

HUGE LOW-LEVEL UFO OVER READING

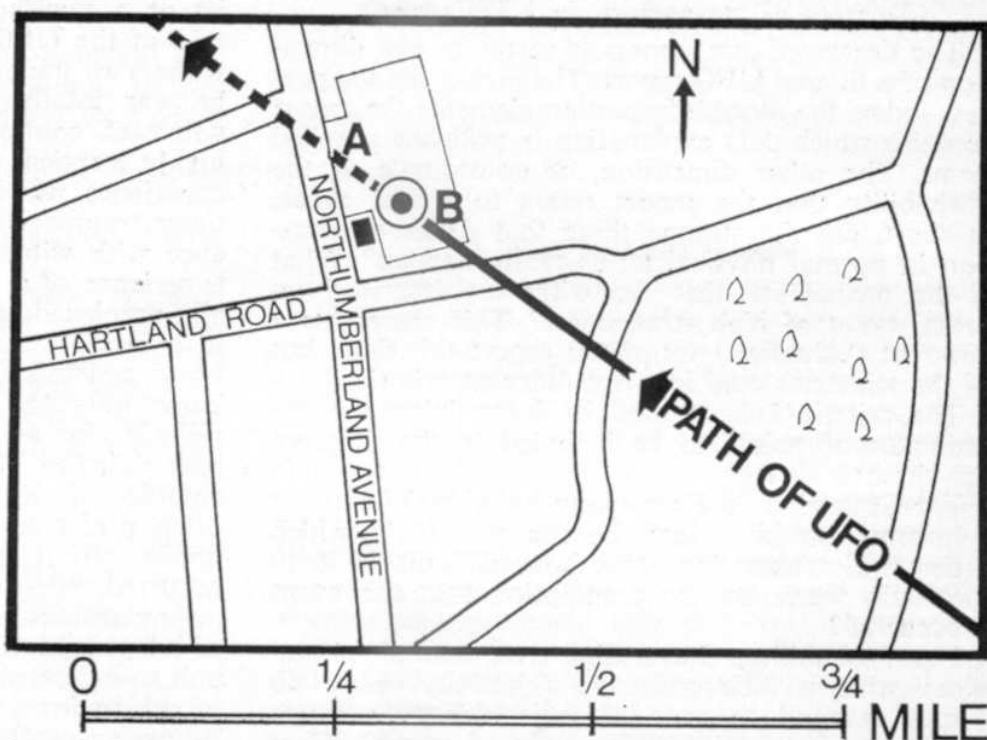
Peter J. Wroath

UFO observations made personally are, naturally, the most convincing evidence for believing in the reality of the phenomenon. There are, however, many people interested in the subject who have never seen a UFO and whose only recourse therefore is to rely upon the testimony of others, usually at third hand via an investigator. Unfortunately neither the witnesses nor the investigator is likely to be known personally. Inevitably, with the best will in the world, there is a certain feeling of unreality about the whole business. This aspect of UFO research, it is well known, bedevils many efforts to gain a wider acceptance of the phenomenon.

Apart from a personal sighting, an account of a UFO sighting at first hand—in an interview with eye witnesses—has, I feel, the greatest impact upon the imagination. Perhaps I am fortunate to be able to claim both of these experiences*. The second of them occurred recently when a colleague and myself interviewed Mrs. Gloria Bomford and heard from her an amazing story of a UFO encounter, at close range, which occurred in daytime in the suburbs of a large town in the South of England.

Mrs. Bomford and her family live at Drayton, a village near Abingdon in the Thames Valley, where her husband owns a joinery manufacturing business. Mrs. Bomford, an attractive and intelligent housewife, was visiting her sister who lives at Reading, a town about 26 miles away, when the sighting occurred. The date was September 6, 1969, when Mrs. Bomford set off from Drayton in the family car with her mother and two daughters, Jacqueline, aged 8 and Karen aged 7, to travel to her sister's flat in the

* See FSR, Vol. 12, No. 5 (September/October 1966).



The circle and dot indicate the position of the UFO over the John Rabson Park. "A" was position of Mrs. Bomford and children; "B", the footballers. The dotted line indicates the ascending departure of the object towards the Basingstoke Road

south-eastern suburbs of Reading. The apartment overlooks the John Rabson recreation ground; a pleasant park with swings and other amenities for children.

