

“I WAS TWO METRES FROM THE SIDE OF THE CONTRAPTION!”

By Michel Morel-Seythoux and Joël Mesnard

(Translation from French. G.C.)

We are greatly indebted to Joël Mesnard, Editor of the French UFO journal *Lumières Dans La Nuit*, for this fascinating case, reported by him in *LDLN* No. 305 (September/October 1990). EDITOR.

Cases of the so-called “*Close Encounters of The Third Kind*” (as well as “*Landing Cases*”) have become relatively rare over the past twelve years. They are unquestionably less numerous now than they were in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. However, they have not disappeared totally from the scene. And here is an example that is scarcely five years old.

The existence of this case was discovered by Michel Morel-Seythoux during an *LDLN* enquiry into the events of the evening of November 5, 1990 (massive UFO sightings throughout large areas of France). Subsequently, with the eyewitness as our guide, we made an investigation of the affair, at the site itself, on Sunday, February 24, 1991.

Strangely enough, the happening took place at a place which will bring back memories for the older readers of *LDLN*, for it was at *Ménétrux-en-Joux* (Sometimes written *Ménétru*), near the Hérisson waterfalls in the Jura region (Eastern France). One needs to walk but 20 m. or so from the site of this event, before glimpsing the Valley, in the depths of which can be clearly seen the spot known as Valdessus, and the fish-farm that was the scene of a UFO near-landing at about 4.20 pm. on November 2, 1972. (See the investigation report on this case by Jean Tyrode in *LDLN* No. 124 (April 1973), which was translated by me in 1973 and published as “*UFO With A Taste For Fish*”, in *FSR* 20/6, 1975. EDITOR. *FSR*.)

Monsieur César Locatelli, the protagonist of this story, is now aged 73. He was formerly a woodcutter, and then later a truck-driver. He is also a beekeeper of great experience, and it was on this account that, at about 4.00 a.m. one morning early in June 1986 (possibly June 20), he came to have an extraordinary adventure.

A little while previously, not far from the precipice from which one looks down on Val-Dessus, he had spotted a swarm of wild bees, and he was planning to catch them. Now of course one cannot safely proceed to make a capture in such cases except when the bees are asleep. And that is why, on the morning in question, he had arisen so early.

He had turned off the Ilay-Ménétrux road (D39) at the spot known as “*Tournant de la Dame*”, and was now driving in his 4L through the undergrowth, southwards, towards the Valley.

It is an area that he knows like the back of his hand, and he had the habit, when getting back on to the

road, to drive around a certain bush on his right, thereby avoiding the necessity to make a U-turn. The terrain there is favourable for vehicle manoeuvre, though, properly speaking, there is no actual road. One can scarcely detect traces of the passage of any vehicle there, and anyway one would truly have to be a native of the area to venture there in a car.

So, having gone two or three hundred metres underneath the trees, César Locatelli found himself close to where the swarm of bees was. He did his right turn, to go around the bush, and then it was that, suddenly, he “*discovered the thing*”. “*You’d have said they were Monks....*”

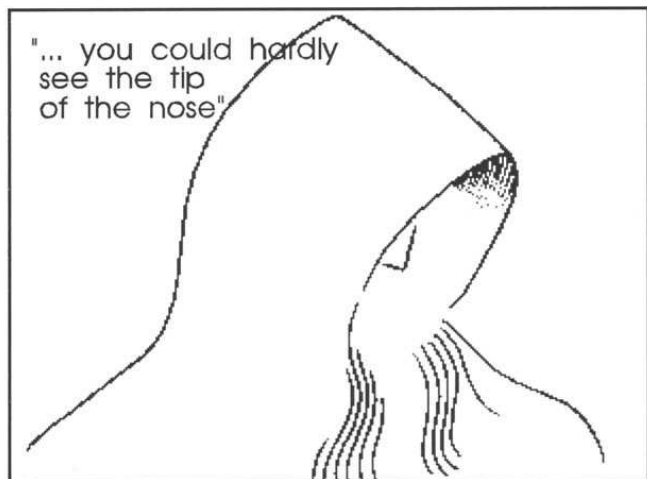
He was already driving dead slowly of course (as it was hardly dawn yet) and then _ he comes to a stop.

