

THE EAGLE RIVER INCIDENT

A letter from Joe Simonton

IN the July-August, 1961, issue of the *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* we published a full account of what is known as the Eagle River incident. It concerned an alleged meeting on April 18 between a farmer, Joe Simonton, and three men from a landed saucer four miles from Eagle River, Wisconsin, U.S.A. Mr. Simonton was given some cakes and he claims that he provided water for the visitors in return. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the whole affair was the apparent seriousness devoted to the investigation by a representative of the United States Air Force. This is made all the more surprising in view of the denial of the existence of flying saucers issued by the U.S. Air Force in February, 1962.

As Mr. Simonton was the sole witness his story is, of course, difficult to check, but a series of questions put to him by Dr. Bernard E. Finch has produced a detailed reply. We print his letter below, having anglicised some of the spellings, but otherwise letting Mr. Simonton speak in his own words:

"Dear Sir,

February 22, 1962.

"I have your letter here at hand and I don't quite understand just what you mean when you say in attempting to put it over one needs more evidence. I have the evidence right here in this pancake that I have. I only have one left and I don't let it out of my sight. I got four of these cakes in all and the Air Force got the rest of them for analysis. One they (the Air Force) won't let me use in my story and the other came too late to put in my story. So I am not telling anyone what it is until I get it cleared by the Air Force.

"I hope you understand and I will tell you this—these cakes are not made out of anything we have here on earth would use for pancakes. I hope this drawing will do for what you want it for. Now I sent you one of my stories which tell everything that happened and explained the ship or flying saucer. Now I have three reasons why I think this thing was from another planet. First those men had a complexion much finer than any woman I

ever saw and their eyes just looked right down to the bottom of your shoes. Do you understand? When they looked in your eyes, well you just couldn't stand to look at them for long. They seemed to do something to you. Now I had thousands of people here last summer and I looked them over good but I never saw anyone that had a complexion and eyes like those three men had.

"2. There isn't a country here on earth that don't have rations for their men when they go in the field or on trips. They don't cook their food as they go. Well, these men were cooking their food right on the job. 3. If we or any other country had one of these machines, why would they shoot these million-dollar firecrackers to get a man into space when they could take one of these flying saucers and put more than one man up in space and back safe all in one day?

"I think I have told you about all I can unless you ask me some questions, then I will answer them. Tell me why do you want all this about my experience? Are you writing it up for some book, paper or story? I wish I could get over to England and tell the people in my own words. But that is out for I'll never make it. I have been giving a few lectures here in the States about my experience. Well, I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

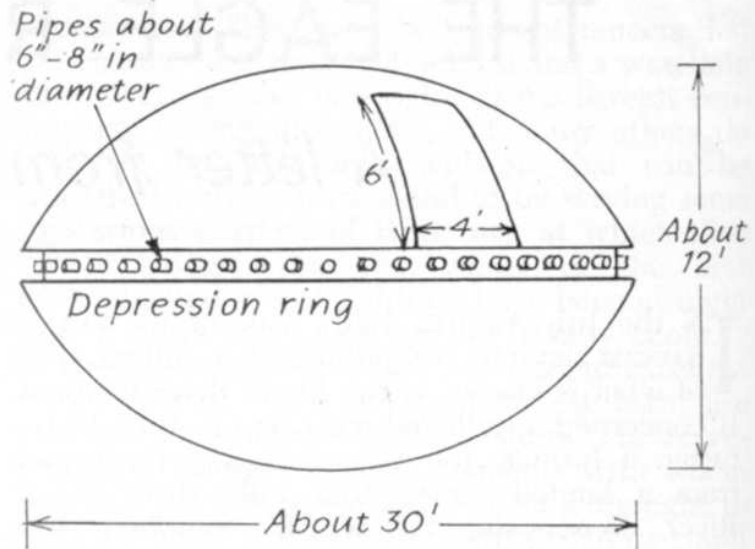
Joe Simonton."

The analysis of one of the cakes would seem to present a further puzzle, for in our November-December, 1961, issue another of our readers, Mr. W. J. Anstee, of Montreal, Canada, was told in a letter from the U.S. Air Force at Washington that the cake was composed of ordinary terrestrial materials.

Before reaching any conclusions on this matter it is worth recalling that the official investigators, Dr. J. A. Hyneck, Major Robert Friend, representing the Aerospace Technical Intelligence Center, and an officer from the K. I. Sawyer A.F.B., of Gwinn, Michigan, announced that there was "no question that Mr. Simonton felt that his contact had been a real experience."

If Mr. Simonton, however, was hallucinated, how did he come by the pancakes?

Even more puzzling was the appeal at the time for more such witnesses to come forward despite the risk of ridicule. This appeal was made nonsense of by the United States Air Force denial only a few months later. The only way in which all the various statements issued by the Air Force can be reconciled is by assuming that its ranks are hopelessly split on this issue and that control passes to and fro between sceptics and believers. The pronouncements made about flying saucers since 1947 constitute a bewildering study. If believers in saucers were in a majority it would be quite possible to choose as many favourable statements as unfavourable. As the majority is sceptical, the newspapers naturally seize on the denials and ignore the reservations and the occasional admission that something very strange indeed is going on in our skies.



Sketch based on a drawing supplied by Mr. Joe Simonton.

AN OPEN LETTER TO PROFESSOR KOPAL

WE are grateful to Mr. Roger Thomas for drawing our attention to the two articles on the subject of life in the universe which appeared in the *Birmingham Evening Despatch* on February 27 and 28. On the latter date the Astronomer-Royal, Dr. Richard van der Riet Woolley, re-affirmed his belief that "the saucer business is utter nonsense." Dr. Woolley is not worth powder and shot as his other *bêtise* on the subject of conventional space travel was delivered on the very eve of man's first triumph in space and will, happily, be long remembered against him. The other contributor, who wrote on February 27, was Professor Zdenek Kopal, Professor of Astronomy at Manchester University. We were very sorry to note that he, too, had attacked the flying saucers: "The existence of flying saucers," he wrote, "cannot be accepted by a rational person. If these objects are really craft manned by intelligence beings, what is their aim? If they are so intelligent that they can build spaceships, surely they would have tried to contact us by radio. It is so much more simple than sending people."

Mr. Roger Thomas contributed an excellent short letter in reply to the *Evening Despatch* on March 2. While Dr. Woolley is best left alone, we felt that Professor Kopal was not beyond re-

demption, so we addressed to him the following open letter on March 19:

"Professor Zdenek Kopal,
Manchester University,
Manchester.

Dear Sir,

In the course of your article in the *Birmingham "Evening Dispatch"* on February 27 you say that no rational person can accept the existence of flying saucers. As the *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* is devoted entirely to an examination of this phenomenon and accepts the existence of the saucers, we must assume that you consider us irrational. But before you dismiss us entirely might we suggest that you study the enclosed copy of our March-April, 1962, issue? If we are as irrational as we appear to you, could we not be told where we have gone wrong and why the evidence we print is either suspect or wrongly adduced?

We would draw your attention particularly to two items which you will find in this issue. On page 18 we report an incident which occurred last February near Ivinghoe. We claim credence for it because of the obvious sincerity of Mr. Wildman who was interrogated not only by our investigators, but also by the police. If, however, it is alleged that Mr. Wildman was the sole witness of this incident and was suffering from hallucination, we must point out that his experience is very similar to many that have been reported by several witnesses at