A., and was first brought to my notice by a small paragraph in Tanfield's column in the *Daily Mail* a month or so later. Being extremely interested I wrote Mr. Bender and, following on correspondence, was elected its sole representative in this country. Since then our local membership has grown to 27 persons with a total of some 430 throughout the world. Several local newspapers have been kind enough to feature the Bureau, and also the B.B.C. were interested enough to permit a broadcast about us some months ago in 'The Week in the West.' The majority of the people so far attracted in this country are exceedingly serious minded persons, and are recruited in the main from those interested in electronics, radar, instrumentation of aircraft, engine development engineers, right on down to the ordinary layman like myself who feels positive that there is more behind the Saucer business than we are permitted to know."

Space Review, the official publication of The International Flying Saucer Bureau of U.S.A., was, in my opinion, well produced and edited. The October, 1953, issue (Vol. 2, No. 4) announced that the solution to the mystery of flying saucers had been found, adding: "We would like to print the full story in *Space Review*, but because of the nature of the information we are sorry that we have been advised in the negative."

By a coincidence, the next item on my file is an article in the London *Evening Standard* of November 25, 1953, entitled: "Now . . . BURY these Flying Saucers!" by Sir Harold Spencer Jones, F.R.S., on which the editor commented: "The Astronomer Royal conducts an enquiry into strange objects in the sky and concludes that it is time the question was closed for ever."

Bender said he had been silenced by a visit from three men dressed in black, which had upset and frightened him. Gray Barker, who was Chief of the Department of Investigation of IFSB, tried hard to get him to talk about the visit, which seemed to have happened in early September, 1953, as Barker relates in *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers* (reviewed in our Vol. 2, No. 3, May-June, 1956). He quotes an interview with Bender on October 4 in which Bender said substantially (p. 131): "Just as the three men who paid me a visit were leaving, one of them lingered for a moment and said, 'In our government we have the smartest men in the country. They can't find a defence for it. How can *you* do anything about it?'"

Bender has at last told his story, and it is a surprising one. *Flying Saucers and The Three Men* (Saucerian Books, Clarksburg, West Virginia, U.S.A., $3.95)* should be read as the testimony of an early pioneer, but it is also first-rate space fiction with the advantage that the author believes it to be true. It is true in the sense that it happened to him, of that his record and obvious sincerity leave no doubt; but it is evident that what happened was not real.

The three men came to see him at home on several occasions and only once through the door in the usual way. They were always accompanied by a smell of sulphur worthy of Old Nick himself. However, it is not fair to describe the story in a detached way because it is so well told that, about half-way through the book, I put it down rather than continue reading late at night. I had got into a frame of mind wherein I felt anything might happen, whereas I aimed to go peacefully to bed—and did so. It was only later in the book that reason prevailed and decided that the events could not be real. Indeed, Bender gives a background of his interest in the grotesque and horrific before the subject of flying saucers came into his life.

It is surely more than a coincidence that the "Flatwoods Monster" incident occurred in early September, 1953, that the story of it is used to open *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*, taking precedence over the silencing of Bender (indeed, it is not until page 121 of that book that Bender is quoted as saying "I went into the fantastic and came up with the answer") and that, in the latest book, Bender on asking Barker to accept the position of Chief Investigator writes: "I thought again of his careful investigation of the Flatwoods incident." Bender would have been particularly impressed because Flatwoods is in West Virginia, Barker's home district.

In concluding his testimony Bender states: "I made a promise also to all former I.F.S.B. members that one day I would publish a book and reveal the matters I had found necessary to keep secret." I should like to thank him for having done so and to pay tribute here to his pioneer work. Bender's talent for organisation and publicity opened the way for the good international communication that exists unofficially in reporting flying saucers; the friendly and efficient tone of his *Space Review* set a

* To be published in London early in 1963 by Neville Spearman Ltd.

standard for co-operation between investigators everywhere which has been inherited and enjoyed by FLYING SAUCER REVIEW.

Ghostly spirits are departed from the woods where the pioneer fell. Likewise, in this tale of visitors from a distant planet, who arrived in 1945 to spend some 15 years extracting a trace substance from our seawater in their under-ice Antarctic base, they have left for good. Bender writes: "Since the metal disc vanished and the visitors from space left our planet, flying saucer reports have decreased. . . . Such a visit may not occur again in our lifetime or for many generations to come, and I personally hope that this becomes the case."

FLYING SAUCER REVIEW can and does testify, with each issue, that visits continue and reports are now so frequent that mere sightings, unless there is some unusual feature, are no longer considered news by the Press at large.

The REVIEW began by reporting news, historical records, explanation and speculation; it has passed through a phase lasting several years of reflecting more or less informed opinion about the nature and origin of the phenomena, excluding neither space animals, benevolent guardians, materialisations nor apocalyptic messengers—the forum has been open to all; now, the REVIEW is increasingly able to be scientific in its approach, and this is for two reasons.

On the one hand, Aimé Michel's discovery of orthoteny in the sighting phenomena rules out hallucination, balloons and all other glib explanations of the conventional scientists. Orthoteny is capable of extension and, in cases where sightings are repeated over the same places, it may reveal regular runs of controlled vehicles: the intersection of these runs could even be bases on earth.

On the other hand, the REVIEW is coming into posession of more information than it publishes, whether because this consists of statements lacking proof or because information is given in confidence.

Having been intimately and actively associated with the REVIEW during the last six years, I have had access to much of this information and the following conclusions have been reached:

1. Space travel has existed for ages. Visits to earth may be more frequent today, yet improved communications would suffice to account for the apparent increase in sightings.

2. Visitors appear to be of different types — some as human as we are, others of near human or even weird appearance. They probably belong to many different groups or expeditions and probably come from various planets.