Barring the way ahead of him, and standing partly on the ground and partly on a big stone, there was an enormous transparent object lit from within by a bluish light. It was by means of this light that he was able to make out, inside the thing, six personages, of slightly less than normal human height (1 m.50 or 1 m.60). These personages were wearing white tunics reminiscent of the robes of monks, and the cowls covering their heads came down low over the front, hiding their faces. They were all standing around a sort of table (possibly oval) and were clearly bent over it.

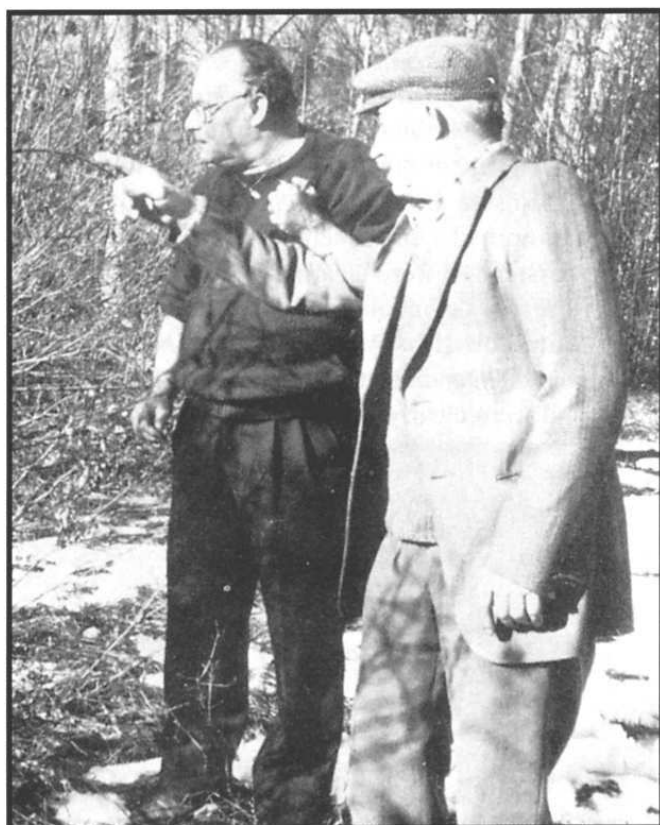


Scared, Locatelli tried to reverse and make a get-away as rapidly as possible. But his engine was dead. He does not know whether this was due to his own emotional state or due to the phenomenon. He was however able to hear “*as it were, a sound like a high-tension line, a bit more high-pitched*”. He switched on the ignition again, and the engine started at once. As he made off, he threw a leftward glance at the thing. One of the beings now seemed to have moved away from the others. He was now bent forward slightly,

and, through the opening in the cowl, *Locatelli glimpsed fair curly hair*. But Locatelli had no mind to tarry. He was only too glad to be able to get away from the spot!



Later, at 9.00 that morning, he came back, but the thing was no longer there. Only the crushed grass, beside the huge stone, testified now to the recent presence of the object.



César Locatelli shows Michel Morel-Seyoux the site of the apparition.

Where is the Stone Now?

We have attempted to secure all possible precise details, but it is clear that, in such an emotional state, the witness did not have the time to memorize many more details than we have here given.

The object could have been 8 or 9 m. in diameter. It seemed to be completely transparent, though with some opaque vertical areas on its surface (see sketch). With its left side resting on the big stone, and its right side on the ground, it was not lying horizon-

tally, but tilted sharply down toward the right.

When he first caught sight of the thing, the distance between it and the front of his car must have been extremely small, for the witness reckons that *the beings were only about 4 m. from him!* So a collision had only just been avoided! But can one speak in such terms?....

If you visualize the object, standing there on the ground before Locatelli arrived, then it must have lit up at the very moment when he caught sight of it, because the scanty vegetation there was quite insufficient to have hidden it.

The six personages do not appear to have reacted in any way to the presence of the witness. They were not looking directly towards him, because their heads were inclined downwards. Making his way rapidly back towards the road, Locatelli was soon out of sight of the phenomenon. He made no attempt to search for the blue light in his driving mirror, but by that time the object was in fact ten metres or so out of line with the axis of his car.

Locatelli himself, who knows the spot well, had noticed the big stone long before that. He reckons that the stone must have weighed at least 1 tons, and he had often felt some astonishment at its *whiteness*. For, unlike the other big stones found around about in that area, it had no moss on it. The last occasion on which he saw the big stone was in September - or possibly October - of 1990.

