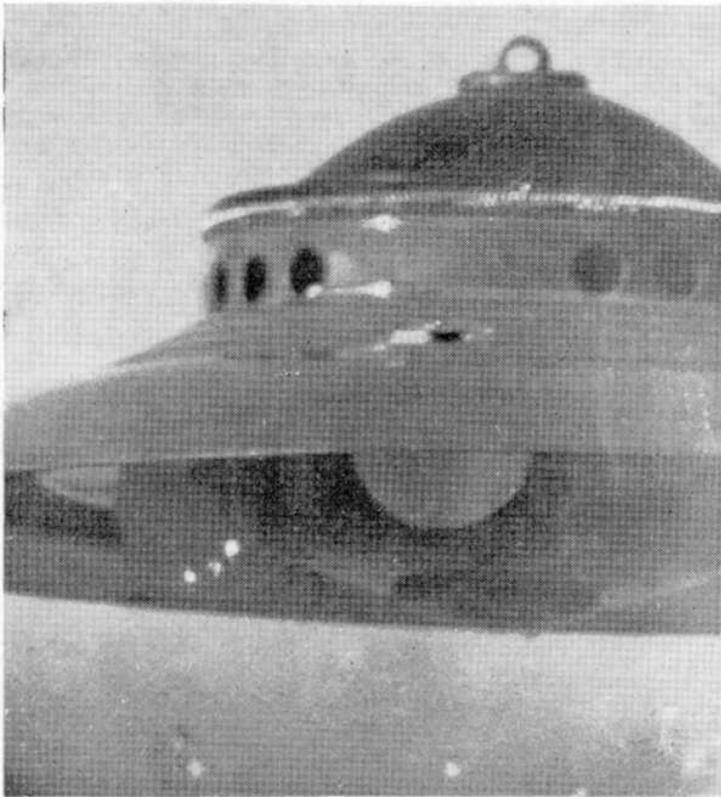


# THE BOOK THAT WAS DYNAMITE

Charles Bowen

CLOSE on seventeen years ago there appeared a book which, so far, is probably the second-best-seller ever on the subject;<sup>1</sup> a book which caused such a rumpus among those who study UFO reports and associated phenomena, that its rumblings have reverberated down the years. The book, **Flying Saucers have Landed**, by Desmond Leslie and George Adamski, has lately reappeared, and is offered, "Revised and Enlarged," in 280 pages, by Neville Spearman Ltd., at 42s.

The original *Flying Saucers have Landed* is a



"Tobacco humidor and ping-pong balls" (USAF), "operating theatre lamp" or UFO?

classic in the UFO literature. The bold decision to publish it was taken by Waveney Girvan, who in 1953 was editor-in-chief of the publishing firm T. Werner Laurie. I say *bold*, because he knew, after his experience with Gerald Heard's *The Riddle of the Flying Saucers*, that the manuscript handed to him by Desmond Leslie was dynamite, and that merely to expose it to the public gaze could cause an explosion. When it appeared in September 1953, the book had obviously benefited from Waveney Girvan's editing skill—during our years of close

association he told me of the difficulties he had faced, and how he overcame them.<sup>2</sup>

The explosion soon followed. As is often the case with explosions, some of the blast effects were unpredictable.

Desmond Leslie's provocative delving into the history of the subject and his speculations thereon were one thing; the Adamski story of his encounter, and telepathic "conversation" with a "Venusian" out of a landed "Scout craft" saucer, and his photographs, were another. A predictable blast effect was the instant raising of the voices of protest among reviewers. The general implication was that Adamski was a liar, a cheat and a hoaxer; others, later, thought he may have been hoaxed by someone else. Some, more charitable, were of the opinion that Adamski had seen, and photographed, a strange aerial object, and that he had suffered an hallucination which gave rise to the sensational story he told.

An unpredictable blast effect was the enthusiasm with which the public rushed to buy the book, in spite of the reviews. Another effect was the way a "contactee" cult sprang into being around the person of George Adamski, an effect which, according to some, has done more damage to the possibility of serious research on UFOs than could have resulted from the pontifications of a thousand Menzels! While this may well be true, it is equally true that many thousands of reasonable people first met the subject through the agency of this book, and thereafter decided, in a rational way, to find out more about UFOs. These people did not join the ranks of the vehement protesters, and they did not become cultists. In fact many of them eventually became readers of *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW*, for another of the effects of the dynamite blast was the founding of this journal late in 1954 by Waveney Girvan and a handful of friends.

