

LUMINOUS "SNAILS" NEAR TRAUNSTEIN, AUSTRIA

Ernst Berger

A report on a field investigation conducted by the author and Rudolf K. Pavlik of Vienna

TRAUNSTEIN, which is in the Zwettl district, is a small rural community on a range of hills overlooking the "Highlands of Ottenschlag," a southern part of the "Waldviertel Highlands" in the north west corner of Lower Austria. Nine hundred and eleven metres above the Adriatic Sea level, Traunstein is surrounded by coniferous forests, lakes, and open fields. The region is littered with boulders, the so-called "Wackelsteine," which are large, roundish, weather-worn rocks typical of the Waldviertel landscape. Geologically it belongs to the Austrian part of the Bohemian Massif, an uplifted neplain made up of strongly metamorphosed schists. The village of Traunstein is situated 8 kms NE of Mt. Weinsberg (1039 metres high), which is covered by the Weinsberger Woods, a wild and sparsely populated area 9 kms West of Ottenschlag and 25 kms SSW of the Allentsteig military training ground near Zwettl (chief city) by the River Kamp, a deserted and cold region known as one of Austria's "zero degree poles." Industrial underdevelopment, "landflight" and a low population density in the Zwettl district make the Traunstein sightings a good example for Vallée's "first negative law," though no landing was observed.

Johann Pritz (age 21), the main witness of our case, is a compositor at a printing works at Zwettl. His brother Gerhard is a skilled locksmith of 16 years. Both are intelligent country lads with good eyesight, somewhat taciturn, but perfectly reliable in my opinion. They live with their mother in a small farmhouse between two groups of "Wackelsteine" known as the *Wachtstein* and the *Franzosenstein*, and near to a double bend in the minor road leading out of the western side of Traunstein, towards Schoenbach, the next village.

The first sighting

According to Vienna's Central Meteorological Station, "Hohe Warte," a stable European high pressure system had full influence on Austrian weather throughout the night of October 28/29, 1973. The local weather report from the Zwettl station reads: "28.10; 19 hrs - no clouds, calm, -2°, no precipitation. 29.10; 07 hrs - clouds 1/8 calm, -6°, no precipitation, minimum nighttime temperature -7°."

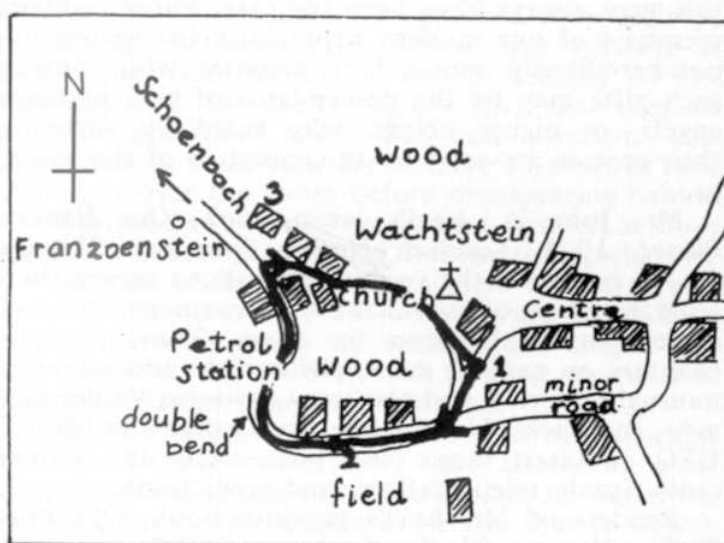
It was a cold, starry night with excellent visibility, no moon after midnight, and only Mars and

Jupiter in the sky. Johann Pritz went to bed at 8.00 p.m. Central European Time and slept well until 0.30 a.m. on Monday, October 29, when he started up. His friend Karl Fichtinger was knocking at the bedroom window.

"He wanted me to come out and look at an extraordinary thing in the southern sky. I dressed, went outside, and there it was. You might have taken it for a star at first glance, but watching it more carefully you would see it was much nearer, giving off a different light and strange periodical light 'signals.' I got my 8 x 40 binoculars and aimed them at the 'star' over the woods." It was some kind of luminous globe with fuzzy edges, hanging motionless at 9° elevation. The yellow-orange light looked calm and steady, not dazzling, but "restful to the eyes."

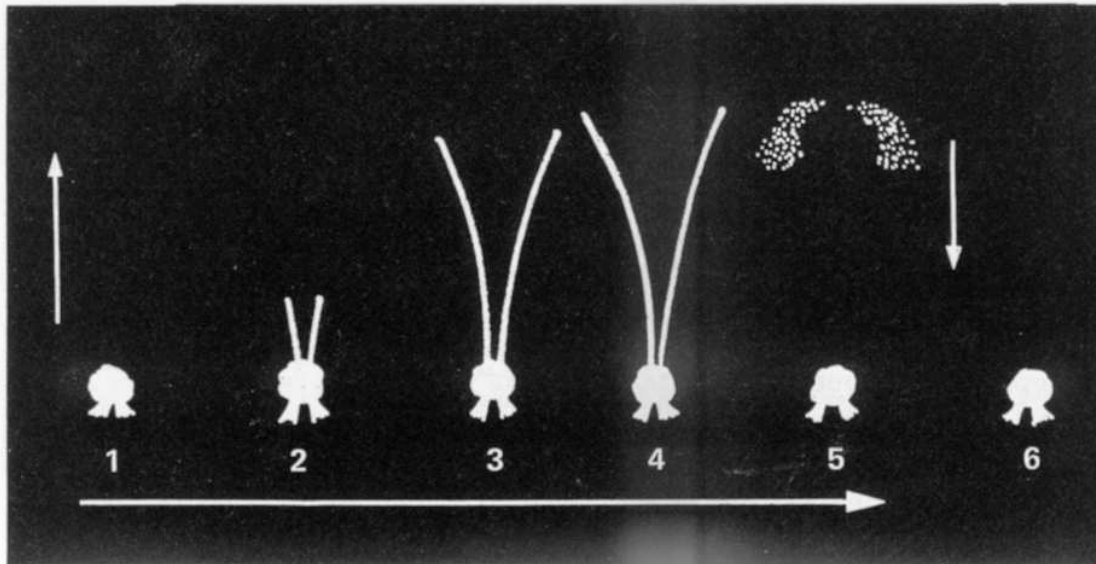
Said Pritz: "The whole surface was shining brightly, you could hardly see its shape. And it was artificial light, bright enough to catch the eye at once. But the striking detail was the signal."

