

REPORTS FROM IBIUNA

Hans Bemelmans

IN the first week of July 1969 I heard and read reports* of remarkable happenings said to be occurring at Ibiuna, a small town of about 5,000 inhabitants (many of them Japanese immigrants) some 71 kilometres to the South West of São Paulo. (The precise coordinates for the place are 23° 40 S., 47° 15 W.) There appeared to have been at least three landings, of which two had left "nest-like" impressions similar to those found in Australia and elsewhere.

The investigation of all such matters is now becoming far from easy in Brazil, for the Brazilian Air Force is making great efforts to suppress all knowledge of UFO activities and kill all reports. The result is that very little indeed is now getting into the newspapers.

The usual Air Force technique is as follows: as soon as news of a sighting or a landing comes in, an Air Force team of investigators at once sets out for the spot. Local officials in the area of the landing or sighting are then requested by the Air Force to form an official group to investigate the phenomena, and a week or so later this arrangement is confirmed to them in an official letter from the Brazilian Air Force. Then come the orders: "You will not under any circumstances give any information on UFO activity to any press, radio, or television reporter or representative. This is a matter of National Security, and all press releases will be made by the Brazilian Air Force Public Relations Department".

The Brazilian Air Force thus "co-operates" with UFO investigation groups, but then muzzles them. Some local UFO investigation groups have at times expressed the naïve view that the Air Force men seemed to know remarkably little about the subject. It is however our opinion that this is simply a pose, by means of which they can appear to plead ignorance and get the local investigators to reveal all that they know about a case before they silence them. Before long the whole country will have been silenced in this way. The interrogation of witnesses by the authorities is carried on intensively, until finally the witnesses agree to confess that it was all a hoax by them.

All photographs are pronounced to be fakes.

I was fortunate enough to be able to pay two visits to the Ibiuna region, the first time during the last week in June and the second early in July. (I heard later that Mr. Nigel Rimes from São Paulo had also attempted to investigate these cases, but I did not manage to see him.)

The countryside around Ibiuna is semi-arid agricultural land (though with some aspects rather similar to what I recall of the South Downs in England). There are many small farms, and many of them grow vegetables (this is of course the speciality of the Japanese). There is also much sugarcane. A few kilometres further north lies the extensive São Paulo Light Reservoir. This area is cattle-country, with pockets of dense bush or woodland. In the area where the two "nests" were found, the geological formation (for those who may perhaps be interested) is as follows: *Intrusivas Ácidas*, granite of recent formation, soil of light sandy texture with a great deal of small stones. Some 6½ kilometres further north, the formations are Lower Pre-Cambrian—dolomites, gneiss, and micaschists (scene of Landing No. 3). (The foregoing is taken from the official Geological Map of the State of São Paulo.)

Putting together the evidence gathered from various sources, I find that there were basically three different types of phenomena that had the people of Ibiuna so excited. These were as follows:

I The "Egoistical Lights"

On a farm known as the Fazenda Bonanza, located some 10 kilometres to the east of Ibiuna, there was a spring of radioactive water, and, after the recent long spell of drought, this spring had gone dry. Then, in March 1969, stories began to trickle out about "balls of orange light" that were appearing at night over and around the dry spring. Many people, including Dr. Rosa, the local Chief of Police, went out there and observed this phenomenon for themselves during March and April of 1969.

The orange lights always put in an appearance at about 9.00 p.m., and there was much comment on the observed fact that, just before their arrival, the pigs, dogs, geese, and fowls on the Fazenda Bonanza farm would

always begin to make a loud disturbance of a kind that gave witnesses the impression that these animals and birds were suffering pain and fear.

The "orange lights" were two in number, each seemingly about the size of a car headlamp (say 18 centimetres diameter). Although of a bright orange colour, they did not illuminate anything near them—neither the ground nor adjacent bushes. We heard later that Dr. Rosa himself had given the lights the nickname of "Egoistical Lights", and this term has in fact stuck, being now adopted by the Brazilian Air Force to describe them. If undisturbed, the lights "would dance with each other" over the spring and its vicinity for an hour or more and then vanish as suddenly as they had come. On the few occasions when observers tried to get near them, the lights would simply vanish completely.