The success of the Leslie/Adamski book prompted these dedicated people to think the time was ripe for establishing a serious journal on the subject. (This is contrary to a view sometimes expressed that the FSR was founded to disseminate the cultist beliefs of the "contactees" and their followers.)<sup>3</sup>

The new edition of *Flying Saucers have Landed* has not been enhanced by the "Revising and Enlarging"—the writing of a new Introduction, the insertion of commentaries and the addition of a somewhat rambling third part. Obviously some revision was necessary. It is a pity Mr. Leslie did not just substitute a new Introduction and add a postscript

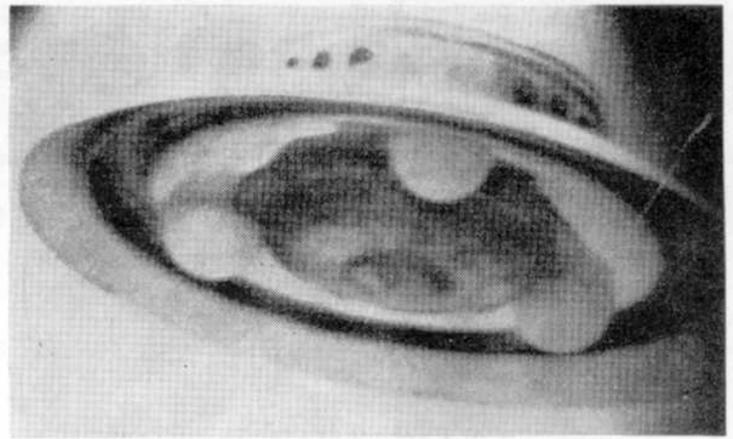
note on his late collaborator, George Adamski, who died in 1965. As it is, some 90% of the original text remains, and this will no doubt be read with interest by a new generation of adherents.

Now that the book has been given a new lease of life, it is to be expected that more voices will be raised against it. Once again, most of these voices will be from the ranks of the "pro-UFO" people, both the serious and the rank and file researchers, which is understandable, for the Adamski story, seemingly ridiculous, makes the subject laughable. However, I have long felt that although the story seems ridiculous, and the chief witness created a poor impression of himself, the greatest danger to the subject lay in the subsequent cultism. The story itself is no more "ridiculous" than the bulk of the contact stories.<sup>4</sup>

Fortunately, like Waveney Girvan,<sup>5</sup> I am not alone among the FSR team in thinking that this alleged incident, shorn of the attendant cultism, should be regarded in the same light as the hundreds of other cases of encounters with humanoid, or human-type, entities.

During the past four years I have frequently speculated<sup>6</sup> on the possibility that there could be solid machine-like objects and, maybe, solid occupants from somewhere unknown, landing on our *terra firma*; that these could also be responsible for projecting into the minds of chance witnesses other visions of aerial objects ("soft" sightings?) or landed "craft", or of various types of entities ranging from the gorgeous to the gruesome. (Such things could also be projected into the minds of certain clairvoyant percipients, and we should not forget that radiation medicine specialist C. Maxwell Cade has pointed out that hallucinatory effects — the same effect in more than one person is possible — can be induced by the beaming of ultra high frequency radiation at people.)<sup>7</sup>

Together with hallucinatory-type, or psychic-type visions such as these, is it equally possible that imaginative "messages" and conversations, or even illusions of having been taken for a ride aboard a "craft", could be induced in receptive minds, and objects like overgrown chicken feeders, monstrous lampshades or oversize operating theatre lamps drummed up for the ready camera to record? If the reader asks why, all I can suggest is that such actions could be a form of *deception*, or *deterrent*: if certain entities *are* keeping us under surveillance, or carrying out strange tasks on our planet, it is possible that they may not wish to be observed.<sup>8</sup> They could, by use of techniques even within our ken, frighten off chance human witnesses by projecting into their minds alarming pictures of monstrous creatures or little characters like gargoyles; they could also plant "phoney" messages of the kind given to contactee percipients to make the subject sound so silly to down-to-earth types that they shun it for ever! Could a logical step from such activities be *control*, of some, if not all? I hope not, but it is a possibility that should not be overlooked.



"Chicken feeder" (Blue Book official), "Lampshade and bulbs," flying model or an incomprehensible "something"?

For these reasons, speculative as they are, I suggest we should look dispassionately at the Adamski story. It could be dynamite—of a different kind to that expected by Waveney Girvan in 1953—and we certainly should not laugh at it, any more than we laugh at the other "occupant" claims. After all, someone, or something, may have *intended* him to do more damage than a thousand Menzels!

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Pride of place must go to *Flying Saucers, Serious Business* by the late Frank Edwards.
- <sup>2</sup> Waveney Girvan gave an account of the less intimate details of the publishing of the book in his *Flying Saucers and Common Sense* (Frederick Muller, 1955).
- <sup>3</sup> Echoed by Aimé Michel in *Les Soucoupes Volantes* (Collection Pour ou Contre—Berger-Levrault, Nancy, 1969) and refuted in FSR, Vol. 15, No. 2, page 28.
- <sup>4</sup> As opposed to the "contactee" claim, with its "messages for mankind", rides round the Moon and other frolics, the "contact" claim covers reports of encounters with alleged occupants of unconventional aerial objects where no intelligible conversation takes place, and where the events are generally incomprehensible.
- <sup>5</sup> Waveney Girvan was editor of FSR from November 1959 until his death in October 1964.
- <sup>6</sup> These speculative essays commenced in *The Humanoids* (first published in October 1966) and were summarised in *Thinking Aloud* in FSR, Vol. 15, No. 6.
- <sup>7</sup> C. Maxwell Cade, *A Long Cool Look at Alien Intelligence*, Part 4 (FSR, Vol. 13, No. 6) and Part 5 (FSR, Vol. 14, No. 2).
- <sup>8</sup> See Luis Schönher's article elsewhere in this issue.

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