The so-called signal consisted of two beams of curved light that were slowly projected upwards from the main body. It was hard for Johann Pritz to describe the details. "Well..." he said, "it looked



Map of Traunstein

1. Prospect Point
 2. Observation Point 17.11.73
 3. Pritz's House
- ➔ route of October 29



"Signal"
Phases 1 – 6

At phase 4, the tips of the "feelers" turned green. At phase 5, a green mist fell sideways, then the rays were gone.

like a pair of snail feelers. The two orange-yellow beams came out — they were light, *but crept up slowly* — and were projected upwards and bent outwards high up. Then they stopped moving, the two tips turned faint green, a green mist fell down sideways, then the rays were gone. There followed a delay of about 5 seconds and then the game started again — extending, stopping, turning green, and switching off, periodically."

Pritz said the "feelers" were about 4 or 5 times the diameter of the fuzzy globe, but a goniometric test on the site later revealed he was rather underestimating, the length being 6 to 7 diameters. And they were not only high, but perfectly clear, "...like two lines drawn with a piece of chalk, with only the dark sky in between them."

The light, it seemed, wasn't solid, but it behaved like a solid. Herr Pritz had never seen anything like it before.

In our investigation I asked him to re-live both phases of interest in "real time," first a bit too slowly, then a bit too quickly, and used my stopwatch for the test. We got 7 — 10 seconds for a complete "extension" and the tips turned yellow-green 2 or 3 seconds before "switch-off." The second test, for the dark phase, showed a greater variance; the beams reappeared after 2 to 5 seconds. The maximum duration for a full period would be 15 seconds, which means at least four "signals" per minute. Pritz also remembered that there were short beams shining constantly downwards from the bottom of the object, and a slight shift of colours towards green and red on the edges (compare with second sighting), but it was a minor effect, and much more exposed to subjective errors.

Johann Pritz had no explanation for what he was seeing. It was not a conventional aircraft, or a satellite, and the idea of a star with "feelers" would be hard to believe. They saw lots of shooting stars that night (orionids and taurids — EB), but they could tell the difference. And temperatures were low in the open; "we wouldn't stay out there for nothing," they added.

It turned out that Fichtinger told Pritz that he had first seen the object around about 11.30 p.m.

on Sunday. He had also pointed it out to a couple of neighbours.

The two friends decided to continue their watch. They went up to Wachtstein, passed the Catholic Church at Traunstein, and stopped at a prospect-point on the steep access road leading to the centre of Traunstein. From this point there is a wide view over the heavily wooded highlands to the south and east. Some minutes later they strolled down the access road, reached the minor road, walked around the double bend approaching the Pritz house and up to Wachtstein again. "We kept up that route for the rest of the night, and tried to oversee what was going on up there. And there certainly was something going on!"

At about 2.00 a.m. the object to the south went into operation. Pritz watched it carefully: "Suddenly a red dot...well...detached itself from the bottom of the globe moved away to the east at breakneck speed. I don't think an aircraft would fly as fast." (We saw an Austrian military jet manoeuvring to the south in full daylight at the time of our investigation, so Herr Pritz knew what he was saying.) He continued: "I kept my eyes glued to it, but suddenly it was gone. The red light went out. Just a few moments later the light flashed up again. It had changed to a bright yellow-orange, like the object to the south, and it started to give off the same strange signals. It really puzzled me."

The trajectory was interesting: the red dot first did a vertical descent of 4 or 5 degrees, then it raced off towards Ottenschlag on a horizontal course, stopped, disappeared, a fuzzy globe reappearing which gave off the first "signals" and then descended until it reached its final hovering point at 4 or 5 degrees elevation in the east. The red dot had no definite shape; it looked like an aircraft running light, but steadily shone the colour of carmine, as our colour test revealed later.

Pritz and Fichtinger arrived at the prospect-point. Two objects hovering in the sky now, the possible "mother ship" in the south (Pritz wasn't sure whether the red dot came out of it, or from behind), and the "missile" over the Ottenschlag region to the east. Both objects continued their

monotonous signals, so the friends looked away, and around the heavens. When they turned to the west they got their next shock on seeing a new, huge object.

The access road runs down towards the south west. The first house to the right after passing the prospect-point is a two-storied country house with two pylons carrying electric cables over the rooftop. A dark object was hovering in the direction over pylon one. I asked Pritz to sketch it, and this he did with some hesitation: "I'm no artist, you see. It was a flattened structure with what looked like an armoured turret of a tank on top, but without a gun-barrel."

He was drawing a classical domed disc.

"It was very near and, you know, I wasn't drunk. I had gone to bed at 8.00 p.m. We couldn't believe our eyes any longer, and I asked Karl: 'What are you seeing?' And he told me, to which I could reply, yes, that's it, you see what I see. It must be true."

