

was not an article at all: it was a news item taken from the *Friend* newspaper, published in Bloemfontein, South Africa. The electric brae in Scotland and the explanation of its apparent mystery has been known to us for forty years. Mr. Watson, who affects the scientific approach, must guard against the assumption that an explanation valid in Scotland must also apply to a hill in South Africa: in logic, this is known as the fallacy of mistaken identification. As a controversialist, too, he has been unwary: he has committed himself to an opinion in advance of his facts. Our comment on the item of news was much more guarded, for we said: "If gravity really does work 'backwards' at this spot, then the hill may contain the secret that has so far eluded all researchers." We had already asked our representative to make a thorough investigation and have mentioned the phenomenon of the electric brae and its explanation. We shall inform our readers of the result of our enquiry as a matter of general interest.

The sensational Papuan sighting reported fully in our November/December, 1959, issue calls forth this downright comment: "Has it not occurred to anyone that what Father Gill and his followers were seeing was merely a reflection of their own images in the sky caused by some meteorological quirk? This 'Menzel-type' explanation at least accounts for the arm-waving of the 'spacemen' coinciding almost exactly with that of the people on the ground." This "explanation" certainly did not occur to Father Gill, whose signed account we printed: he, after all, was much nearer the spot than the dogmatic Mr. Watson. If Mr. Watson will now re-read

the account he will see that, at first, *one* mission boy waved and *two* occupants waved back. If the Papuan incident is genuinely reported, the "Menzel-type" explanation is nonsense. Incidentally, the weakness of the Menzellian position is typified by our reader's comment. Speculation as to what things "could be" is boundless and usually, therefore, quite unprofitable, particularly if the one who speculates is distant some thousands of miles from the scene of the alleged happening. Direct evidence must always be preferred, until it is upset by something more weighty than conjecture, particularly when that conjecture is based upon a mis-reading of the original account. It is strange that those who pride themselves on being "hard headed" are often the first to flounder in this way.

The "Life in Space" article meets with criticism because of our remark: "The strongest argument in favour of extra-terrestrial life is the flying saucer." Our critic's comment is: "Somebody has got the cart before the horse!" If we accept the evidence, as we do, that flying saucers exist and are not made on this earth, then we must hold that the horse is firmly in its right place. We think that once again Mr. Watson has misread the article and thinks we wrote "interplanetary" instead of "extra-terrestrial."

Mr. Watson ends his letter by saying that if we do not mend our ways and become more critical our magazine will fold up. Our circulation, as it happens, is steadily increasing and has been for some time, but we shall certainly attempt to become more and more critical, particularly if Mr. Watson can be persuaded to write to us regularly.

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## The latest from Papua

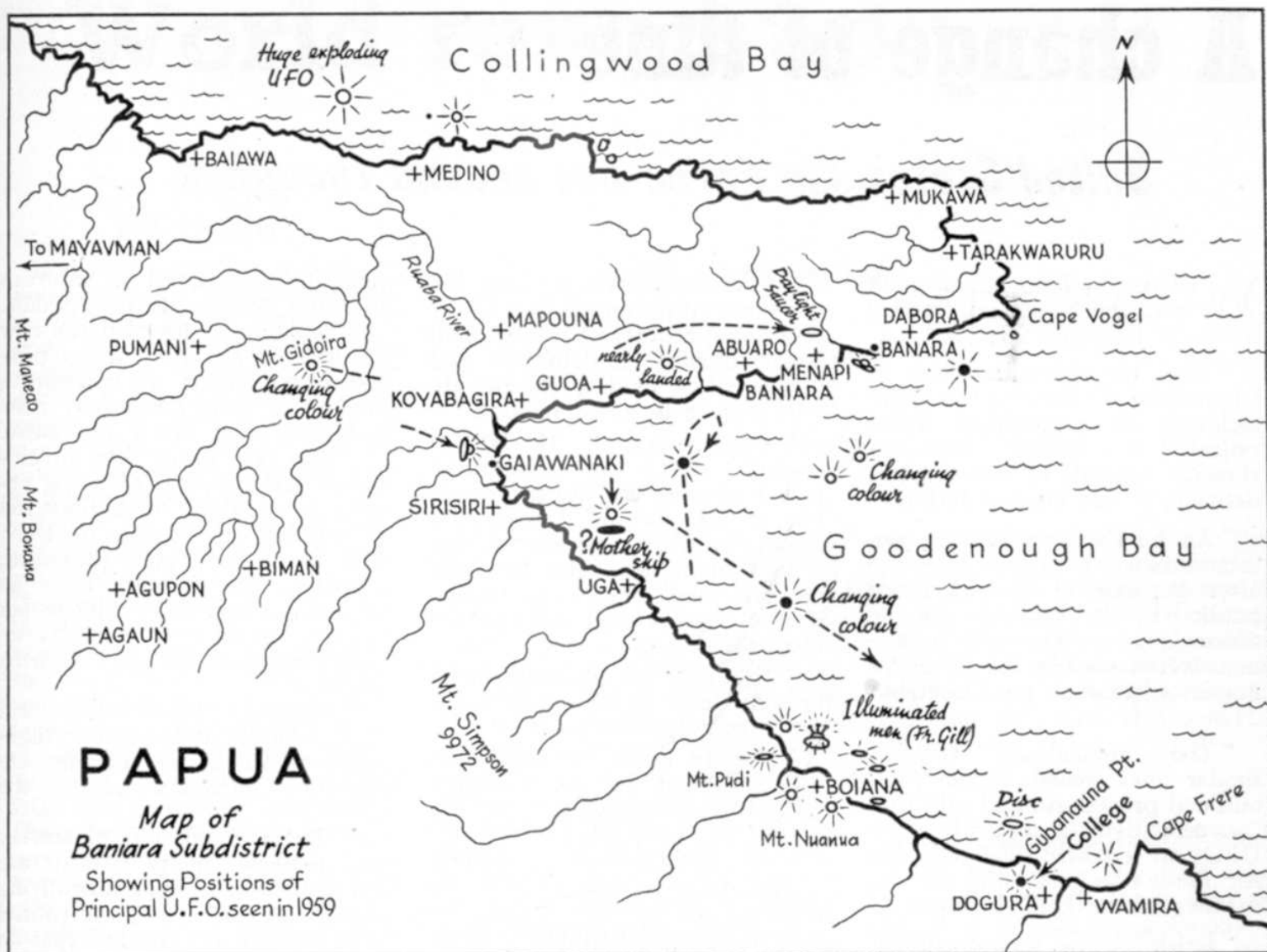
READERS of our November/December, 1959 issue, will remember the report of one of the most amazing of the recent sightings: four men in a saucer were seen at fairly low level by a number of witnesses at Boianai.

