

# MAIL BAG

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.

## Socorro landing gear

Sir,—A. C. H. Durham has, indeed, caught me in a non-sequitur. If the landing gear of the Socorro craft were rigidly fastened in place, then there is no way to predict the weight distribution on the pads. Without saying so, I was imagining the linkage among the supposed legs to be flexible, in which case the distribution of weight would be automatic.

I have preached so many times to UFO witnesses and analysts about arguing backward from effect to cause that I ought to be embarrassed at such a slip. If I had any principles, I would be. However I trust that none of the readers thought that I was trying to *prove* that my analysis was the only correct one or possible one. Given an end result and plenty of time, one can arrive at the same end result from an endless number of different and even conflicting starting assumptions. The only way to choose one set of assumptions over another is to find some evidence supporting the *assumptions*, not the conclusions. Since I have no evidence about the construction of whatever Zamorra saw, my little exercise in speculation must remain, at best, as food for thought for designers of landing gear.—William T. Powers, 1138 Whitfield Road, Northbrook, Illinois 60062.

## Wartime UFO

Sir,—Your letter in today's *Daily Telegraph* prompts me to pass on a small matter which may just possibly be of interest. In or around the year 1942 my father was staying with relatives at Southsea, Hants. He was out walking one day when, as he described afterwards, he saw a cigar-shaped object travelling at tremendous speed in the area of Hayling Island. What struck him, besides the great speed, was the absolute silence of the object. He was at a loss to account for this

thing. He was convinced he had seen it. In later years I formed the opinion that the object must have been an early experimental jet, but though this would account for the speed (possibly), it would not account for lack of noise.

Recently I have begun to wonder whether in fact he was seeing what people are calling UFOs. It does seem as though his experience fits in with the accounts of other people I have read about in recent years.

Being of a sceptical nature, I have very much reserved my judgment on the UFOs, but reading between the lines, it does seem as though certain authorities, especially in the United States, are giving more consideration to the matter than they are willing to admit publicly. The whole matter is bedevilled by sensationalism. I regret more serious study was not mentioned in the recent article to which you refer in your letter.—"A Clergyman" (name and address supplied).

## Manipulating the news

Sir,—A method of "News Management", as it was first called in Washington, has come to Whitehall in a big way. This is the manipulation of official information given to the public by various Ministries, its major function being to keep the Government's image as bright as possible. First official admission that the men operating this machine are made to issue totally false statements to the public emerged recently from a report given by Mr. Chapman Pincher of the *Daily Express*. He revealed that officials of the Defence Ministry, the Foreign Office and the Post Office were all instructed to issue misleading statements to the newspapers to cover up an activity which the Government did not want exposed. In spite of this exposure, the practice continues. Notwithstanding that this doubtful practice usually relates to the

D-Notice system, which advises newspapers on security matters, it will be apparent to UFO researchers that this could quite well operate with reference to release of information concerning UFOs. Mr. Pincher concluded his article by stating that "the public should be even more concerned about the disinformation (i.e. false statements) being issued for home consumption by Whitehall".

Let us look at the emphatic and official explanations given to the recent wave of saucer activity. Sir Bernard Lovell: "I am convinced that most sightings are merely Venus or manifestations of some other natural phenomena". Note that this is a statement of fact, to be sure and which we fully admit to, but used in this instance as a blanket statement covering the many reports published during this period.

A U.S. Air Force Base reports that refuelling exercises have been held on three nights of the period of the October "flap", entailing "planes flying alongside a powerfully lit giant jet tanker in a cross-shape formation". Not until actually being asked by a *Sunday Express* reporter was it revealed that this refuelling took place between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m., recent sightings being in the early hours.

The Ministry of Defence officially admitted that this explanation could no longer be valid, and stated: "It looks as if there is still no rational explanation for the object reported being seen". According to the Ministry, the R.A.F. last year (1966) investigated 95 sightings. Twenty-nine were satellites, 9 were satellite debris, 10 were balloons, 5 were celestial phenomena, 5 were meteorological phenomena, 17 were aircraft, 15 were miscellaneous and 5 remain classified as *unidentified*. This year they had received a total of 153 sightings, plus, of course, the many more of recent activity.—John D. Llewellyn, Area Investigator—B.U.F.O.R.A., 63 Masons Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire.

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## MISSING MENTIONS

A READER has remarked on similarities between certain passages in Coral and Jim Lorenzen's recent paperback *Flying Saucer Occupants*,\* and passages in Gordon Creighton's article in *The Humanoids*. I can put our reader's mind at rest on that score, for while preparing the book, Mrs. Lorenzen asked for permission to quote certain cases from our special issue—for which publication she had herself written an excellent article. There was never any question of permission being withheld, and it was expected only that if the authors used cases from *The Humanoids*, then due acknowledgements would be accorded. In fact mentions of

FLYING SAUCER REVIEW and its special issue are duly listed in an appendix of recommended reading at the tail end of the book: there is also an occasional reference to the REVIEW in the text.

Nevertheless, it is felt that the authors were cavalier towards Mr. Creighton, for there is neither mention of him, nor is there acknowledgement of the mountain of research he had done, or translations he had made from original source material in Spanish and Portuguese. Furthermore these sources are not mentioned, although they were punctiliously listed in Mr. Creighton's article in *The Humanoids*.

C.B.

\* Signet Books.