Quite a spectacular sight for two country lads who have never read a book on the topic, and have seen only a few sketchy press reports about it. The disc with its clearly outlined upper curvature plus dome, was hanging in the WSW at 17° elevation ($+2^\circ$), enveloped in a diffuse, yellowish light, which seemed to come from behind. Its lower line was curved rather than straight, and rather indistinct as the yellowish light reached peak brilliance there. The surface had a violet-black colour, and it "surely was solid material, and nothing fuzzy like the two others." But that wasn't all: from the dark cupola

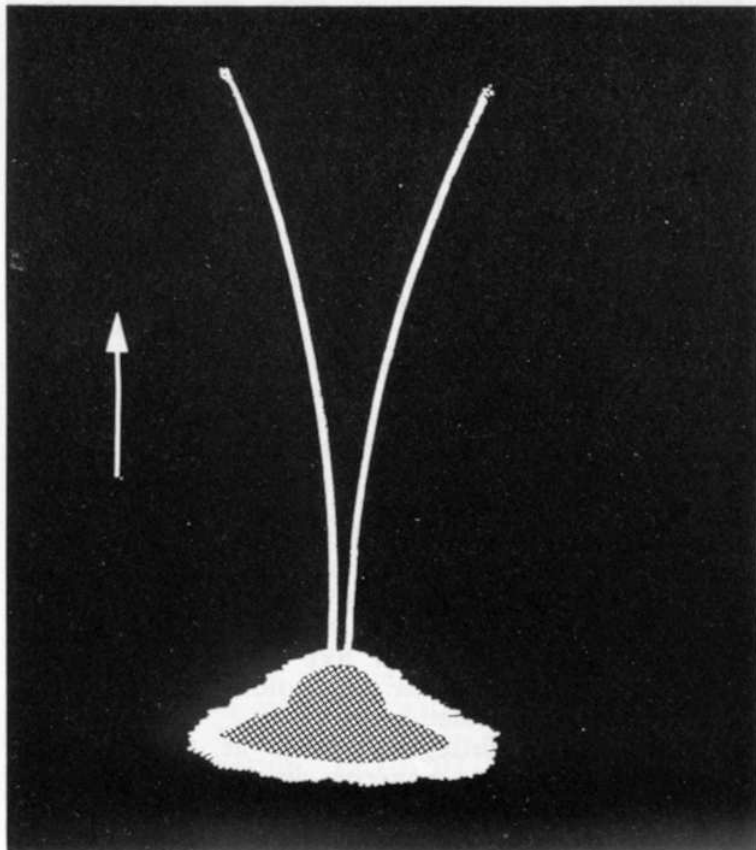
two "feelers" of curved light went up into the night sky, achieved their green tips, vanished, and came out again at a stretch.

Said Pritz: "It was at that moment that I thought: 'That is a controlled operation! They're emitting the same light signals, and belong together.'"

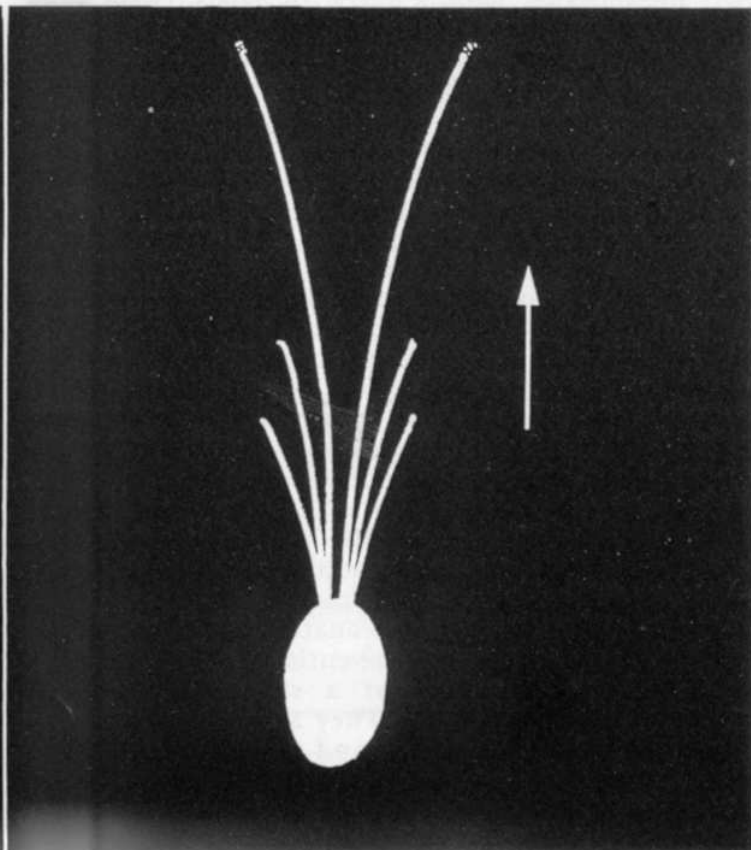
He had no idea how far away the disc was, but it seemed quite close at hand. His goniometric test results gave us a diameter of 35 metres for the maximum distance, i.e. 2 kilometres. "I was glad to have waited such a long time. It was quite impressive and we didn't pay much attention to the eastern object any more."