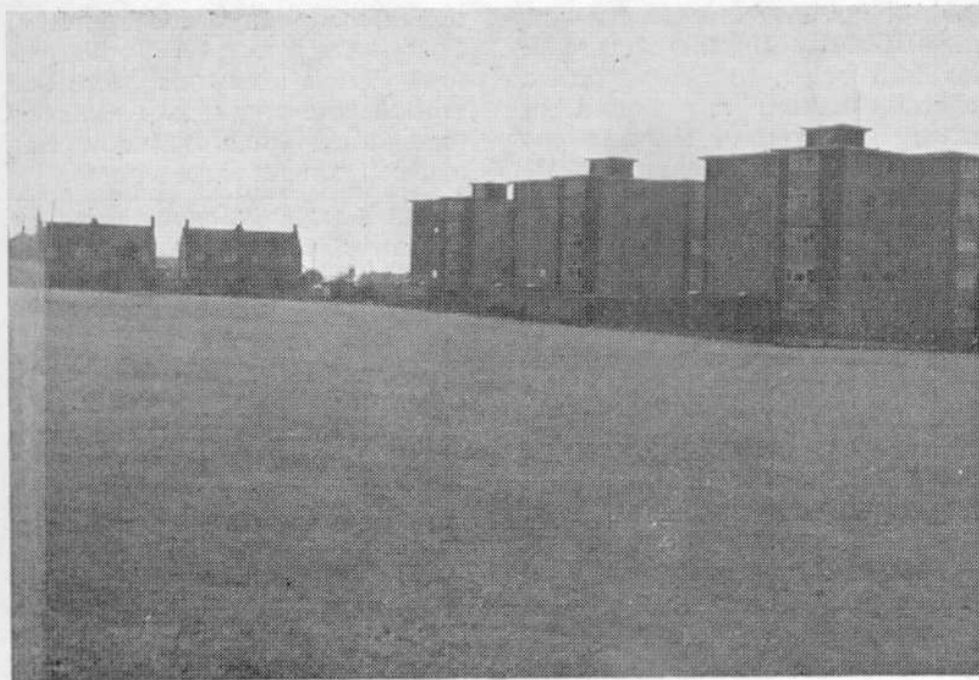
It was a warm, late summer's evening; the skies were clear and there was no wind. The setting sun appeared as a large red disc glowing through a slight evening haze. Mrs. Bomford and her mother had been observing from the balcony of the apartment the periodic flights of migratory geese, crossing the recreation ground in formations, travelling in an easterly direction. It was around 7.00 p.m. and Mrs. Bomford felt it was time to collect her children and to start thinking about returning to her own home.

The children were playing on the swings about 300 yards away. Mrs. Bomford walked over and talked to

them for a few minutes, then, as they were leaving the swings to return to the flat, another skein of geese passed over. Drawing the children's attention to the birds, all three stood still and watched the geese disappear in the distance.

It was then that Mrs. Bomford noticed a small speck in the same region of the sky that seemed to grow larger as she watched. As the object came nearer its appearance seemed to resemble a biplane. When the object came within sight of the park it began moving along a steadily descending flight path towards them, as though it intended to make a "landing" in the park. By this time it was clear that the object was not any conventional type of flying machine she could recognise.

Mrs. Bomford became quite



The block of flats where Mrs. Bomford's sister lives is the one at the right edge of the picture

excited and together with the children ran a little way towards the object to view it better. This object was still steadily losing height as it approached and still appeared intent on landing in the grounds. However, it finally stopped moving and then remained quite stationary in the sky.

The three of them stood gazing up in amazement at this strange object, in appearance like two saucers joined at the rims. Mrs. Bomford estimates the height of the object to be around 300ft. and its size to be about 30 to 40ft. in diameter, taking as a yardstick the size of conventional aircraft in flight. They were looking up at an angle of approximately 45° and some 250 yards away a group of seven or eight boys who had been playing football had now stopped play and were also pointing towards the object. The direction in which the boys were pointing was also towards the Bomfords, so that the object was overhead somewhere between them.

Mrs. Bomford relates that she had the curious feeling that the object was observing her. "It was an incredible experience," she said, "and the object could aptly be described as a flying saucer, though formerly I didn't believe that they really existed at all."

