

are therefore extraterrestrials. Throughout long years of reading all manner of "messages" and other statements claimed by human witnesses to have been delivered to them by ufonauts, I have come across an awful lot of what is apparently nonsense and gobbledegook. Admittedly

there may be a true signal here and there amidst the background of rubbishy noise, and we need to take note of it all for that reason alone. The safest bets are still to "Hear all, see all, and *believe* nothing," and when speculating to speculate carefully.

UFO EVENTS AROUND ASHBOURNE, DERBYSHIRE

L. R. Hall

The investigators of these reported events were the author, Les Hall, and his colleagues Syd Henley and Peter Ann, all of the Nottingham UFO Investigation Society and UFOIN. This short version of the report was prepared specially for *Flying Saucer Review*.

DURING the early hours of the morning of August 31, 1980, a series of sightings occurred in and around the Ashbourne area of Derbyshire which were to result in one of the most intensive and comprehensive investigations ever undertaken by Nottingham UFO Investigation Society, an investigation which is still being pursued with maximum effort.

After four months of investigation, it was felt that an interim report should be published in order that the events be made known to ufologists in general and, in addition, to detail the lines of inquiry followed by the investigators, in the hope that other groups or individuals may be able to furnish additional information. The report has been published as a special issue of *UFO Research Review*.^{*} Space limitations do not permit the publication of the entire report in FSR, but it is hoped that this edited version will convey the basic details of the sightings and the investigation which followed.

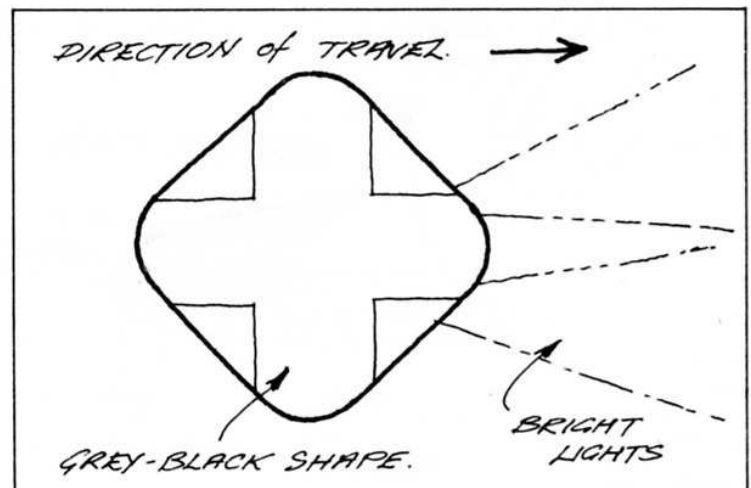
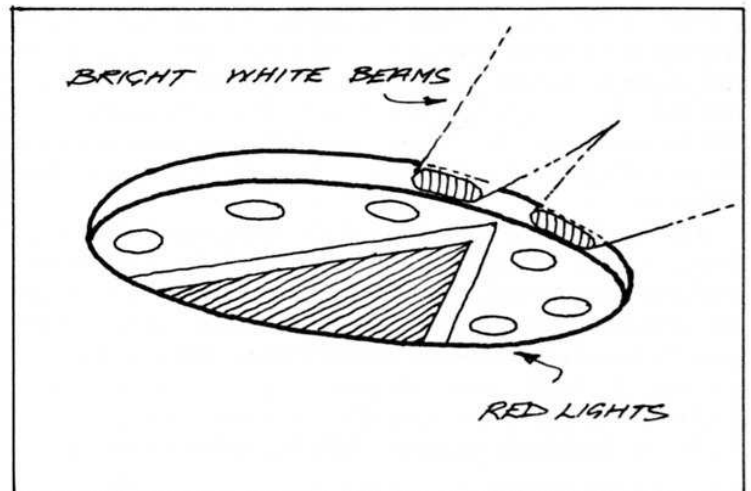
The Ashbourne event

At approx. 00.20 on the morning of August 31, 1980, two groups of people were returning to their camp site, located in Beresford Dale, Derbyshire, when they saw a number of lights moving towards them from the South-East. The first group, who were in fact approaching the site by car, described the object as follows. A large oval shape carrying two very broad beams of white light at the front, with six smaller red lights below the base. Apart from the general shape, very little detail could be seen against the sky. The car was stopped and the witnesses got out to watch the object which moved away towards the N.W. emitting a faint "buzz-hum" as it passed overhead. An impression of the object is shown in Fig. 1.