Consequently they failed to see the next manoeuvre there. Turning around after a while, Pritz and Fichtinger spotted three smaller globes near the "missile," one to the left and two to the right, making up a "chain" with regular intervals. "And they were all giving off the same signals...in the same time." This was the full operation now: six objects were in the sky, the domed disc to the WSW, the "mother ship" to the SSE, the "missile" to the East with the three newcomers around it. All were completely noiseless, and were a remarkable sight, "...like bright mercury vapour street lamps. You would pass a house, or a group of trees, and lose sight of them, but find them again at a glance. It looked as if they were all standing at the same altitude, but only in the southern hemisphere. We searched the northern sky, but found nothing."

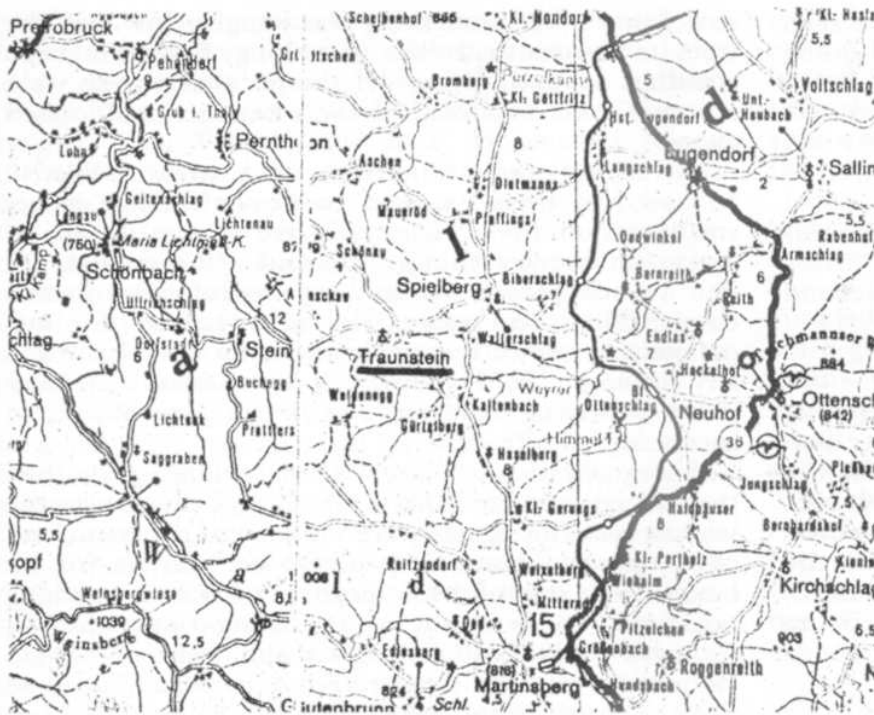
I examined his idea afterwards, and must say it wasn't irrational. Suppose the disc hovered 2 kms



Domed disc – (Phase 4)



Object seen on November 17 – first variation



Map of the Traunstein locality south of Zwettl

away at 500 metres altitude (=17°) and the other objects kept the same level, the “missile” would be 6 kms away, right over the Zwettl – Martinsberg railway line and near the Ottenschlag crossing, whereas the “mother ship” would be at 3 kms distance.

It was nearly 3.00 a.m. when a solitary car came down the road. It did not stop, but kept to a certain route, just like the two friends were doing. “He was driving the same stretch over and again, and we couldn’t see the reason why.” Somewhat later two other persons approached. Said Pritz: “We tried to show them what was going on, but they were pretty blue, and called us ‘nuts’.” And the two “nuts” remained the only witnesses, no matter how hard they tried to draw the attention of other people. “We knocked at doors trying to wake someone up, but nobody cared. Maybe they took us for drunkards or burglars. Anyway, a highland village isn’t the safest of spots at 3.00 a.m. so finally we gave up.”

The six objects “signalled” on and on. Then, at about 3.30 a.m. the “missile” moved again. The “signal” stopped, the yellow-orange light went out, the red dot appeared, descended and dashed away, this time in the opposite direction, that is to the south. “First,” said Pritz, “I thought: ‘Look, it’s flying back to the big one’ (the ‘mother ship’—EB) but it passed under it and went off into the west at a dizzy speed. We lost sight of it after a few seconds.

Five objects remained and continued their mission, whatever that was. Then “...gradually the three smaller objects standing in line started to move, very slowly, but easily visible, southbound (along the railroad track?—EB).

At 4.30 a.m. on October 29, after five hours of observation by Fichtinger and four hours by Pritz, the friends went home. The three globes had travelled to the southeast and kept their altitude and formation



The driveway to Pritz’s House

at 150° azimuth. The “mother ship” and domed disc were still motionless. Pritz said goodbye to Fichtinger and went to the porch of his house. “I looked up at the sky a last time and all was to be seen very clearly. As it was Monday morning, and a working day, I entered the house and returned to bed, but I couldn’t sleep. I looked out again at 6.00 a.m. (about 30 minutes before sunrise) and the objects were gone.”

From the first moment of Fichtinger’s observation until 4.30 a.m. the “mother ship” must have given off at least 1,200 “signals,” the domed disc had emitted 550, and the “missile” a minimum of 360.

Publicity

Things took their usual course. Pritz told his colleagues at the printing works about the hair-raising night, and they ‘phoned the editor of the *Zwettler Nachrichten* (the local newspaper). Pritz was interviewed for *Landesrundschau*, a weekly transmission of Oesterreich Regional (second programme of the Austrian Radio and Television Company “ORF”). The broadcast went out on October 31, 1973, and star reporter Ossy Wanka asked Professor Meurers, the director of Vienna’s university Observatory, for a statement. Meanwhile the story had reached *Kurier*, a popular Vienna newspaper, which published the negative comment of a second astronomer. *Zwettler Nachrichten* contributed one of the most stupid articles I have ever read, and the discussion cooled off until mid-November.