Papua and Northern Australia seem to have been the area of greatest concentration just lately, and we are indebted to the Rev. N. E. G. Crutwell, who reported the Boianai incident, for three further sightings. On Friday, October 23, 1959, a very big light came over from the direction of Boianai towards Pumani which lies about five

miles east of Mount Gwoira, a precipitous mountain about 4,500 feet high. The bright light seemed to ascend the mountain until it hovered vertically over the summit. It was observed in this position for about an hour by Micah Aigaba of the Anglican Mission at Pumani. Finally it descended until it seemed almost to touch the mountain peak, but then moved away towards the north. It kept at a level height as it passed over Monari and Medino and then it veered eastwards and circled right round the coastline of the Cape Vogel Peninsula (apparently, though it

could have been much nearer) and finally disappeared in the direction of Boianai, from whence it had first approached the witness.

In appearance it was a dazzlingly bright disc or globe; it was especially bright when on the move. It changed colour continually, the basic colours being green, red and yellow. Parts of the object showed different colours simultaneously—in the words of the witness, "it twinkled." The colours changed about every three minutes. In size it was approximately half the apparent size of a full moon, but



was, of course, far brighter. There were at least three other witnesses and the occurrence caused great excitement. The sighting took place between the hours of ten and eleven in the evening.

One week later, on October 30, the same witness at the same time saw what appeared to be the same object again. It did not come quite so near as on its first appearance. The object, performing in very much the same way as before, approached from the direction of Boianai and then moved northwards, following the coastline. This time it disappeared to the north and was not seen again.

On November 23 yet another sighting occurred over Papua. This time the observers were the Rev. Albert M. Ririka of the

Anglican Mission at Menapi, Japhet Kirakai, Mission Teacher and Cecil, a Native Medical Assistant. The object was first seen by Cecil at about 7.30 p.m. He, and his companions, were on the Mission Station of Koyabagira, one of the outstations of Menapi and about 15 miles south west of there. The station is right on the shore with a clear view to the east and south east across Goodenough Bay to the ranges of Boianai and Dogura.

What was seen was a brilliant illuminated disc or sphere in the sky towards Boianai. It was above the level of the mountains but not very high. Again it appeared to be half the size of a full moon, but much brighter. This time the light was white and did not change. Beneath the bright object, which Cecil described as a "plate," was a dark boat-shaped

object, "like a black cloud." The witnesses watched the round object slowly descend until it slowly disappeared into, or behind, the "black cloud," being gradually eclipsed until it went out. The bright object did not reappear, but the black object was still visible about an hour later.

Our correspondent adds the following remarks about this curious occurrence. The bright object, he points out, could not have been the moon which did not rise that night until midnight or afterwards and which was at that time of the month only a small crescent when it did appear. Although at first the "disc" was giving out a brilliant light so that the "black cloud" stood out against the glow in the sky, when the "disc" passed behind the