The usual "explanations" were of course speedily forthcoming. Thus the local dentist, Dr. Francisco Elias Soares, and a local court official, Sr. Rubens Xavier de Lima, expressed confidence that the phenomenon was a perfectly natural one, due to gases escaping from the dried up spring and undergoing spontaneous combustion on contact with the atmosphere. But subsequently the Brazilian Air Force themselves struck a deadly blow at this nice theory by flatly rejecting it. They even told Dr. Rosa, the Chief of Police, that the lights "were probably some sort of probe from a mother-ship in Outer Space."

Since the lights themselves decided shortly afterwards to move away from the spring and do their dancing over a spot where there was no spring and the terrain was totally different, the Brazilian Air Force's explanation at any rate looks a lot more sensible than the "gas theory" advocated by dentist and court official!

II Fireballs

In Ibiuna and the surrounding district there have also been a number of reports of *bolas de fogo*, or fireballs, travelling at very high speeds and at both high and very low altitudes.

There has been general agreement in all the descriptions, which are of an orange ball of hazy light, darker at the centre and having a luminous tail. The tail was also orange, paler where it was close to the ball and getting darker towards the rear. The estimates of size

* See, in particular, report in newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, July 12, 1969.



From left: *O Estado* correspondent R. Soares de Campos, Sr. de Lima, the Dentist and Chief of Police Dr. Rosa



Sr. and Sra. Kaneko in front of the Kaneko Bar



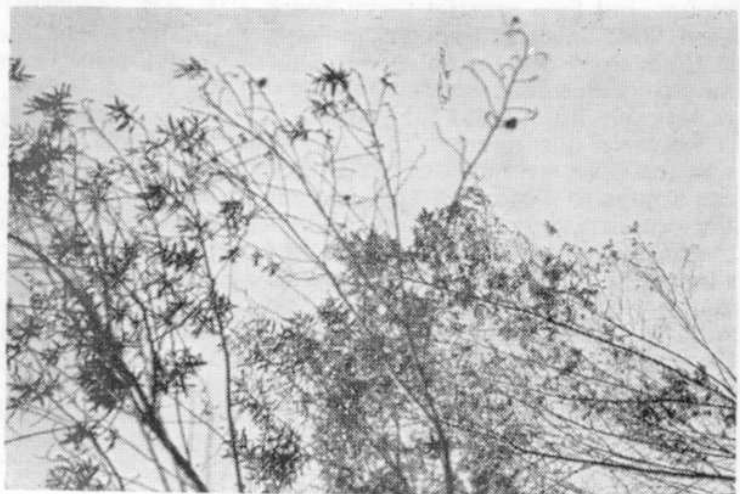
The circle is still clearly defined although the area of the "landing" has been cleared by burning



Scene of landing No. 3, witnessed by Sr. Benedito. "Nest" as seen when approaching from road



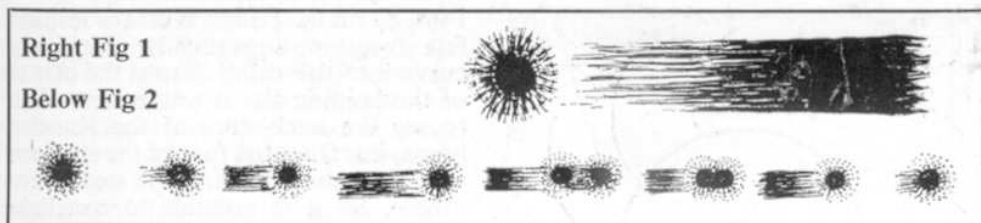
Landing No. 3. Approach as seen from centre of the "nest"



Branches and twigs around site of No. 3 landing. Leaves withered and fallen

Right Fig 1

Below Fig 2



varied a good deal, but many witnesses said they were "of the size of a car headlight."

When the orange fireball was sighted, the percipients would usually begin by seeing a single orange light approaching in the distance. As it came over at great speed the tail part would become apparent, and when right overhead it was evident that the phenomenon consisted of not one light but *two* lights and a tail. Then the two lights would merge as the phenomenon receded, so that finally only one orange light was again visible. The total time taken for the phenomenon to cross the sky from horizon to horizon was usually in the neighbourhood of one minute. (See Figs. 1 and 2.)