The second group of witnesses were on the site itself, and two members of the group completed sighting report forms. Witness 'A' stated that at between 00.20 and 00.30 on the morning of August 31, he was called outside to see a strange object which had appeared in the sky. The object was described as being of square shape with rounded

corners. It was flying with one of the corners leading, and upon this were mounted two bright, white lights. Described as being the size of a medium sized aircraft, the object was flying straight and level at an estimated altitude of 1500-2000 ft and was in view for six or seven minutes before moving away in a North-Westerly direction. A faint "buzz-hum" was heard as the object passed overhead.

Witness 'B' from the same group described the object as "being cross-shaped with maybe a ring around it."



^{*} Obtainable from: The Editor, *UFO Research Review*, N.U.F.O.I.S., 433 Meadow Lane, Nottingham NG2 3GB. Price 25p plus postage (12p in UK).

The size of a jet fighter, it was carrying a very bright light in front with two red lights underneath, and was moving quite slowly from South-East to North-West with a humming-buzzing noise as it passed overhead. Witness 'B' estimated the duration of the sighting as some 10 minutes. A general impression of the object, as seen by the second group of witnesses, is shown in Fig. 2.

At 00.30 also on the morning of the 31st an Ashbourne housewife was saying goodbye to some friends when their

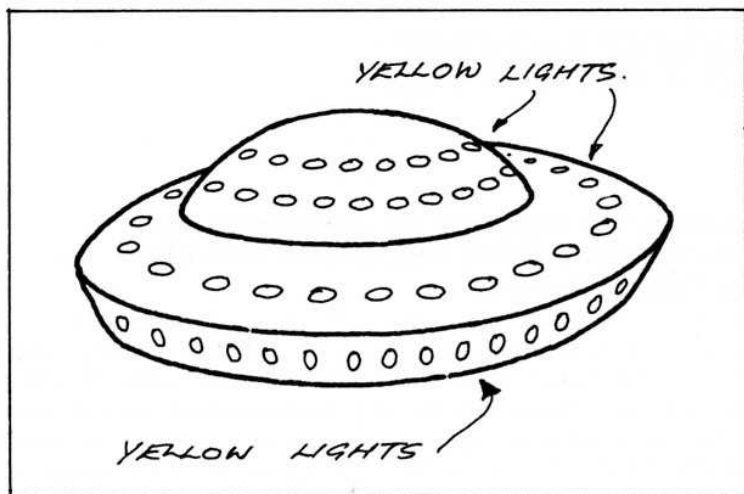


Figure 3

attention was drawn to a mass of flashing and pulsating red, blue and green lights approaching from the Ormaston (S.E.) direction. The object was described as being larger than a four-bedroomed house and, as it passed overhead, a buzz-humming sound was heard. Calves in a nearby field got to their feet and ran across to the opposite corner. The family dog, who normally will not come in, even when called, rushed into the house, and the witnesses watched as the object moved away towards the North-West having been in view for some five minutes.

Also at 00.30 a witness in the Chaddesdon district of Derby (some 12 miles across country from Ashbourne) had just gone to bed, when, through the open curtains she noticed what appeared to be an unusually large, bright star. Going to the window to investigate, she was amazed to see a large dome-shaped object, covered with yellow/white lights hovering above the roof tops on a level with her bedroom window, looking very much like a

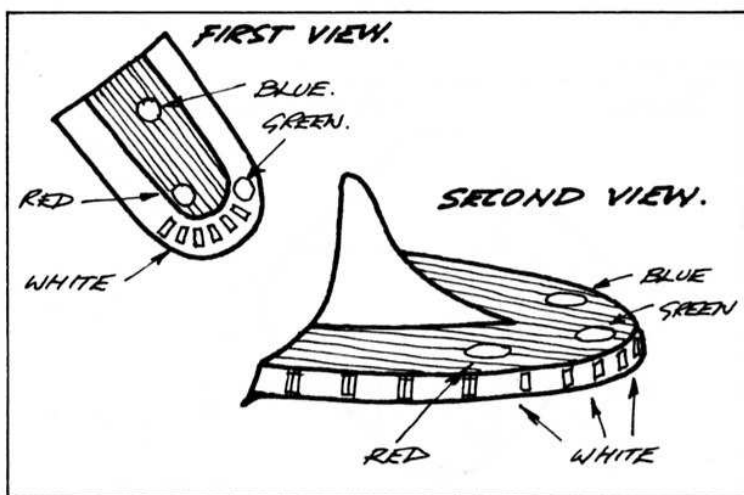


Figure 4

bright chandelier. The object, which was about four times the apparent size of the full moon, continued to hover for a minute or so, before moving away due West, having been in sight for some two or three minutes. An impression of the object is shown in Fig. 3.

