

# BEDFORDSHIRE MID-AIR "COLLISION"

Ken Phillips

Classification: September 15 1974 Billington, Bedfordshire MED Level C

LESLIE MOULSTER is a UFO enthusiast, he freely admits.\* As he says, "I have been interested in the UFO business since the mid-fifties, read most of the books on the subject, subscribed to FSR since its inception, given lectures on the subject etc. So what do I do when I see a UFO? I panic and say nothing about it. After all who is going to believe a UFO addict? I wouldn't for one, and it would only confirm the general view that UFO enthusiasts sit around and talk about their latest contact with the 'space people'."

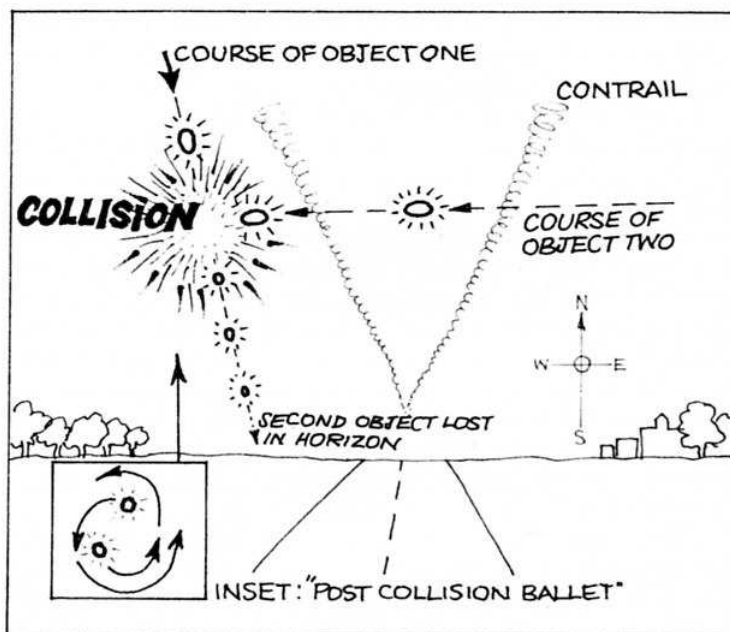
So this sighting remained dormant for four years before Leslie was brave enough to come forward and tell us about it. This he did principally because in recent months several similar incidents have come to light, and it is now not so strangely unique as it seemed at the time of its occurrence.

Mr. Moulster is an instrument fitter, now aged 47. He lives in Dunstable, and on this particular Sunday evening in 1974 he was driving along a minor road between Stanbridge and Billington, heading roughly south west. It was about 7 p.m. on a sunny evening with a light breeze and scattered cloud.

Being quite an expert in aviation he became interested in a vapour trail that crossed the sky ahead of him. It ran north-south, with the aircraft at its northern head, and disappeared into cirro-stratus cloud towards the horizon. Although it seemed that the aircraft responsible was very high (he thinks probably a Boeing 747 on a trans-polar overfly route) the trail itself was unusually wide and spread out.

Presently he turned right on to the A4146 at the Billington junction (about ½ mile from the Bedfordshire/Buckinghamshire border). He was now travelling northwards towards Leighton Buzzard and was directly under the trail. At this point he became aware of a silvery object flying parallel with the trail heading north, but offset slightly to the west of it. This he took to be another aircraft, following the same route as the first, but was surprised that it did not leave any vapour trail at all.

Mr. Moulster watched the silver oval no larger in apparent size than a pinhead) as it moved to about a 60° angle from his field of view. He had just passed through the village of Billington, when he noted to the East a clear disc shape – very similar to the



first object but coloured, quite distinctly, a dull reddish brown.

The witness had by now slowed his car appreciably to watch the sight, because it seemed that the two objects were on a collision course. Indeed within a matter of seconds they did collide with a vivid flash that temporarily blinded him and obscured everything in the vicinity.

Reacting with instinctive horror Mr. Moulster expected to see bits of wreckage falling to earth because he had totally accepted these objects as ordinary aircraft (the second one reflecting the setting sun to the West). However, after a second or so when vision returned to normal he saw in fact an amazing aerial ballet. The two objects were still quite intact and encircling one another far too tightly to be conventional aircraft.

He watched this for a few moments but his attention was distracted by the blare of a car horn behind him. An irate driver in a Rover 2000 car was becoming annoyed at his obstruction. Mr. Moulster signalled for him to overtake, and on looking back noticed that the reddish brown object had disappeared. The silver one was now proceeding on its original course as if nothing had happened!

Mr. Moulster watched the silvery dot move away northwards for a minute or two until it was lost in the horizon cloud. Every so often it seemed to flare up to the brilliance of the flash during the collision. Despite enquiries he found nobody else who had been witness to this strange sight, a factor that added to his reluctance to speak out.

\* [I can testify to that, for Mr. Moulster was involved with R.H.B. Winder, G. Creighton and myself in the investigation in 1967 of the "Little Blue Man of Studham Common" – see FSR Vol. 13, No. 4. He was also involved in a debate with me in the columns of "Mail Bag" on Lenticular clouds in 1962/3 – EDITOR]

# RESEARCH REPORT-1

*Jenny Randles*

THE idea behind this section is that it should be an up-to-the-minute review of the latest ideas, projects and developments in the world of UFO research. Its success, or otherwise, as a regular feature naturally depends upon how you, the researcher and interested UFO reader, react to it. It stands or falls on the submissions of suggestions, news and progress reports on serious and well-planned research projects.