On at least three occasions this "orange light" phenomenon has been seen travelling at the same fantastic speed and at a height of only about 3 to 5 metres above the ground, following apparently with the most perfect ease all contours of the terrain and lifting over trees and obstacles lying along its route.

Here again "natural explanations" were soon forthcoming. The local Ibiuna UFO study group (set up by the Brazilian Air Force as an official body) thought that ball-lightning or some other natural phenomenon was the answer. *But once more the Brazilian Air Force themselves put paid to such a theory by announcing that the objects in question were certainly not natural phenomena!*

III UFO Landings and "Nests"

There have been at least three landings, two of them producing "nests". The three cases are as follows:

(a) At Km. 48 on the Ibiuna-São Paulo Road

At 4.30 in the early morning of April 26, 1969, Sr. Mareal Robler, a Brazilian industrialist, was driving along the Via Bandeirantes, the main highway to São Paulo. As he came down a hill and round a bend towards the railway bridge at Kilometre 48 he was amazed to see a most unusual object standing on the ground between a small general store and a nearby police-post (closed at the time). The object was approximately 4 metres in diameter, its lower part a bright luminous red, the colour of blood, and shaped like the inverted base of a slightly tapering cone. (See Figs. 3 and 4.) The upper portion consisted of a dome with a sort of metal window-frame, "rather like an orange cut in half, but having only four sections". The interior of the object was so brilliantly lit that the percipient could see nothing inside it and yet, as he reported, *the surroundings were not illuminated.*

At so early an hour of the day there was nobody else around, and Sr. Mareal was too alarmed to tarry. There do not seem to have been any reported magnetic effects on his car, but it is to be noted that his newly purchased Rolex Oyster watch stopped precisely as he drove past the object. Later, in São Paulo, the watch-repairer to whom he took it said that it had been subjected to a very intense magnetic field.

(b) "The Kaneko Landing" at Ibiuna

The principal street of Ibiuna runs along the edge of a fairly deep valley. This means that the houses are built in

such a fashion that the bedrooms are located where the cellar would normally be. Such is the case with the *Kaneko Bar*, an establishment owned by a Japanese immigrant, Kaneko Nobutoshi, and his wife Kioko, both of whom came to Brazil some years ago.

At 2.00 a.m. on June 17, 1969, having finished business for the night, the Kanekos locked up the bar and went out on to the exterior staircase in order to descend to their private living quarters. The night was cold and damp, so that the valleys were filled with a

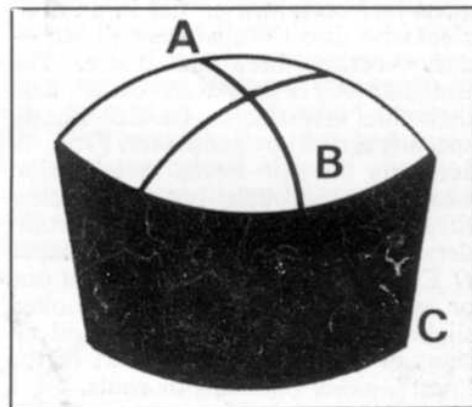


Fig. 4

slight mist which made it impossible to make out more than a faint glow coming from the street-lighting just beyond the baseball stadium on the hill on the far side of the valley. Despite the mist however there was a new, unfamiliar light, very clearly visible and in a place where no light should be.

At first Kaneko Nobutoshi thought this light might be from a truck unloading building materials for a new Japanese social club then under construction nearby. But very soon he realised that whatever he was looking at was no truck, and indeed was like nothing that he had ever seen before. All that he and his wife could actually make out resembled one very large curved "window", brilliantly illuminated, and it seemed to be suspended just above ground level. Its light was like the light of a mercury lamp, but struck him as decidedly odd, since it only illuminated the ground for some 20 metres or so on either side but not at all in front. The "window" seemed to have four vertical bars, which showed up clearly against the background of light. One of the middle bars was seemingly much thicker than the others. Kaneko Nobutoshi estimated the diameter of the curved "window" at between 8 and 10 metres, and its height at from 2½ to 3 metres.