About seven minutes later, in the village of Mapleton, a local disc jockey and his wife were driving towards their home in Mayfield, which is on the outskirts of Ashbourne, when they saw, coming towards them from the South-East, a group of coloured lights moving in a "sort of mist." These they described as like two headlights shining upwards, a row of blue lights and a green light, plus a flashing yellow light underneath. There may have been a flashing white light on the top. So low was the object flying that it was reported as narrowly missing the corner of a house (estimated height 30ft) before moving away N.W. towards Dovedale. During the sighting a sound like the buzzing of an old aircraft, or a milking machine, was heard. An impression is shown in Fig. 5.

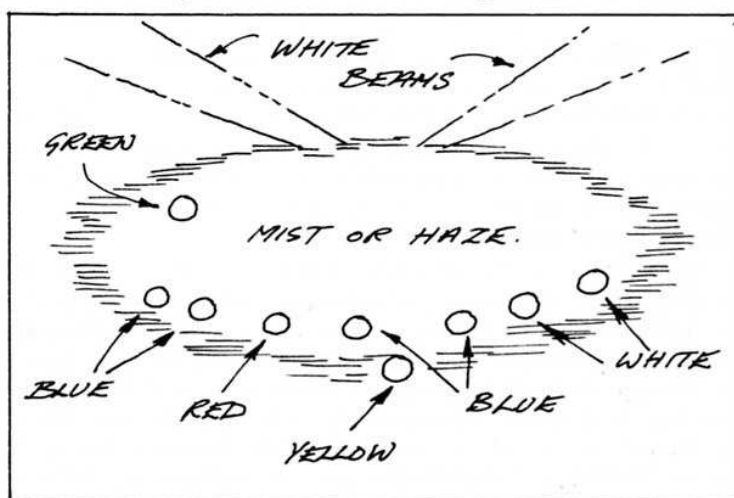


Figure 5

At, or about, 00.35 a witness who was located at the Nestlé's Milk factory in Clifton Road, Ashbourne, was watching, with some amusement, the progress of three late-night revellers when, on turning and looking down the factory yard, he saw a cluster of bright lights moving towards him. The lights, which were very bright, were coloured red, white, green and blue, with the blue light higher than the others. As the object came closer, the witness got the impression of two fuselages and five or six portholes, but this was only an impression, because no definite outline could be seen at this stage. However, as the object continued to approach, it turned a few degrees to its left and the witness got the distinct impression of a high tail fin, and, what seemed to be ducting or something similar at the bottom of the craft, with steam or vapour of some sort being given off.

After some five minutes the object moved away over the factory roof heading N.W. at an estimated altitude of 500 ft (see Fig. 4).

The last report to be included in this short summary relates to the daylight sighting of a "classic" saucer seen at about 17.00 hrs on August 31, 1980. The object was sighted as it hovered over power lines at Shelton Lock in Derbyshire, and was described by the witnesses as "like a saucer upside-down with an inverted cup on top of it." The outside was reported as rotating with the centre "standing still." The object was a silvery colour and was

flashing throughout the time it was hovering over the pylons. After about five minutes, during which time it was observed through binoculars, the object climbed rapidly away, heading in the direction of Elveston (N.E. by E). No sound was noticed during the event (see Fig. 6).

The investigation

In all, some 40 witnesses were contacted, covering 15 different locations from which sighting reports had been received, ranging from Hatton near Burton-on-Trent to Chatsworth House in the North, a distance of about 20 miles. In spite of extensive coverage by press, local radio and T.V. (notably *The Ashbourne Telegraph*, *The Derby Evening Telegraph*, *The Derbyshire Times*, *the Nottingham Evening Post*, B.B.C. Radio Derby, B.B.C. Radio Nottingham, I.B.A. Radio Trent and I.T.V. *ATV Today*) no related reports have been received from outside the original sighting area.

