

a giant step forward.

For many reasons 1897 is vital to our comprehension of the great UFO riddle. Therefore, we strongly urge readers of the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW to join us in our undertaking. Interested North Americans should study newspaper files of late March, all of April, and early May 1897. West Coast researchers should check the papers of November and December 1896, with spot checks into months before and after.

There is cause to believe as well that 1880, 1883 (in fact the whole 1877-87 period, termed by the late M. K. Jessup "the incredible decade"), 1907-10, and 1913 have something to offer American and Canadian investigators.

Residents of the British Isles might check out the airship flap of 1909, which Fort describes briefly in *Lo!* Ufologists in middle Europe, especially Germany, should study the newspapers and magazines of the late 1850's, and Frenchmen should find the 1860's fertile territory. South Africans should concentrate on 1914.

One last suggestion: Perhaps a Canadian ufologist could go through the Toronto papers of October 5, 1896, to see if there is anything in them of conceivable relevance to our subject. By dropping this specific issue at Dan Gray's feet, the ufonauts may have been trying to tell us something.

20 YEARS BACK

Brinsley le Poer Trench

THE year 1949 was not a vintage one as regards the number of reported sightings. However, two notable incidents occurred and the first of these took place on April 24.

At that time Commander R. B. McLaughlin, a regular Naval officer, was in charge of a team of scientists at White Sands Testing Ground, New Mexico. Actually, during 1948 and 1949 McLaughlin and his team made several UFO sightings, but the April 24, 1949, one is generally considered to be the best one.

At about 10.30 a.m. Commander McLaughlin's team were preparing to send up one of the giant 100-foot diameter Naval Skyhook balloons. The sky was crystal clear. They had already sent aloft a weather balloon to check lower altitude winds. Some of the team under Charles B. Moore, Jnr., were busy tracking this balloon at about 10,000ft. when suddenly one man shouted and drew their attention to another object much higher and away to the left of the balloon.

To their astonishment the team of scientists saw an elliptical-shaped UFO which was whitish-silver in colour. One of them swung the theodolite being used to track the weather balloon round on to the UFO and tracked it for a whole minute. The unknown object finally climbed away very fast and was lost to sight in a matter of seconds.

Subsequently, the scientists estimated that the UFO had been at a height of 56 miles when first spotted and travelling at 7 miles per second, that is at 17,000 miles per hour!

The late Edward J. Ruppelt, former head of Project Blue Book, in his book *The Report on Unidentified*

Flying Objects, related how the March 1950 issue of *True* magazine carried an article called "How Scientists tracked Flying Saucers", written by Commander McLaughlin himself.

"I am convinced," McLaughlin wrote, "that it was a flying saucer, and further, that these discs are spaceships from another world, operated by animate, intelligent beings."

For some extraordinary reason his story had been given full clearance by the military, but according to Ruppelt the material in the article was in direct contradiction to all releases made by them during the previous two years. This is another example of the confusion and conflicting views foisted on the public. Hot news and then cold douches repeated alternately all the time.

The impact of the Commander's article in *True* magazine was formidable and many people were convinced that if scientists were seeing UFOs then there was something very real from outer space watching our planet.

The sequel was that Commander McLaughlin suddenly found himself posted from White Sands to the destroyer *Bristol*. Possibly the United States Navy prefers its regular officers to maintain silence over some matters in the same way that our Royal Navy is traditionally known as the silent service.

SOURCES

The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects by Edward J. Ruppelt (Doubleday) 1956.

The Truth about Flying Saucers by Aimé Michel (Criterion Books) 1956.

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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.

Vallée on Witness Intimidation

Sir,—A recent letter by Janet Gregory (*Mail Bag*, November/December 1968) raises the question of witness intimidation and observes that its scope appears to be limited to the USA: "In my fairly extensive reading, I cannot remember having seen any reference to these gentlemen (the intimidators) other than in the USA." Perhaps the following case is relevant in this context:

On July 24, 1952, a man who was fishing in the Serchio river, near Vico, Italy, at night, saw a disc hovering nearby for ten minutes. From it, he said, hung a hose-like object that plunged into the water. The disc itself measured an estimated 20 metres in diameter, had five "propeller"-like things in the rear and a dome on top. An orange glow could be seen through slits along the deck.

A man wearing a diving helmet looked at the witness through a window, who, before he could get away, received what he described as "an electric shock" as a ray of light hit him. His strength failed, and it was with difficulty that he looked up to observe the departure of the object in an easterly direction.