The two Japanese stood watching the mystery light for some 40 to 45 minutes. For a while a sort of spotlight

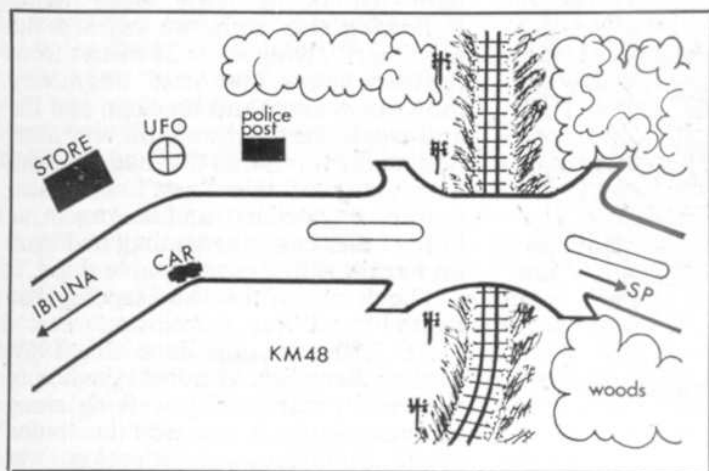


Fig. 3

was directed from the object on to the nearby trees and shrubs, but apart from this no change or movement was seen. Then the light simply vanished.

On the following day the Kanekos and a number of other people went over to the spot where the light had seemed to be. After a brief search in the long grass (*capim* as it is called in Brazil) they found a circle of flattened vegetation, recalled as being approximately 8 metres in diameter, though nobody thought of taking precise measurements until the spot had been too much trampled.

Inside the circle of the "nest" the grass had been swirled flat in an anti-clockwise direction, with small secondary vortices here and there. The Brazilian Air Force were called, and their chief investigator, Lt.-Col. Zanni, speedily arrived by helicopter. From all accounts the Air Force investigation was fairly thorough, but nevertheless they missed some of the important details. A reporter from the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* wrote that one or two patches of the grass looked slightly scorched, but I could find no signs of scorching on any part of the "nest", either on stems or roots.

When I paid my first visit to the site (it was one day in the last week of June) I was just in time to see an old man in the very act of striking a match to set fire to the dry grass of the "nest". He was unable to explain to me why he wanted to set that particular area ablaze, and it is interesting to speculate as to the instructions he had received, and from whom they came. Two weeks later, when I came again, the "nest" site had been burnt. Be it noted however that the whole area surrounding it, well covered with long dry *capim* grass, was intact. No attempt had been made to clear that!

On my first visit the "nest" was still very clearly defined, despite the lapse of some days, and the trampling by the feet of numerous visitors. The *capim* at the spot was now dried and very yellow. I made a careful study of the whole area, as the published reports had stated flatly that there were *no marks* to indicate that any object had actually made a landing there. And I was successful, for I found that where the small "vortices" had been there were six flattened disc-shaped areas 5 centimetres in diameter, and in the centre of each of them there was a hole 2 centimetres deep and just wide enough for me to insert the tip of my index finger. The diameter of these central holes was about 1.5 centimetres, and they were "rounded" at their bottoms. (See Figs. 5 and 6.) The holes were also slightly inclined outwards from the centre of the circle.

The distances between these flattened

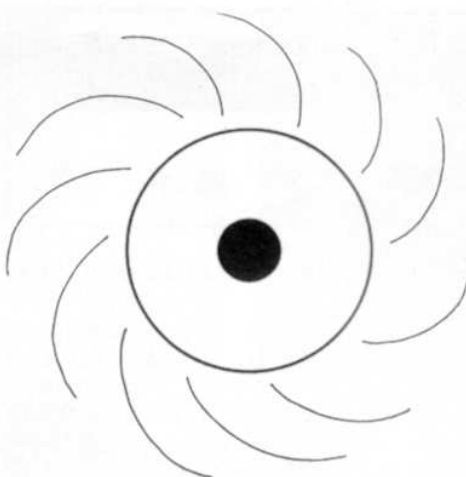


Fig. 5

disc marks with central hole were uniformly exactly 1.60 metres, and they were set in an open-ended fashion like the letter "U", with marks Nos. 1 and 6 exactly 3 metres apart. The open end of the "U" faced towards North. An odd feature is that all the six marks were in the western half of the swirled circle. A very careful search for a seventh disc-shaped flattened mark to close the "U" proved fruitless (see Fig. 7).