There is a dividing line in ufology, albeit a hazy one, where on the one side there are those who investigate and collect sighting report information, while on the other side there are those who try to do something with this mass of data. Obviously there are some who have a foot in both camps, but primarily one has to make a choice as to which direction one's own interests will go.

Now there is little doubt that both are intermixed and cannot survive without one another. The research needs a constant supply of raw data, which inevitably needs to have been reliably investigated. Similarly it is a rather forlorn hope to expect that collecting reports will ever "solve" the problems that the UFOs throw up. So we need a healthy promotion of both aspects if we wish to avoid utter stagnation. It might be nice for some *not* to find the answers because the mystery (and presumably their "hobby") is proliferated. However, to the majority of ufologists the answers, hopefully are there to be found, and we must make more effort to do so.

*Flying Saucer Review* has concentrated on the publication of significant sighting reports from many parts of the world. In so doing it builds a permanent record and so fulfils a vital function. Furthermore, it has also carried, over the years, much important speculation and research results, from workers such as Michel, Vallée Saunders and Poher, not to mention its own editorial team and consultants. However, with a growing world trend towards specialisation in some aspect of the phenomenon there is now a need for a new regular function of this journal — to keep interested parties aware of what is being done with the data and how.

RESEARCH REPORT hopes to plug this gap.

Of course, FSR will still be more than happy, the Editor tells me, to

consider completed articles on research results, but these often take years to achieve and there is need to note developments and aid interaction of several ongoing research projects. This column can achieve this and also help to give you the outlet to announce your plans and receive support from like-minded readers.

To begin with I would like to describe a research project that I have been involved with since the Autumn of 1976. It is something that could be repeated in other parts of the world with similar effectiveness. Since publication of the first results is imminent (possibly by the time you read this) the time seems ripe to describe the methodology involved.

The idea sprang from the minds of independent researcher Ian Cresswell and ufologist Bernard Delair, editor of the CONTACT (UK) publications and director of their research. They got together with me and we devised the project. We have also received substantial help along the way from NUFON workers Peter Warrington and Rosalind Parsons.

We decided that it was important to provide a comprehensive reference source for UFO sighting data within a certain region. Inevitably this was scattered in a large number of places and the task of collating these was enormous. Yet we felt it could be of great benefit to ufology to do this, so we set about the mammoth undertaking.

The first steps were to decide which sources were to be handled by whom, and at the same time to begin to card index the relevant data to a co-ordinated plan. The area agreed for this first "catalogue" was Northern England. This we defined clearly (basically to cover counties north of a line through the Shropshire/West Midlands southern borders to the Wash). The major sources were the three main UK organisations, BUFORA, CONTACT and NUFON (UFOIN being virtually synonymous in this respect with NUFON). There were also all issues of FSR, old copies of defunct group journals (such as *Orbit*, the publication of the Tyneside group), and a fantastically rich source at the Newcastle Central Library (which is the UK library and has UFOs as its specialist subject and therefore stocks copies of all UFO-related books published in this country).

The long process of card indexing quickly uncovered how many reports we would be handling (many thousands) and meant that a cut-off point was required. We finally decided upon December 31, 1975 (later years being added as an appendix at some future date). It also necessitated the development of meaningful classification systems for the data and investigation levels (see FSR Vol. 24, No. 2) which help to facilitate the amount of data that could be transferred to ufologists from published material without becoming too complex.

There were also long debates about the data that should be specifically included. One could not put in every minute scrap of information or the catalogue would stretch into thousands of pages and be as confusing and useless as the infamous Condon report. So eventually it was decided to include date, time, specific location, object description and colour, plus factors such as witness data, object height, duration, direction of motion and peculiarities of the phenomena. Alongside the classifications outlined in FSR Vol. 24, No. 2, and information about identifications that had been discovered by investigators (*all* recorded activity is included in the catalogue but some means of judging potentiality of identification was vital) a fairly comprehensive set of data is made available to the researcher.

The catalogue is intended primarily as a research tool. Its function is not to propose results, but it is hoped it will lead to some. Already many interesting avenues of research using the catalogue have made themselves obvious. There will no doubt be hundreds more.

To add to the value of the work we decided to append three indexes, with each of us specialising on the production of one. This is an index of all the many reference sources (e.g. file numbers, books, magazine articles, newspaper cuttings etc.) to give total back reference to the origin data. Secondly there is an index of all the special features of a case (e.g. photographs, landings, car stops, physical traces etc.) so that specialists in one field or another could have rapid reference within the main body of the catalogue to relevant cases. Finally, there is an index by specific location (i.e. any small localised area named in the report) to facilitate study of such things as Ufocals (window areas) or any factors relevant to the spatial and temporal location of UFO phenomena.

We are very proud of this work and feel that it has not only contributed to the growing science of ufology but, incidentally, has shown how it is possible for the rivalries of UFO groups to be superceded. The