Six days later the witness was again fishing at the same spot when a tall, thin man, who spoke Italian with a foreign accent ("rather Scandinavian than American") approached him and asked if he had seen airplanes or flying saucers from this particular spot. The witness said no. The man offered him a long, golden-tipped cigarette. The witness began smoking it, and thought he was about to die as his head reeled. . . . The stranger took the cigarette away and threw it into the river, leaving the witness weak and helpless.

You will find this report in the September 25, 1952, issue of *La Nazione*, a Florentine newspaper. Jacques Vallée.

Was Whippingham barley diseased?

Sir,—I would like to be quite sure that the article "Healthier, heavier harvests" by Sir Frederick Bowden in the July 18, 1968, issue of *New Scientist* has been brought to your attention. There is a reference here to wheat laid flat by infection with the eye-spot fungus and an accompanying

photograph. The latter so closely resembles your May/June 1968 cover photograph that I feel this requires further investigation. I have absolutely no information on the character of the disease and I do not even know if it can attack barley as well as wheat. I would be grateful if you would ensure that Mr. L. Cramp has been informed (he has probably seen this already). If he can obtain information on the symptoms of the disease, he is best qualified to compare them with his observations in the Isle of Wight barley fields.

It is worth remarking here that "brute force" is not the only way of creating such havoc to crops as Mr. Cramp observed at Whippingham. These deadly little organisms can be just as effective.

I think it is most important that all your readers are made aware of this fact and so please feel free to publish this letter. I would also appreciate your comments.

I would just like to mention one other completely unrelated fact. There is quite a good article in the German magazine *Stern* (December 1, 1968) entitled "War Gott ein Astronaut?" I haven't time at the moment to send you a translation, but perhaps Mr. Creighton will supply you with one. M. Eastwood, B.Sc., Turnham Green, London W.4, November 30, 1968.

The disappearing scarecrow

Sir,—After reading the article *Encounter with "Devils"* (FSR, September/October 1968) I was persuaded by my family to re-tell my meeting with similar creatures.

It must be almost forty years ago, as a little girl of six, I was often taken by my father for a walk in the fields along Anstey Lane, Leicester. On one such occasion, being a hot summer's day, my father settled down to have a sleep while I read a book.

I suddenly became aware of something watching me, and saw what I took at first to be a scarecrow. It looked like a scarecrow because of its odd shape, and the fact that it was all in black and did not appear to have any face, although it had a large head. I was some distance from it, so it may well have had features which I could not discern, but I did notice that its arms were long and dangling. Being interested in my book, I dismissed it as being just

a scarecrow and continued to read.

However, I could still feel it watching me, and on looking up again I saw by the side of it what I at first took to be a hut. As the hut had not been there before, I became frightened and tried to wake my father. When I eventually woke him the scarecrow and the hut had disappeared. For years afterwards the tale of the disappearing scarecrow has always been a big joke with my family.

My son, who is familiar with my scarecrow story, on looking through the September/October edition of *Flying Saucer Review* came to me and said: "Look, mummy, isn't this what you saw?" The sphere and the black figure were absolutely identical to my scarecrow and the hut. My black figure must have been about five feet in height and reminded me of an octopus, but with fewer legs. I remember thinking at the time what a funny hut it was because it was like a large globe on legs.

Pauline Berger, Leicester, December 1, 1968 (per Dr. B. E. Finch).

UFOs and fault lines

Sir,—I was most interested to read the articles "UFOs and Fault Lines" by F. Lagarde and "UFOs, Earthquakes and Volcanoes" by Gordon Creighton, both in the July/August edition of *Flying Saucer Review*. It seems that there may be an interesting link with the discovery of "orthoteny".

Admitting the fact that UFO sightings on a particular day can be aligned, I understand that in noting the exact location of such reports and in discovering an alignment, the *direction* in which the UFO was travelling at the time of the sighting is apparently irrelevant. This is a rather surprising fact—that whether the UFO is seen travelling along what is subsequently found to be an orthoteny, or at an angle to it, the object is only reported from a location which places it exactly on the alignment.

F. Lagarde, in his article, shows that there is a statistical relationship between UFO reports and fault lines; he notes that faults appear to be the scenes of delicate electrical or magnetic effects, while they also seem to be a favourite spot for thunderbolts during storms. Gordon Creighton also draws our attention to the fact that earthquakes are often preceded or accompanied by strange luminous objects in

the sky. In my own locality, it is recorded in a local newspaper that a strong earth tremor which shook buildings in Guernsey on December 22, 1843, was preceded by a very remarkable meteor and that the appearance of the sky was also very unusual.