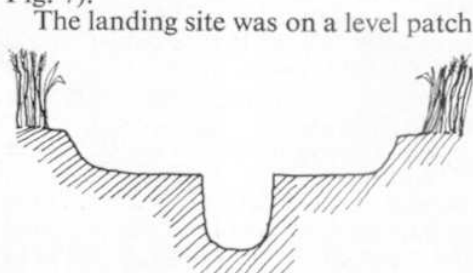


Fig. 6

of ground about 20 metres wide. To the East the ground then rose up to the wall of the baseball stadium, which was some 40-45 metres distant (see

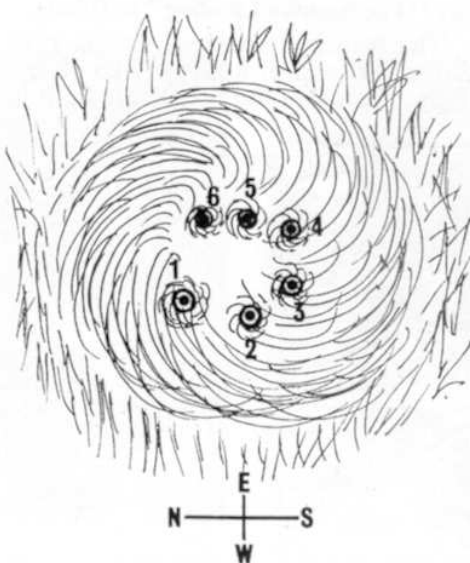


Fig. 7

Figs. 8 and 9). To the West the ground fell away in a gradually steepening curve into the valley. From the centre of the landing site it was not possible to see the back door of the Kaneko home, but from the foot of the stadium wall both the door and the steps were visible. So it is possible to conclude that the base of the "window" seen by the Kanekos must have been at least 2 metres or so above the ground.

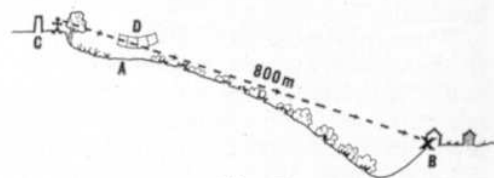


Fig. 8

This site will be visited again some months hence.

(c) Third Landing Near Ibiuna—and a New Type of Craft

When I made my second visit to Ibiuna and saw Mr. Kaneko again, his first words were: "I suppose you've come about the other flying saucer!" And so I discovered that there had been yet another landing. This was of a most unusual device, which had apparently crash-landed on June 26, 1969, in a wood some 6½ kilometres to the north-west of Ibiuna.

However the Japanese seemed curiously unwilling to say too much to us about this latest event, perhaps because he had been warned not to talk, but we managed to meet several lads who knew where the thing had come down and could conduct us there. The local police also refused to give any information about the case to the press or to visitors, having evidently been well briefed by the Air Force on the necessity for silence.

Following a dirt road out from Ibiuna for some 6 kilometres, we turned off and went about 500 metres along a narrow track. We were now in a valley covered with fairly dense brush and young trees. To the right a well-trodden path led up a fairly steep bank. Following this path, we reached the new "nest", lying some 25 metres from the track below. The "nest" was in very long *capim* grass and bracken, and the anti-clockwise swirl was still very clear despite the trampling that had gone on. The limits of this "nest" were also most clearly defined, and here again, as in the other case, the landing had been on terrain with a considerable slope.

The details of this third landing and second "nest" are as follows:

At 2.30 p.m. on June 26, 1969, Senhor Benedito, the local Justice of the Peace, was quietly walking along this narrow track towards the Ibiuna road. Suddenly his attention was

drawn to a sound like the humming of a swarm of bees. Glancing upwards to his left, he beheld the oddest looking device hovering over the trees. As he watched the object, which was rocking from side to side, it suddenly dropped out of the sky and crashed into the brush out of sight. The old gentleman's immediate reaction was to hasten to the scene of the "accident" to see if anyone had been injured. He got to a point about 6 metres from the machine, which was sitting there, on the ground. Then it quickly lifted, hovered for an instant, and went away in a gentle climb.