We had arranged for a field investigation with Johann Pritz on November 18, 1973, and drove to Traunstein that fine Sunday morning. Snow had fallen over the Waldviertel Highlands in the meantime, and it was difficult to keep the car on the icy road. At 10.10 a.m. we reached the Pritz’s house. We were late and young Herr Pritz was already waiting for us in his green *Volkswagen*. A surprise awaited us as, looking a trifle shaken, he greeted us: “Good

morning! It's as well you've come today. We've seen it again yesterday evening. Perhaps we're all going crazy!" It seemed we had arrived in time for a "near hot-line investigation," for a multiple-witness sighting had taken place only 15 hours earlier. We had never had such a chance before, and we concentrated on the four main witnesses (the investigation we had planned to carry out envisaged sufficient time for the first sighting alone, and certainly not for interviews with the 10 witnesses involved in the second incident).

The second sighting

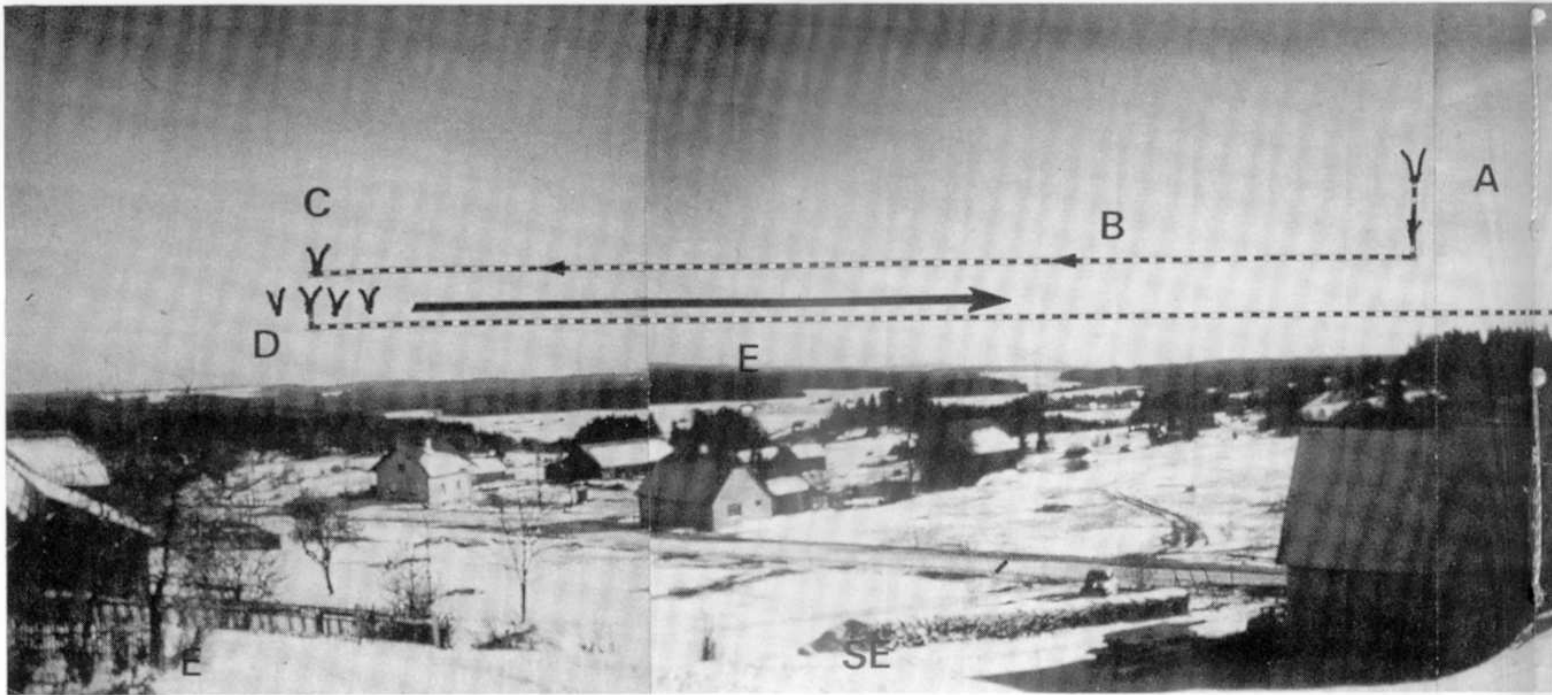
The weather was fine on the previous evening (November 17). A ridge from the British high pressure system had reached Central Europe in the morning, and precipitation had ceased in Lower Austria (the last snowfall at Traunstein had been on the Friday). The local weather report from the Zwettl station runs: "17.11; 19 hrs - no clouds, wind NW 24 kmh, 1°, no precipitation, maximum daytime temperature 4°." Sunset was at about 4.15 p.m. CET.

Shortly after 6.00 p.m. Johann Pritz was on his way home from a visit to Arbesbach (15 kms NW of Traunstein) driving his car along the minor road which runs between Schoenbach and Traunstein. Between Schoenbach and Ullrichschlag the road is southbound, running towards the vast Weinsberger Woods before bearing off to the east. "Suddenly it

struck my eyes. Something was hanging low over the trees to the south. It was an oblong, flattened shape standing on end, giving off the peculiar signals we'd seen before. I muttered 'it can't be true!' and looked away."

After his radio interview and press publicity Johann had been exposed to heavy ridicule in his small community: "They said we'd been drunk, or crazy, and seeing things," he said. "It's enough for one to see such a thing. One's reputation doesn't count. The press story was no advantage for me; people are highly sceptical, and only a few showed any interest. So I thought it over; was there any point in saying anything about this new object, so increasing my "madness?"