Mrs. Bomford's attractive appear-

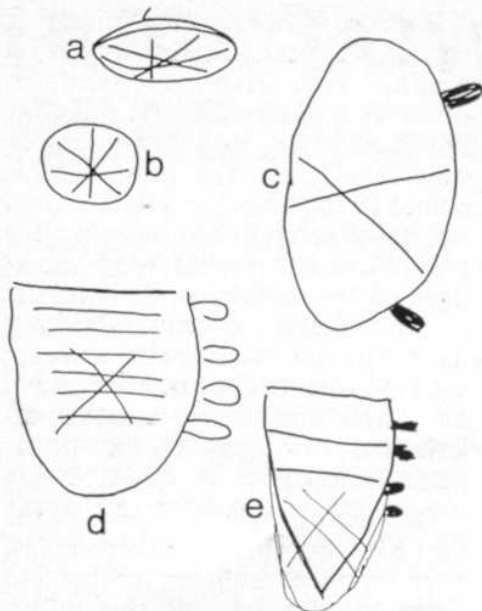
ance was more than usually marked on this occasion as she had borrowed a very striking blonde hairpiece from her mother; her natural hair colour is brunette. Mrs. Bomford is now convinced of the existence of UFOs, but she also feels uneasy about them, and says that she derives some comfort from the thought that she was effectively "disguised" by the hairpiece whilst under close scrutiny, as she felt, by the object or its occupants.

Because of her strong feeling that this craft was of no terrestrial origin, Mrs. Bomford tried to observe as much detail as possible, but could see no port-holes or other apertures. The grey metallic colour of the object was lighter than normal aircraft colouring, and the only markings visible were radial lines on the underside, dividing the circular shape (as would be seen from directly underneath) into six equal segments. The object remained absolutely stationary; was soundless and appeared to be under perfect control.

Because of their proximity to the flats Mrs. Bomford ran there as fast as she could to fetch her mother and sister to also witness this event. Although her quick dash and reappearance from the flat took no more than half a minute, in that time the object had completely vanished. Jacqueline and Karen Bomford remained where they were and continued to observe the object. They told us they felt uneasy when their mother left them. They gave us a description in good general agreement, one with the other, of the departure of the object. We questioned them both separately and found them to be bright and intelligent children. They were unanimous in saying that after their mother hurried off to the flat to fetch the others, the object con-



Approach position of the UFO is a little left of centre



Sketches of the object
 a & b by Mrs. Bomford
 c by Karen Bomford, aged 7½ years
 d & e by Jacqueline Bomford, aged 8½ years

tinued to remain motionless for some seconds. After this three or four black knob-like protuberances, darker than the radial lines on the underside of the craft, emerged on the right-hand side only (as far as

could be seen from the viewing angle). Shortly after this occurrence the craft began to rise vertically, without making any sound or leaving any trail or showing any other visible signs of change at all. It gathered speed at a fantastic rate, rising upwards until it disappeared from sight.

That night Mrs. Bomford felt disturbed by the experience and dreamed about it. The next day she informed the Reading police and also R.A.F. Abingdon. Nothing further was heard from either except a phone call from the R.A.F. station to say that they had checked with Heathrow and were told that no UFO had been observed at that time on the radar screens.

Mrs. Bomford's mother found it hard to believe the account of the UFO as related by her daughter and grandchildren, as also did various friends in the locality when she made enquiries to find out if anyone else had observed the object. Because of this discouragement and the lateness of the hour Mrs. Bomford unfortunately did not contact the boys playing football to

obtain their names and addresses. There were also several other persons dotted about the recreation ground who could have witnessed the sighting. Attempts are now being made to contact these witnesses.

EDITOR'S NOTE: After receiving the "negative" telephone call from the R.A.F., Mrs. Bomford was even more puzzled, so, remembering how the *Sunday Express* had serialised sections of Robert Chapman's book *Unidentified Flying Objects*, she wrote to that newspaper on September 11, told of her experience, and enquired whether or not there had been other reports of the UFO. Mr. Chapman discussed the case with me and, subsequently, I asked Mr. Wroath if he would interview the witnesses. We are grateful to him for having readily agreed.

In her letter to the *Sunday Express*, Mrs. Bomford commented on the R.A.F. reply that nothing had been observed on Heathrow radar: ". . . to me [it] is startling that an object of its size could even approach [undetected] this country (even if it were only from another continent on this world) . . ."

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