As it took off, he again heard the humming sound and was almost knocked off his feet by a strong blast of wind. He at once went into Ibiuna and told his story to friends. Within a matter of hours the Brazilian Air Force investigators were there to question him, having been alerted by the police.

The Air Force investigators examined the site and removed a broken branch and some pieces of something I heard described as resembling "a thick plastic bag which had been torn open." The same observer commented that "perhaps 'they' had unwrapped something and thrown away the plastic cover of it". (One or two other people expressed the view, however, that in all likelihood this plastic bag was merely something that had been dropped there by one of the numerous sightseers who had visited the site immediately after the landing and before the Brazilian Air Force arrived on the scene.)

In probing the site, I found myself quite hampered by the sheer thickness of the swirled *capim* and bracken. I could find no trace of any marks that could have been made by a landing gear, and this seemed to confirm Sr. Benedito's declaration that there was no landing gear of any sort on the machine. Several bracken stems appeared to have been crushed by a heavy weight, but this crushing was confined to within 8 centimetres of, and only to one side (the lower side) of the primary fracture. There were indications that the leaves of a small tree immediately beside the "nest" had withered, but I do not know whether this was due to heat, radiation, and bruising, or to merely natural causes. I hope that, on this point, photographs may be of help.

I could find no similar withering on other nearby trees of the same species.

A decidedly strange thing that I did find, however, was that despite the very prolonged recent drought (this region has had scarcely any rain at all this year) the soil directly beneath the flattened vegetation of the "nest" was *extremely wet*. In fact the only way in which it could have been wetter would have been for there to be water actually

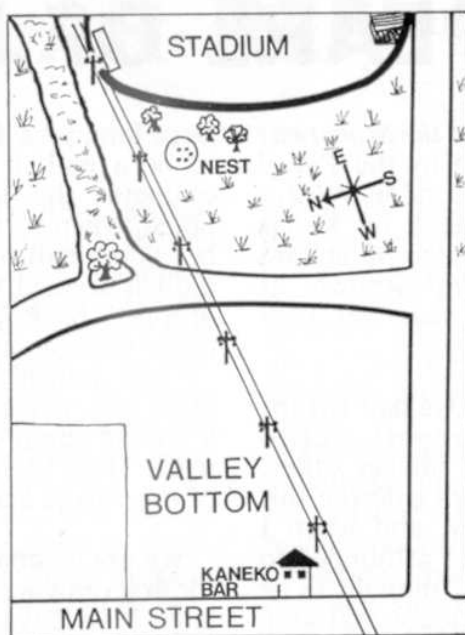


Fig. 9

trickling down through the base of the "nest", but there was of course no indication whatever of this, or that there had ever been such a flow of water there. Ten metres from that spot the soil was dry and dusty and below the surface the humidity was only very slight indeed.

Samples of *capim* which I took from under the swirled mass of the nest looked as though they had been scorched, and they certainly presented a different appearance from similar samples taken from the grass on the trampled approach path. One investigator, so I understand, had hoped to have some of these examples tested at the São Paulo Nuclear Laboratory, but it seems that, for reasons beyond his control, he was unable to have this done.

As regards Sr. Benedito's description of the craft itself, it seems that its bottom half was shaped like a bowl. The upper portion was divided into two parts, one of them being like a rather shallower bowl fitting precisely on to the lower one, while the front end had a "drum" which was revolving at high speed in an anti-clockwise direction, i.e. towards the percipient (see Fig. 10).

The colour of the whole machine was a very light brown, with a leaden appearance—dull, heavy, and metallic looking. Sr. Benedito thought the length was about 6 metres. This figure agrees indeed with the diameter of the "nest" which was found to be just under 6 metres from one side through to the other.