I stopped for a while at Ullrichschlag, got out of the car and watched the thing. It was there, over the woods, and the signals were the same. I drove on, and got home at about 6.15 p.m." He went in for his binoculars, and told his mother, who was watching television, to look out of the living-room window. He took his 8 x 40 field glass and went out again. He met his brother Gerhard who was with his friend Erich Leitgeb. Frau Pritz came to the window, and the four of them watched the object for a while before the good lady returned to the TV set. Johann had already decided on the next move: "We jumped into the car and drove to the Traunstein centre to get some more witnesses. I knew nobody would believe our story without such backing."



TRAUNSTEIN PANORAMA

(Field investigation, November 18, 1973)

Within fifteen minutes Johann had found six respectable persons: Joseph Habegger (owner of the local department store), Frau Habegger, a third person from the store, Karl Fichtinger and Leopold Wagner. Karl Teuschl, the local tobacconist joined them after driving his car to the garage. The nine persons took their stand near a telephone pole on the minor road before the double bend. It proved to be a good observation point. The object was hovering some distance away (no estimate possible) at $5^{\circ} + 1^{\circ}$ elevation and $200/210^{\circ}$ azimuth in the direction of a depression in the treeline. They were able to observe its manoeuvres precisely.

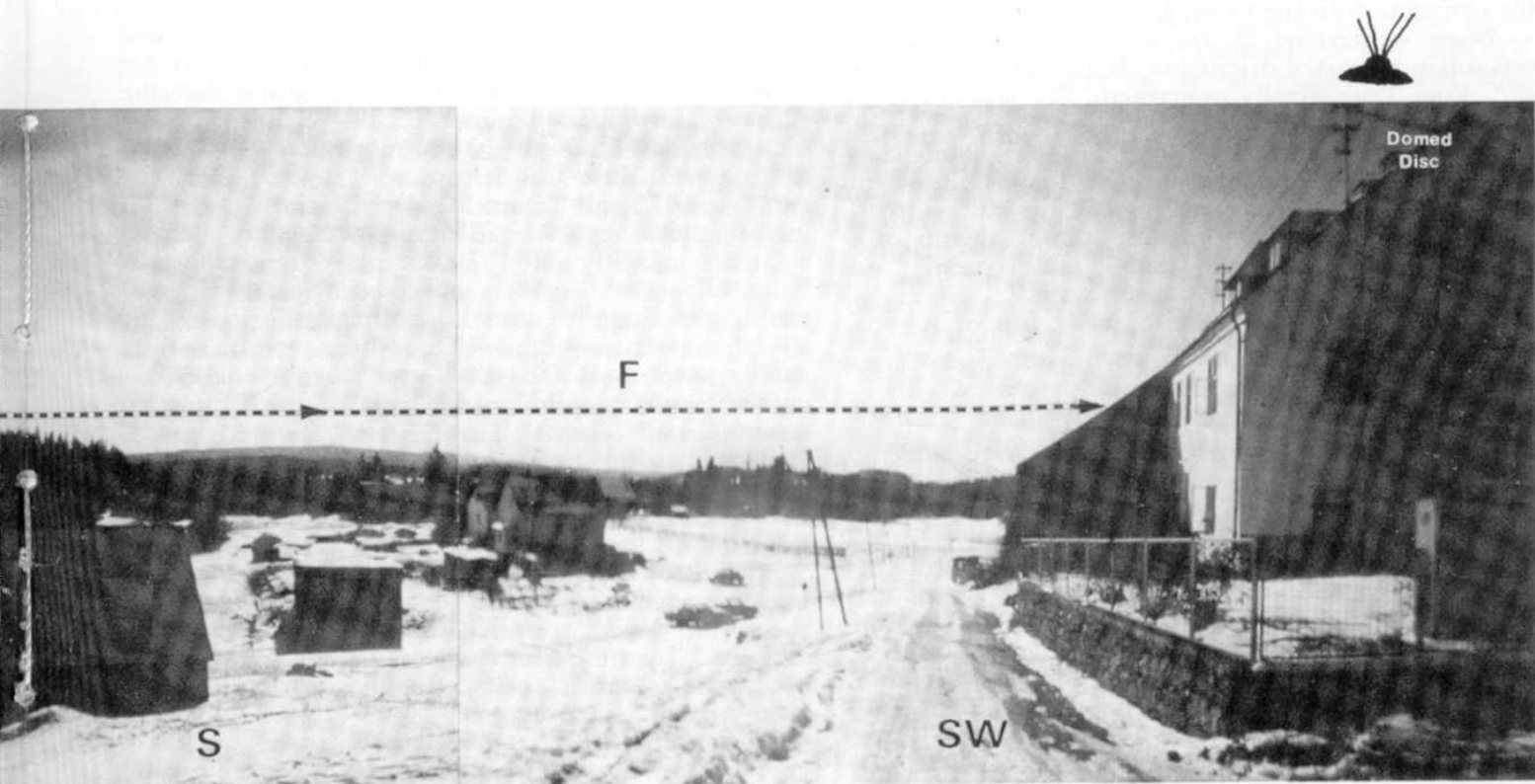
"It was even more peculiar than anything we'd seen the first night," said Johann Pritz. The main body was oblong and shining in a bright orange-yellow colour, light which seemed to originate at the outer surface. According to our goniometric test the diameter would have been 32 metres at a distance of 2.5 kms. Was it the domed disc again, now standing on end?