3. Flying saucers are scoutcraft used in the atmosphere and based in tubular or cigar-shaped interplanetary ships. But, there are many types including remote-controlled scanning discs (foo-fighters).

4. Some groups have bases on earth and there is general infiltration to an extent few would believe.

5. The facts are known to a few people in authority in the chief countries of the world, but the majorities would be hard to convince at present. Even if convinced, those in authority would fear panic and loss of control of their populations, giving scope to crime, if the news were officially to be announced.

6. This knowledge is the main reason for the enormous sums now being spent in getting out into space. It is safer to meet out there than it is to admit you have uninvited guests.

7. There is no harm in stating this in FLYING SAUCER REVIEW, which is engaged in preparing public opinion to accept the facts as they will appear. Infinite horizons alone cannot provide escape from war: but, they give perspective and improve one's sense of proportion.

FLASHBACK TO 1948

Scandinavian visitors to this country report that rockets have recently been seen travelling at very high speeds over Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and coastal waters, coming from the direction of Peenemünde, the German experimental centre where V1 flying bombs and V2 rockets were developed. Peenemünde is now in the Russian zone. The missiles are almost invariably seen at 9.30 a.m.

The rockets have been seen at various heights, ranging from just over the tree tops to 25,000 feet. They emit a bluish green flame, but—unlike the V2 rockets—leave no trail in the sky. Their speed is estimated at between two and three kilometres a second, equivalent to about 4,500 to 6,750 m.p.h. Observers say that their trajectory appears to follow the curvature of the earth.

Such missiles have been noticed three times in recent weeks by pilots of D.N.L., the Norwegian Air Lines. One was seen a few days ago off Skagen, the most northerly point of Denmark, by the pilot of a D.N.L. aircraft, Captain A. Hartvedt, president of the Norwegian air-line pilots' association, who during the war served with the Royal Norwegian Air Force from British bases. He and his co-pilot noticed a missile flying at between 20,000 and 22,000 feet. They timed it with a stop-watch; it disappeared over the horizon in four seconds.

From *The Times*, February 25, 1948.

A problem of orthoteny

By Michael Davis

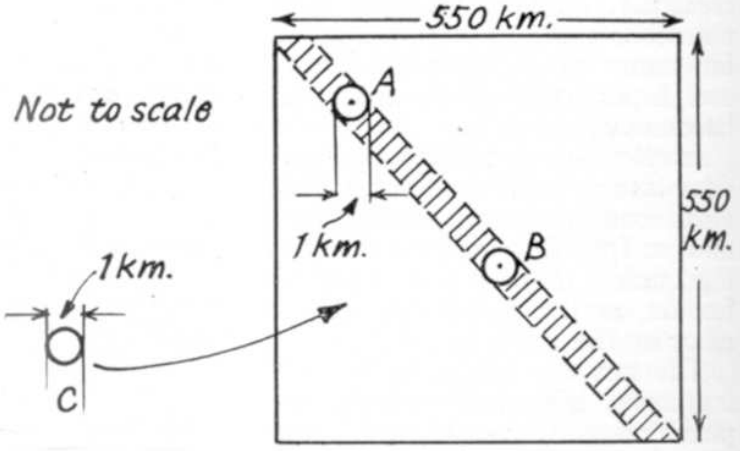
THE article by Jacques Vallée in the March-April issue of the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW on the apparent confirmation of orthoteny in the Algeria-Tunisia area was interesting. However, an obvious question which must have occurred to many readers is: how likely is it that "alignments" similar to the ones noted could be found from a completely *random* set of observations?

The answer to this evidently depends on how stringent are the requirements for "alignment," and on how precisely located are the sightings. These are not stated in the article, but perusal of the list of sightings suggests that most are not located more precisely than to the nearest kilometer. Then, allowing *no* latitude in making the "alignments," it is found that for 30 sightings in the area covered (about 300,000 sq. km.) one might expect about 15 three-point "alignments" and at least one four-point alignment even if the sightings are randomly distributed. Not only this, but one might also expect, on the same basis, about six sightings to be in no "alignment"—i.e., six "virgilians."

These figures are so similar to the actual number of alignments (15) and virgilians (5) quoted that one must conclude there is no evidence in the article that the sightings are other than randomly distributed. The list of sightings is impressive, but does not support the Orthoteny principle. Similar alignments could be drawn from any such set of points on a map. The simple mathematics to support the above are given below:

1. Area involved is about 300,000 sq. km. To simplify problem make this a square of side about 550 km.

2. Consider just three sightings, each with a possible error of location of 1 km., *A*, *B* and *C* below.



A, *B* and *C* will be in alignment if *C* intersects the shaded band across the country (1 km. wide or about 550 km. long)—hence the *centre* of *C* must fall in a band 2 km. wide and 550 or more km. long. If there is random distribution, the chance of this happening is 2/550, i.e. 1 in 275.

3. There are 30 sightings; three sightings can be selected from these 30 in $\frac{30 \times 29 \times 28}{1 \times 2 \times 3}$ ways.

4. Therefore, one might expect about $\frac{30 \times 29 \times 28}{1 \times 2 \times 3} \times \frac{2}{550}$ three-point alignments, i.e., about 15.

5. The chance of a four-point alignment is $\frac{30 \times 29 \times 28 \times 27}{1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4} \times \left(\frac{2}{550}\right)^2$ which is about evens.

6. The chance of any point being "virgilian" will be $1 - \frac{1}{275}^{435} = 0.212$.

[435 is the number of ways 2 points can be selected out of 30, i.e., $\frac{30 \times 29}{1 \times 2}$]

Hence, one might expect about 30×0.212 "virgilians," i.e., about *6*.