

DO AIRPORTS ATTRACT UFOs?

Jenny Randles

IN the Spring of 1978 FSR received a very large batch of reports from the *Daily Express* UFO bureau. Some of these were followed up by UFOIN investigators, and the cases have appeared in these pages. However, there were also stories — some most intriguing ones — that were impossible to pursue for various reasons. In this instance, for example, the witness did not wish communication or investigation because of fears that her husband, a devout UFO sceptic, might consider her unbalanced.

I refer to the letter from this lady because it appears to be of considerable interest, and also because it closely relates to the article by John Judge in FSR Vol. 24, No. 6, regarding sightings in the vicinity of Gatwick Airport, Sussex. Our astute witness also poses an interesting question — used as the title of this piece — and suggests that UFO researchers look into the density of UFO phenomena reports in relation to their proximity to airports.¹

Unfortunately we shall have to use the pseudonym “Amy” for the witness.

Amy lives in Pound Hill, near Crawley, Sussex, which, readers will recall, features quite prominently in the cases referred to by John Judge. Her second sighting took place from there, but for an interesting earlier confrontation with the phenomenon, we must return to the days when Amy lived in South West London and used to travel on the 77a bus between Wandsworth and Wimbledon.

It was early Spring 1947, just prior to the era of the “Flying Saucers.” Amy describes the day as “storm and sunshine,” and as she travelled along on the top deck of the ‘bus she watched dark clouds scudding about with gaps of blueness between them. The time was 4.30 p.m. and dusk was already beginning to approach.*

Amy has always been an avid reader, but something made her look up from her book. She still does not know what caused that — perhaps some kind of acute “feeling.” To her right she saw a rounded disc that was shining silver and hovering, quite still, between two clouds. She attracted the attention of several other passengers, and they stared and watched for some minutes. Various theories were cast about, with one man saying it was a weather balloon. In answer to that another woman pointed out the clear rotation that they all observed, and the balloon idea was discarded. Then suddenly the object moved. In a blink of an eye it had streaked away to their right and vanished behind a cloud. It did not reappear. Discussion continued for a few moments, but presently, the bus arrived at Amy’s destination and she had to get off.

Apparently there were a large number of reports of this object, followed by the inevitable “official statement.” The object seen was a “weather balloon.” Amy says, and

I quote: “I am prepared to swear, all these years later, it was no meteorological balloon.” She has good reason to be positive, as you will see later. Amy agrees this is “. . . hardly good evidence” but thinks that it might be of value as it occurred before the first rush of UFO sightings began.

We now have a jump of more than thirty years to November 1977. This was the second time that Amy observed a UFO. As she says: “. . . anyone who lives near an airport is well used to just about every type of air transport. . . we are used to helicopters hovering, circling planes, even ‘disaster rehearsals’ complete with flares.” She says this to emphasise that she is accustomed to seeing strange things in the sky, and when something attracts her attention she knows it has to be unusual (she comments that her ears are so attuned to the sounds that she is able to tell — just from the noise — which particular type of aircraft has flown over).

It was a cold and frosty night, and Amy was drawing the curtains of a window that faces southwards. Once again something simply made her stare out into the sky, and she saw, close together but high up, two red spheres side by side. Their brilliance and their incandescent orange/red colour made them stand out. She made an estimate of altitude at 35,000 feet (for which it seems she is well qualified). Truly puzzled she called her husband over and he, and their eldest son, watched the objects for more than half an hour. She knew it was no astronomical phenomenon because there was absolutely no movement. The objects eventually disappeared by moving directly away in a straight line and merging into one light before vanishing.

As an explanation for “compulsion to look at the sky” Amy notes that she has a degree of ESP, although she tries to force this into the background because “life has no use or time for it.” As for her ability to make accurate comments about aerial phenomena it should be mentioned that formerly Amy was an air traffic radar controller. As she says, “. . . with all those blips on the screens and interference from TV sets and radios that we sometimes get, it would be an excellent cover (to be near airports), with interesting ‘data fields’ as a bonus.” Witnesses, too, would probably pass them off as “connected with the airport.”

Amy believes that the UFOs which she and others have seen are extraterrestrial, and to close I will quote her feelings about such “aliens”. . . “I hope to God they are an improvement on this world, and that humans are not His best efforts!” I think, be we ETH supporter or not, we would say ‘hear hear’ to that!

Note

¹ While the idea has interesting merits, I imagine that it would be very difficult to compensate for the obvious fact that misidentifications of phenomena connected with the airport would increase with closer proximity to it. Hence, strictly speaking, the number of “UFO” reports would increase.