When he went back there somewhere around mid-November 1990, to his vast astonishment the stone had vanished. And indeed there was no sign that it had ever been there, and the grass was not even crushed! Nor was there any sign that any large vehicle or machine had ever been there. And it isn't all that easy to shift a pebble weighing 1 tons!

Again, on January 10, 1991, César Locatelli returned to the spot. And he at once became unwell, and felt difficulty in breathing.

The Monks of Balerne?

One might perhaps find the name of the spot, "*Le Tournant de la Dame*", somewhat surprising. There's indeed a bend (*tournant*) in the road there. But who is "the Lady" in question?

On the other side of the Valley, it will be noted that there is a *Belvédère de la Dame Blanche*. ("Belvedere, or panoramic viewpoint, of the White Lady"). Who can explain for us the precise origins of these names?

We have learned of the existence in ancient times, of a religious community established in this region: *The Monks of Balerne*. Balerne is near Champagnole, about 12 kms. distant, as the crow flies. The Monastery, recently restored, is now a private property.

"A Big Glass Ball with People inside it...."

During one of our conversations with him, César

César Locatelli shows the spot where he made his sudden turn.



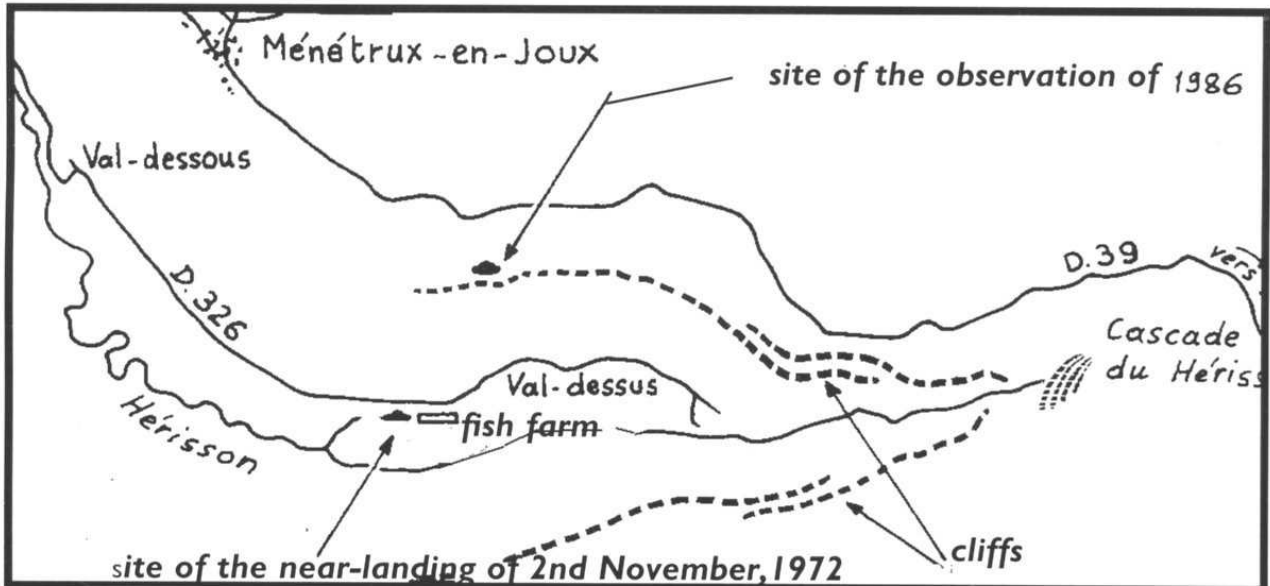
Locatelli described for us one of his early childhood memories. Round about the year 1926, a woodcutter named Filippi, of Italian origin, who lived at La Combe de Morbier, was in the habit of returning every winter to Italy, on account of the snow. On these occasions, he would go to Berbeno, some 30 kms. from Bergamo, in Lombardy, where the inhabitants had the custom of all gathering together in a stable for the evening, in order to save on firewood.

During those evening gatherings, Filippi will-

ingly related that he had seen, near Morbier, "a big glass ball, with people inside it, at pine-tree height" (30 m. from the ground), and that "you couldn't talk with them".