As stated, only a few sightings have been outlined in this report, but they do indicate the shape, colour and direction of flight of the objects seen during the Ashbourne Event, and an analysis of all the data received to date indicates that a minimum of three, and possibly more, objects were operating in the area on the night in question, and that these were physical but of unknown origin and identity.

Bearing in mind the fact that the Ashbourne area lies beneath possibly one of the busiest air corridors in the U.K., and has East Midlands Airport to the South East, plus Ringway Airport to the North-West, the following possibilities were initially considered:

(a) A lighter than air machine

The initial reports indicated that an air-ship or other lighter than air machine may have been the culprit in certain of the sightings, the estimated speed was of the right order (about 30 mph). The sounds could have been due to a piston engine, or engines, and the general direction of movement (N.W.) was directly into a wind of from 7 to 15 knots according to altitude. The main objection to the theory was, and still is, the reporting of blue lights, sometimes in conjunction with red and green, which is not permitted in any type of aircraft according to the Civil Aviation Authority, the R.A.F. and the U.S. Air Force, all of whom have been contacted. Furthermore, all attempts to identify any such craft in the area (blue lights or not) have to date failed. The possibility of a non-powered lighter than air machine (balloon etc.) being responsible was ruled out by virtue of the wind direction.

(b) A large twin-rotor helicopter such as a Chinook

The possibility of such a machine operating in the area was investigated, particularly in view of the fact that major N.A.T.O. exercises were to take place in West Germany the following week, and Army or other units could have been involved in final training within the Ashbourne area. According to the Ministry of Defence, the T.A. and the U.S. Air Force, no such training exercises took place, and furthermore had such exercises been held, all aircraft would have been carrying standard navigation lights and, under no circumstances would blue lighting have been displayed. According to the R.A.F. the only occasion that blue lights of any type may be

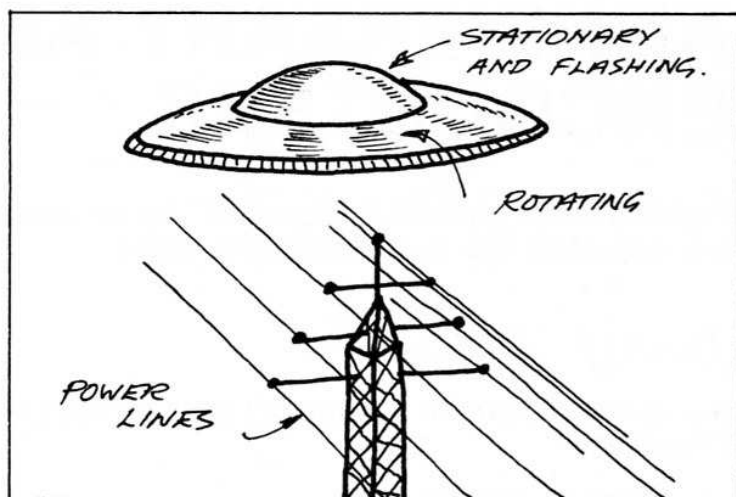


Figure 6

employed is when a tanker aircraft, operating over the sea, fires one single flare to call in aircraft for re-fuelling during conditions of poor visibility. It would appear that, at the moment, helicopters can be ruled out.

(c) Conventional aircraft

Examination of all the information indicated that the objects were slow-moving, low flying, and almost silent. Add to this the reports of several blue lights plus the familiarity of local people with aircraft lighting, due to the busy air lanes, and it would appear reasonable to exclude conventional aircraft at this stage.

In the case of the daylight sighting at Shelton Lock, extensive enquiries were made regarding the possibility of an electrical effect being responsible for the report, but both the E.M.E.B. and the C.E.G.B. stated that the operating voltage of the line is far too low to give rise to a plasma effect, and that no faults were recorded on that line on the August 31, 1980, which would appear to rule out any possibility of a flash-over or other fault condition being responsible.

The Investigation is continuing but, at this point in time, the reports are classified as relating to an Unidentifiable Flying Object (or objects).

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NEXT ISSUE OF FSR...