**[This would suggest late February rather than Spring, which in 1947 saw Britain in the grip of an icy winter right through to mid-March; a bleak time of fuel crises and rationing — EDITOR]*

POSTSCRIPT TO NEW ELGIN

Patricia Donaldson

IN FSR Vol. 23, No. 4 there was an account by Jenny Randles of an investigation conducted by herself and Bryan Hartley into a report of a landed UFO and entities seen by two girls in the small town of New Elgin, Morayshire, Scotland on May 18, 1977. At the time UFOIN had only just commenced operations, and its membership in Scotland was almost non-existent. The investigation was, therefore, conducted by the unsatisfactory methods of telephone and postal communication.

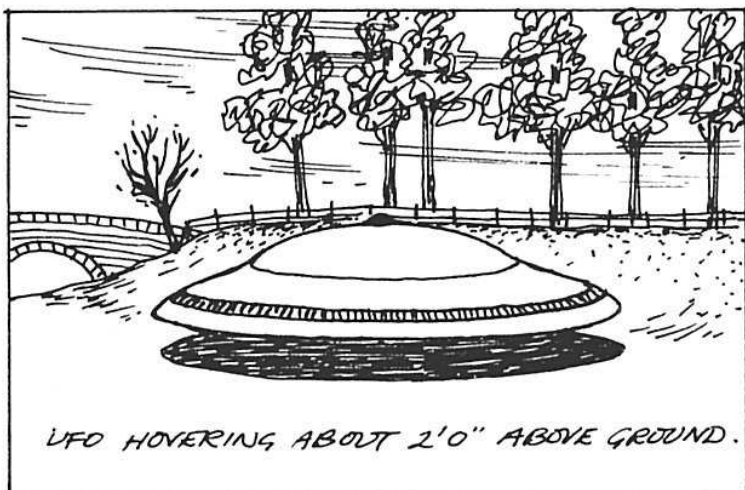
However, early in 1979 I joined UFOIN and was asked to visit the area to make a full report for the UFOIN files. Some points of interest are noted here.

Firstly, I was struck by the way that the story was described to me almost in the precise terms that it had been given to the previous investigators. I was able to add little to the detail and found only one or two small discrepancies. It should be said that the participants had not seen the issue of FSR which carried the report until, after my interview, they were given one.

As the photograph indicates the actual site is somewhat different from the sketch drawing with the original report. It consists, in fact, of rather overgrown and bumpy terrain. It lies behind a pub, the Coter House, and consists of an old disused railway track with a small bridge. A grass bank surrounds the heavily overgrown depression where the tracks once were. This is three or four feet wide on either side. There are just a few trees surrounding the site and none blocked the view that the girls had of the landed object. The fence was in fact behind the railway and the object. The area is very quiet and almost traffic-free.

When the object landed, it straddled the depression of the line, resting on the grass bank on either side. When it took off it left to the witnesses' right (and not left as stated in the original article).

The only major difference in testimony concerns the entity seen. Height was about six feet and the suit was a



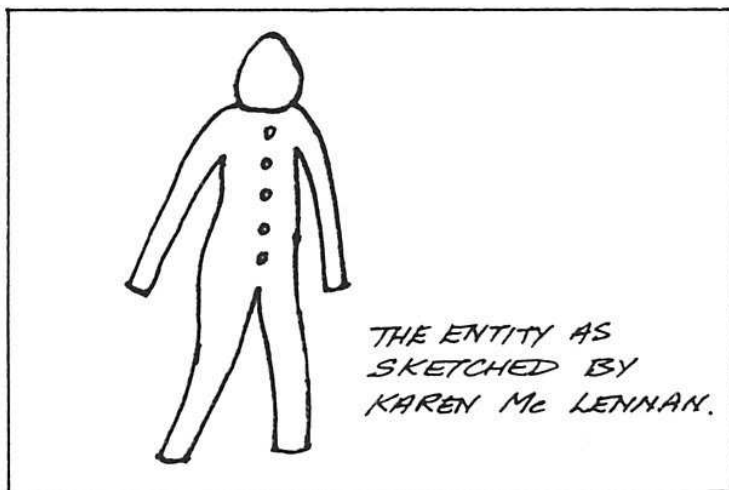
UFO HOVERING ABOUT 2'0" ABOVE GROUND.

Sketch by author of UFO at landing site.



New Elgin landing site — mid foreground — with fence and trees in background.

shiny silver all over. No facial features were observed but a line of silvery buttons down the middle were seen. The arms were now stated to be disproportionately *long* where previously they were said to be short. This latter claim was also made to *The Sun* newspaper in March 1978 (less than a year after the event), and on *Radio Highland* a few months later.



There are a few other points to note. The police left the case unsolved, and the samples of burnt leaves that were collected and sent to UFOIN never arrived. This is apparently the second major trace data that vanished in