Johann Pritz added that Frau Habegger had also used field glasses, "but it wasn't necessary, for you could see enough with the naked eye, every detail." Two "feelers" were clearly visible among some minor "feelers" which were less high and prominent, and were in constant operation, as before. Their height was enormous — about 80 metres at the supposed distance (about $2^{\circ}40'$ in the night sky, i.e. five times the diameter of the full moon). A

second variation was the permanent shift of colours on the left and right of the main body. "A kind of fusion," as Johann put it. It seemed the light turned a sparkling red at the left, then it vanished and a yellowish green appeared on the right, vanished, and the whole process started again.

Later, Johann described the third, and most spectacular variation: "Suddenly the signals would stop, and the whole body would shrink away. It was like letting the air out of a toy balloon. The light dimmed, turned red more and more, as if it would cease glowing, burn out, and the whole thing nearly shrank to nothing. But a few moments before what was expected to be the end it would "inflate" itself rapidly, gradually resume its yellow-orange light, and the feelers would come out again."

A difficult process indeed, and a hard one for Austrian countrymen to believe. Whereas the "signal" (i.e. the "feelers") followed the old pattern of October 28/29 (7–10 seconds "projection," green tips, 2–5 seconds darkness, and so on) the "shrinking and inflating" process had a different frequency: from a "real time test" with Gerhard and Johann we learned that the "shrinking" took 3–7 seconds, and that the "inflating" was much faster. Both processes had their fixed duration, but the fully "inflated" state had not. Said Gerhard: "You would look at it for a minute or so until it shrank away again, but sometimes it signalled for about two minutes. Johann and his mother agreed with this.



Key:

- A. "Mothership" — descends
- B. Red dot trajectory 1 (2.00 a.m.)
- C. Stops

- D. "Missile" + 3 "newcomers"
- E. Slow movement of the "newcomers"
- F. Red dot trajectory 2 (3.30 a.m.)

No sound was heard during the whole of the operation.

Whatever it was, Traunstein object number seven carried out one of the most complex but apparently senseless missions I had ever heard of, and it was as well we were able to investigate the report only hours after alleged event.

Gerhard told us of a test conducted during the observation: "We asked each witness to look at a different spot in the sky while one of us continued to watch the object. When it turned red (shrinking process) the observer shouted 'Red'. Then we glanced at it all together, and it was okay, for we all saw the same every time."

Soon after seven o'clock, while the crowd stood staring in head-shaking silence, Johann remembered that he had promised to telephone the editor of the *Zwettler Nachrichten* should the "thing" come again, and he drove off to the nearest telephone booth. While he was away the group of watchers broke up, leaving just Gerhard and his friend Erich, but Frau Pritz, who had finished watching television, came out and joined them.

It was then, Gerhard Pritz told us, that "...it blinked red and green, shrank until it was small and blood red, and 'set' very slowly."

"Yes" said Leitgeb, "it sank towards the woods on a sloping course." Frau Pritz concurred, and added "in about four minutes it was gone."

The two youngsters ran to the centre to warn Johann, but fortunately he had been unable to get the connection to the newspaper editor.

When we arrived at Traunstein, the Pritz family was still in animated discussion about the observations and Frau Pritz finally remarked: "It was eerie. Is there going to be a new war?"

As for ourselves, we got a first (and last) impression of public attitudes at Traunstein when measurements we were making at the access road caused a jolly good laugh among the occupants of a nearby house. "Let them laugh," said Johann. "We now have all the corroboration we need."

Gerhard confessed: "I also made fun of it, you see, until yesterday evening..."

Comparative Phenomenology

The Traunstein "snail feelers" are a rare pattern, but no novelty, as we were to find out by searching our records for similar cases. APRO published a report on the Sullivan incident near Bealiba, Australia where, on April 4, 1966, a steel contractor was startled to see the headlight beams of his car "bent to the right" towards an object resting in the adjacent field. The APRO Bulletin of January-February 1971 gave a follow-up report plus sketches on the August 13, 1971, Maarup case in Denmark, where a "light cone was drawn into the thing" very slowly.

Remember too the excellent Taizé report by M. Lagarde, (a translation appeared in FSR July-August 1973 p.16): the torchlight cone of a witness in the field was "deflected" by a strange "hedge" on August 12, 1972, and beams of light shining down from the main object looked like "pylons," i.e.

solid. Lagarde also mentioned he had investigated a 1968 case at Villiers-en-Morvan, where the beams of light had behaved like a solid.

Striking similarities are to be found in Reverend Cruttwell's excellent report on the 1958/59 New Guinea Wave (FSR Special Issue No. 4 *UFOs in Two Worlds*). On June 27, 1959, a bright object was seen from Baniara, with 3 shafts of green light emanating from the base. They were blotted out at regular intervals. According to the witness, Patrol Officer Smith, "they did not exactly flash on and off but seemed to lengthen and shorten in a most peculiar way, as if they were objects being protruded and withdrawn. They did not appear to be solid legs but only rays of light." An early case of the "solid light" and "snail feeler" phenomenon on the same night as the spectacular second Boianai sighting!

On August 3, 4 and 8, 1959, Mr. Smith saw his "snail" again, with the same "feelers," near Mapouna, Wakwapu and Biniguni: "These (the shafts of light - EB) seemed to recede into the object (they did not simply go out) and then re-appeared later."

We have to add that Mr. Pritz has never heard about FSR and, moreover, is not able to read English articles. Although it was issued in August 1971, we did not have the Special Issue No. 4 at home in late 1973. We ordered it in February 1974.