Humanoids at South Middleton

Investigation of CE III reports in Massachusetts in 1978

David F. Webb

Ufology in the USSR

An assessment specially prepared for FSR

Nikita A. Schnee

The Falcon Lake incident

From Canada, an in-depth study of the Michalak case of 1967

Chris Rutkowski

The chicken poachers on Puerto Rico

Jorge J. Martín

ANNIVERSARY AERIAL ENCOUNTERS

Eight civilian aircraft "accosted" by an aerial object — or objects — twelve months to the day after the Supercaravelle case.

Juan J. Benítez

Our correspondent is a journalist with a Bilbao newspaper. Translation from Spanish by Gordon Creighton.

A TOTAL of eight civilian Spanish aircraft have been "accosted" by UFOs in a period of just one year. Thus, as we have reported previously in FSR, an aircraft of the TAE Company was forced off its route (from Palma de Mallorca to the Canary Islands) and virtually obliged to touch down at Valencia when pursued by an object some 200 metres long.* That "incident" at Manises caused the Spanish Workers' Socialist Party to present a threefold question to Parliament.

Now, precisely one year later, not one, but *seven* commercial aircraft have encountered more "Unidentified Flying Objects." This new incident occurred on the evening of November 11, 1980.

Interview with Comandante Ramos

The first report of the incident reached me through my good friend Andreas Faber-Kaiser, Director of the prestigious review *Mundo Desconocido*. The truth is that, despite the many years that I have spent in UFO investigation, this new encounter in the Spanish skies has struck me as most mysterious. . .

How could it possibly be, I asked myself, that the world-famous incident at Manises should be repeated precisely one year later?

Wasn't this, I felt, just *too much* of a coincidence?

The first accounts that came to me spoke of *five* UFO encounters over Spain during the evening of November 11, and all the sightings were from the same area of our country — North-East.

The aircraft involved in this multiple case were the following:—

An Iberia 727, flying from the Province of Asturias to Barcelona. This machine, without question, was one of those most affected by the appearance of the UFO.

The second aircraft was also an Iberia 727, en route from Barcelona to Athens.

The third machine, British, was proceeding through Spanish airspace en route from England to Alicante.

The fourth machine, apparently an air-taxi, had just taken off from Palma de Mallorca and was over the Mediterranean, bound for Marseilles.

The fifth was a Transeuropa aircraft en route from the Balearic Islands to Bordeaux via Reus.

A few days after I had commenced my enquiries into these cases, I was able to verify that the number of planes that had encountered the UFO(s) was in fact not five but *seven*. For there had been two other Iberia 727s (Nos. 1831 and 1800 to be precise), both of them flying the shuttle service between Madrid and Barcelona.

The statements gathered so far from the members of the various crews suggest that *either* seven different UFOs were involved, all with very similar features, or, as certain other pilots have suggested to me, it was *one sole UFO*, capable of such speed that it could travel hundreds of miles in just a few minutes.

Let us however look at the testimony of one of the *Iberia Line* captains — the veteran pilot Ramos — who was en route that evening from Asturias to Barcelona:—

Comandante Ramos: It was 6.40 p.m. We were flying at about 10,000 ft.**, and I think, if my memory serves me aright, that we were in the vicinity of Maella. The Second Pilot was at the controls at the time.

Question: Was it already dark?

R: We were just in the last few minutes before sunset. Behind us, big clouds were building up, and ahead of us, towards Barcelona, it was already night. And, at 6.40, when we were about 108 miles from the Barcelona VOR, "it" appeared. . . At first, we took it for another 'plane.

Q: Why did you do that?

R: We saw a green light, and we thought it must be the green light carried by 'planes on the starboard wing. But this supposed 'plane was coming straight at us. . . The Second Pilot, who was at the controls, said "Look!" It was coming towards us at an angle of 230° — which means to say, almost on a collision course.

Q: Head-on to your 'plane?

R: Not exactly head-on. A bit to our left. In aeronautical parlance, at 10 o'clock or 10.30 to us. Well, as I have said, the thing was there. And getting closer and closer. It was like a sphere. Or rather, like an enormous soap bubble. When I saw it, it was almost on a level with us and coming straight for our 727. I made an instant reflex movement. The Second Pilot had switched off the automatic pilot, and I pushed the controls forward and we dived.

Q: Do you think the object would have collided with your 'plane if you had continued on at that level of 31,000 ft.?

* See FSR Vol. 25, No. 5 (published March 1980).

**[Suggest this should be 'metres' rather than feet — ED]