Sixty-five years later, César Locatelli still remembers this story, but he recalls no more precise details than that.

This man Filippi, if alive today, is unquestionably no longer young, since he had a son who - like César Locatelli - was born in 1918.



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FRESH INFORMATION IN VALENTICH DISAPPEARANCE MYSTERY (AUSTRALIA)

By Paul Norman, Vice-President of V.U.F.O.R.S., and FSR
Consultant

From THE AUSTRALIAN UFO BULLETIN (Organ of V.U.F.O.R.S.) March, 1991.

After twelve years since the disappearance of Frederick Valentich* in his encounter with an unidentified flying object over Bass Strait, information from observers who witnessed strange lights or objects or heard strange sounds that night is still being received, and is helping us to reconstruct the UFO activity which occurred just before, during, and after, the greatest mystery in Australian aviation history.

Only seven months ago, three new witnesses came forward to give perhaps the most significant evidence concerning the fatal incident that has been received since the disappearance of the pilot and his 182L Cessna.

This information was learned during a casual conversation between two men who were discussing the subject of UFOs, when one of the men mentioned that *he and four other people (one of them now deceased) saw both an airplane and a "green light" flying just above it. At that time the witnesses did not of course know the identity of the aircraft and the pilot. However, Frederick Valentich was the only pilot flying in that area at the time.*

Two of the witnesses, from Coffs Harbour, New South Wales, were visiting relatives at Apollo Bay, Victoria. While in Coffs Harbour on August 14, 1990, I interviewed two of these witnesses, ladies, both of whom were receptionists for a firm in that town.

Their observations of the Valentich episode had taken place from a hill 2 kms. west of Apollo Bay, where a party of four, including themselves, were rabbit-shooting.

"Green Light" seen above an aircraft

One of the ladies noted a green light to the southwest, and called to the others to look. Her uncle looked up, and saw the lights of an aircraft, and thought she was referring to *those* lights. She said: "No - Look *above* the aircraft!" The uncle then saw the green light flying above. He estimated that both the aircraft and the green light were about "10 or 12 miles" distant.

The second niece told the same story.

On October 23, 1990, I interviewed the uncle, at Apollo Bay. When I asked him why he did not report the sighting, his reply was:-

"There was so much ridicule at that time that nobody would have believed me".

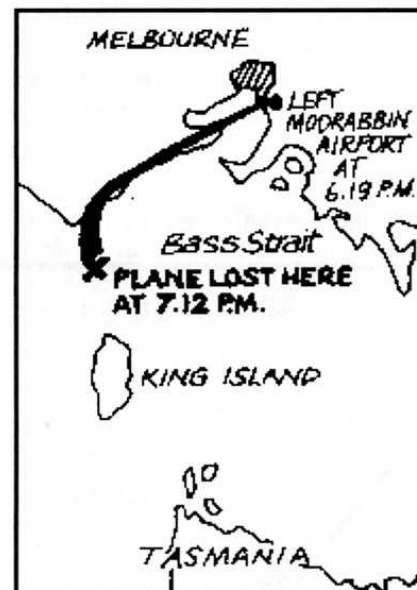
He first mentioned it to his wife, and she

laughed at him. He also told his friends next day at work, after hearing that the aircraft and pilot were missing. They too laughed at him when he said that he had seen the green light.

So he discontinued mention of the green light.

We now know at what stage the aircraft and the green light were observed. The official transcript states:-

1910:07 (7.10 p.m.) "DELTA SIERRA JULIET, MELBOURNE, it seems like it's stationary - what I'm doing right now is orbiting, and the thing is just orbiting on top of me. Also it's got a green light and sort of metallic like. It's all shiny on the outside".



Further Reports from Fishermen

Previously, we did not know that fishermen camped along the Parker River saw the Cessna making its turn, about 5 kms. east of the Cape Otway Lighthouse, in order to pick up its heading for King Island. That was at 1900 hrs. (7.00 p.m.). Prior to this latest information, we already had reports from 20 eyewitnesses who saw an erratic moving green light at about the same time and in the same direction from where Frederick Valentich was reporting his encounter to Melbourne Flight Service.

These reports came from witnesses located at Portsea, Frankston, Brighton Beach, Geelong, and from four motorists travelling along the Great Ocean