The possible connection between UFOs and fault lines now becomes apparent. Is it possible that the reason why a UFO travelling across an orthoteny is only reported from a point exactly on the alignment is because it is only visible or luminous at that point? Could the factors which seem to produce luminous effects during seismic activity also induce luminosity of a UFO in the immediate vicinity of a fault line with its associated electro/magnetic characteristics? If this is correct, the sudden appearance or disappearance of UFOs, repeated observations over a certain locality, and the fact that UFOs cannot usually be tracked from point to point across country, could each be explained if a UFO, normally travelling too high to be observed, becomes luminous over certain points on the earth's surface. It remains to be seen whether orthoteny do, in fact, coincide with fault lines.

G. A. Falla, "St. Brendan's," King's Road, St. Peter Port, Guernsey, August 27, 1968.

Stranger on the street

Sir,—Your article on "Strangers About the House" in FSR of September/October 1968, and especially Mrs. B's story, rang a bell with me. The following paragraph from your article sounded familiar. I quote:

"Her uninvited guest, quite solid in appearance, would simply stand looking at her, never attempting to communicate or move. Mrs. B was unable to detect from his facial expression whether he was angry, surprised or just plain bored. *He never smiled . . .*" (my italics).

I suddenly remembered an experience I had back in 1953. At that time I had never heard of flying saucers or of visitors from elsewhere, nor did I know that there was somebody by the name of George Adamski.

It was a fine summer day in June, I think, about noon, and as I had plenty of time I leisurely did some window-shopping in the most popular shopping-street in Vienna, the Mariahilferstrasse. While looking into one window I noticed with the corner of my eye somebody standing in the doorway beside the window, facing me and the street. I looked and my eyes met those of a good-looking, tall, well-dressed young man. He did not stare at me, but looked quickly away. I hardly took any notice and walked on to one of the next windows. After a moment my

eyes were again drawn to the door next to the window and there was the same man, looking straight into my eyes with a very concentrated expression on his serious face. There was not the faintest trace of a smile, neither was there anything repulsive in his look. I began to wonder if he knew me; but if he did, then why didn't he smile? I'd never before met a person who looked at me with such an expression on his face.

Next I had to cross a street. There was a bustling crowd afoot. We had to wait for the traffic to pass. There he was again, standing on the opposite side, looking at me. When I moved with the crowd across the street he did not move. He stood like a rock in a surging sea, one head taller than everybody else. He did not move when I had to pass close by, so that I couldn't help brushing him with my arm. Then I reached my tram-stop where again I had to wait in a crowd. I turned round and met his eyes—he was standing behind me! He did not take the slightest interest in what was going on around him. When he turned his eyes away, he looked with a far away, detached look, across the heads and the turmoil as if nothing was there around him. And indeed, no one seemed to take any notice of him either.

At this point I have to explain something: at that time Austria was under occupation and in Vienna we had four occupying powers. The power which was stationed in the district I lived in was well known for kidnapping people. This happened very frequently. Not knowing anything about space-people, and not having any explanation for the strange behaviour of that man, I remembered that kidnapping business and I confess that I began to get worried. I resolved to go straight to the police should he continue to follow me. When I looked round he was gone and I did not see him again.

The thing that really puzzled me was the fact that I never saw that man move

one muscle, except for his eyes. I never saw him make one step; he always stood still while I passed him by, yet wherever I stopped there he was. Isn't there a similarity to Mrs. B's visitor? But there is a difference: this man in Vienna with his concentrated look gave me the impression that he had a purpose, that he wanted to convey something.

(Mrs.) Dora Bauer, Karolinengasse 14/14, A-1040 Wien IV, Austria, October 24, 1968.

The Fogl Photograph

Sir,—Reference an observation on page 35 of the July/August 1968 issue of the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW on the subject of the Fogl photograph. In the period 1964-1966, BUFORA Committee members "knew" the photograph to be a fake only on the strength of an allegation by a colleague that Mr. Fogl had so informed him. The colleague in question—now no longer on the National Executive Committee of BUFORA—declined to permit us to act on his statement, of which we held no documentary proof at all.

I wrote to the Hon. Brinsley Le Poer Trench and to you on the matter in the spring or summer of 1966. In the autumn 1966 issue of "BUFORA Journal", believing wrongly that documentary evidence had at last reached our files, I inserted a paragraph exposing the fake. The paragraph was written BEFORE I saw your exposé in the September/October 1966 issue of the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW.

It may be said that BUFORA's Committee ought to have followed up the "tip" it received with independent enquiries into the authenticity of the Fogl photograph. However, the entire field of UFO photography is riddled with fakery and if we followed up all such verbal allegations we should have time for nothing else.

J. Cleary - Baker, Ph.D., Editor, BUFORA Journal, 3 Devenish Road, Weeke, Winchester, August 12, 1968.

[I regret the delay in publishing this letter, due to misfiling—EDITOR.]

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