

Correspondence is invited from our readers, but they are asked to keep their letters short. Unless letters give the sender's full name and address (not necessarily for publication) they cannot be considered. The Editor would like to remind correspondents that it is not always possible to acknowledge every letter personally so he takes this opportunity of thanking all who write to him.

### Cigar ships

Sir,—I shall be interested to know if you have had any sightings of "cigar-ships" reported over Britain for September 21, 1959. Can any of your readers help me?—A. Rawlinson, Liverpool, 4.

### Light on the Moon

Sir,—The following observation, which I made on the evening of October 13, 1959, may be of interest to you. While observing the Moon with a 36-inch telescope my attention was directed to the crater Aristarchus, then on the terminator, and brilliantly white in colour. At approximately 7 p.m. I was surprised to see a delicate yet bright reddish-amber glow in or near Aristarchus clearly outlined against the white background. It was visible for only a few seconds (how many I cannot say). I did not time it. After it disappeared no trace remained to show it had been there.—E. H. Rowe, Paignton, Devon.

### An incident of 1912

Sir,—You may be interested to know that I have just read a report of a strange aerial phenomenon which I came across in that great book *Across Unknown South America*, by A. H. Savage-Landor. In volume one, on pages 296-297, he recounts a sighting that occurred at a place called by Landor, Camp Areal, near the vast mountain mass called the Paredao Grande, in Matto Grosso State, Brazil, on the nights of May 25-26 and 26-27, 1912:

"At night, while back in camp, we saw to the W.N.W., quite low on the horizon, a brilliant planet

## MAIL BAG

—possibly Venus. The stars and planets appeared always wonderfully bright and extraordinarily large on fine nights. Whether it was an optical illusion or not I do not know, but the phenomenon, which lasted some hours, was seen by all my men, and appeared also when the planet was seen through a powerful hand telescope. It seemed to discharge powerful intermittent flashes, red and greenish, only towards the earth. Those flashes were similar to and more luminous than the tail of a small comet, and of course much shorter—perhaps four or five times the diameter of the planet in their entire length. Whether this phenomenon was due to actual astral disturbance, or to light-signalling to earth or other planets, it would be difficult—in fact, impossible—to ascertain with the means I had at my command. Perhaps it was only optical illusion caused by refraction and deflected rays of vision, owing to the effect upon the atmosphere of the heated rocky mass by our side and under us—such as is the case in effects of mirage. . . . At moments the planet seemed perfectly spherical, with a marvellously definite outline, and then the flashes were shot out especially to the right as one looked at the planet, and downward slightly at an angle, not quite perpendicularly."—Justin B. Delair, Norwood Road, Southall, Middlesex.

### A film mystery

Sir,—At least twelve years ago, and possibly a few more, I saw in the Monseigneur News Cinema in Piccadilly a few minutes of moving film of an object stationary in the sky. It resembled an inverted saucer seen at an angle from below and on top was a projection like a short mast ending in a small round knob—it reminded me of a spar buoy. The

commentator said that this object (it was before the expression "flying saucer" came into use) was filmed above a town in the U.S.A., where it remained motionless for several hours. I do not remember the name of the town, nor the date, and I have recently tried without success to trace the film. Can any of your readers help me?—J. M. L., Yaldham Manor, Kemsing, Kent.

### Saucers and psychism

Sir,—In your last issue you printed an article by Trevor James on Psychism and Saucers. Mr. James put forward two main props to his argument. One is that saucers have been seen to materialise and dematerialise. Might this not be explained by the vessels either approaching or passing the speed of light (when an object becomes invisible) or slowing down below it (when it would become visible again)? His second prop is that saucers have sometimes been seen with the naked eye though not recorded on radar. Couldn't this be explained by anti-radar, a device not unknown on this earth even fifteen years ago? You will notice that I do not claim—as Mr. James does—that my explanations are final. He may be right in all he says, but he should avoid dogmatism unless he *knows*. If he does know why not let us into his secret?—Ernest Wilberforce, Aberfeldy, Perthshire.

### A 1921 rocket?

Sir,—In Richard Bennet's *The Black and Tans*, an excellent account of the troubles in Ireland soon after the 1914-18 war, he refers to the newspapers of that day and how they treated the situation. He says that in February, 1921, all news about Ireland was eclipsed by the headlines which announced that America was about to send a rocket to the moon. Can any of your readers tell me more about this rocket? It does seem surprising that people were even thinking of such possibilities nearly forty years ago.—"Quaestor," Birmingham. (Name and address supplied.)