Strangely enough, on August 8, 1959, at Biniguni, a second fluctuation was observed: "During the time the light was stationary, it was not static. It appeared to expand and contract...When large the light appeared brighter, and when small dimmer. The same shafts of green light extended from the base of the object. It is possible that the object was approaching and receding in line with the observer, but I saw no lateral movement whatever."

And, last but not least, in *FSR Case Histories* August 1973, I came across the new SOBEPS investigation report (p.2) on spectacular Belgian sightings of July 4, 1972, among them a report from Ellezelles: Farmers observed "beams of light, having the shape of arcs in a circle". Now combine all phenomena quoted here (there are a lot of similar cases, too) and you'll get "slowly progressing, curved beams of solid-looking light" - the Traunstein snail feelers."

The "green tips" and the "green mist" in connection with "curved light" have no predecessors, however, and may be a clue to the physical solution of the "curved light mystery" sometime.

The "toy balloon shrinkage manoeuvre" is no brand new pattern either. I remember I once read about an object's strange disappearance that was described by the witness the same way. But I paid no special attention to it and could not find the case in my search.

Variable shape is reported every now and then. Perhaps the most famous episode is the Elmwood Park, Illinois, sighting (November 4, 1957), when an object apparently "folded into itself" and "puffed out" again. EM effects were present, but no periodicity of the "folding process" was observed, although the "egg" had a bright red-orange colour, like the

(Continued on page iii)

NOTES ON "URI," AND YET ANOTHER "CONTACTEE"

Charles Bowen

MY first meeting with Andrija Puharich, author of the book *Uri* (published 1974 by W.H. Allen & Co. Ltd., 44 Hill Street, London, W1X 8LB; 285 pages, price £2.95) was about five years ago. He was here on a brief visit and, before an invited audience including doctors and members of the press, he gave a lecture, supported by films, on the work of that remarkable Brazilian healer, Arigó.

However deeply impressed some of the pressmen might have been on that occasion, I cannot recall that any word of that lecture found its way into their newspapers; what I do recall is that one or two of the doctors present were quite hostile in their attitude to Dr. Puharich.

For the record, Andrija Puharich, a neurologist, is an MD with many years of hospital and laboratory experience behind him. He also implies that he lives comfortably from the proceeds of some 50 patented inventions, and now devotes himself to "...the full-time study of the mysterious powers of the human mind." This has brought him into contact with people like the remarkable paragnost Peter Hurkos, and the psychical surgeon Arigó and, of course, Uri Geller.

Arigó is alluded to many times in the book *Uri* — importantly, it will be seen — and this is one reason why I write about him now. I feel sure that had Dr. Puharich published a work on Arigó's miraculous feats at the time of his London talk, few would have believed him and he would have had a rough time at the hands of his colleagues in the medical profession. Yet, in itself, the subject of that lecture was not a new one to me, for there, with me at that time, were my friends Anne Dooley* and Gordon Creighton, who had both undergone spectacular operations performed by another Brazilian healer, Lourival de Freitas. I had also been present with scores of other witnesses when Lourival had performed an exploratory operation on one of Gordon's eyes.† His implements were a penknife and a teaspoon, and he used no anaesthetic. So I had no need to be convinced by the Puharich films, for it was obvious that when he spoke about Arigó's talents he was talking about something very real.

After the lecture I had a short talk with Dr.

Puharich and he told me that he had had a number of UFO experiences while studying Arigó in Brazil. It seemed at that time, however, that he knew relatively little about the UFO phenomenon as a whole.

The advent of Uri Geller

It was in the Spring of 1973 that reports began to filter through to us of the remarkable feats in the realm of ESP and mind-over-matter by a young Israeli named Uri Geller, and, not surprisingly, the itinerant researcher Andrija Puharich was at the heart of things. Because it was stated that UFOs were involved, Gordon Creighton and I became very interested in this, and an article was prepared, based on the material we had in hand, for the September-October, 1973, issue of *FSR*. It transpired that before this article had a chance to appear (thanks to our multifarious publishing problems) Uri Geller suddenly and staggeringly became known to millions of people in the United Kingdom. That was when he took part in David Dimbleby's live BBC-TV presentation, before an invited audience, and with Professor John Taylor and Dr. Lyall Watson on the platform with him. We all witnessed Uri's powers of telepathy in reasonably controlled conditions, and his skills as a watch "mender" and as a fork bender — a select few of the many feats it is claimed he can perform, including the disintegration of metallic and other objects, the apparent dematerialisation and (re)materialisation of objects, and the transporting — or teleporting — of objects, all seemingly by the powers of the mind.

Uri Geller's performance on the Dimbleby show was very convincing. So convincing that the reaction from certain quarters bordered on the hysterical — with conjurers being paraded in front of TV cameras to demonstrate, far from convincingly, that they too could bend door keys (it should be noted too that unlike some of Uri's keys and forks, their sleight-of-hand props did not continue to bend after being put down).

Scientists who have been involved in the Stanford University Research Institute investigations have told members of the *FSR* team that Uri's powers are absolutely genuine, and that the research scientists are staggered by what they have seen.

So, as with his lecture on Arigó's psychic surgery, I am sure that Andrija Puharich is involved with something very real when he writes about his study of Uri Geller, and about Geller's acquisition of his powers. The accounts in the book *Uri*, of their experiences in the Sinai Desert, and the fact that

* See *Every Wall a Door*, by Anne Dooley (Abelard-Schumann Ltd., London) for descriptions, and photographs, of her operations.

† See *Beyond the Senses* by Paul Tabori and Phyllis Raphael (Souvenir Press Ltd., London) for a description of the operation on Gordon Creighton's eye, in which a growth was removed from the back of the eye (the exploratory operation, which I witnessed, took place a few days later—C.B.)