One thing that Sr. Benedito mentioned particularly about the "drum" was that he thought it might have been a fuel tank. He explained that, right at the nose of the "drum" (see Fig. 10)

there was something protruding which looked very much like a filler-cap. He also stated quite flatly that the "drum" was spinning on a horizontal axis, not on a vertical one.

As regards the hum, he said that the machine was emitting a hum all the time, and that the hum merely rose in pitch when the machine took off.

Incidentally, the drawing made for me by Sr. Benedito is identical with one that was made by another person on the basis of Benedito's oral description given just after his strange adventure, and the rest of his description as given to me also seems to tally very closely with other people's versions of what he had told them. The only discrepancy in the accounts seems to be that some people (who, of course, had not themselves seen the object) appeared to think Benedito had said it was of the colour of lead, whereas in his statement to me he maintained very firmly that it was a metallic light brown.

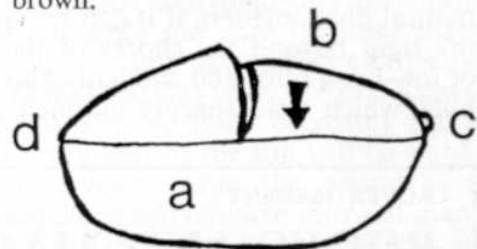


Fig. 10

Copy of Sr. Benedito's sketch: (a) light brown metallic colour, (b) drum revolving in anti-clockwise direction, (c) "filler cap", (d) dividing line clearly visible

No port-holes or hatches were visible on the craft at any time, nor did he see any occupants.

He says he was not frightened by the machine. His first reaction when it came crashing down into the undergrowth had genuinely been one of alarm and concern for the safety of the occupants. Naturally this feeling gave way to utter amazement when he came round a bend in the track and found himself confronted by the weird machine.

In addition to being the local J.P., Sr. Benedito is also the minister of the local Church of God. I wondered whether he might have connected his weird experience with his religious beliefs, but this does not appear to be the case. He seemed to me to be a simple straightforward man who had seen a decidedly unusual machine seemingly getting into difficulties and then taking off again. There was no sign of tension in him and no indication that he might be withholding anything from me. I shall visit him again in a few months to see whether he has undergone any change or had any further experiences.

Watkins

*Books of interest to
Students of
Flying Saucers*

THE HUMANOIDS

Edited by Charles Bowen
30s.

UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

by Robert Chapman
30s.

UNINVITED VISITORS

by Ivan T. Sanderson
30s.

CHARIOTS OF THE GODS?

by Eric von Däniken
30s.

SPACEMEN IN THE ANCIENT EAST

by W. Raymond Drake
30s.

THE VIEW OVER ATLANTIS

by John Michel
35s.

CHALLENGE TO SCIENCE

by Jacques & Janine Vallée
25s.

FLYING SAUCERS FROM OUTER SPACE

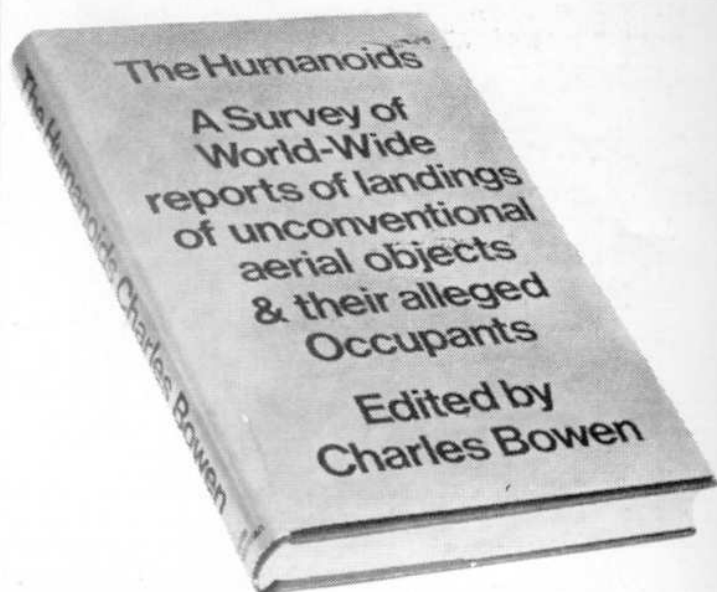
by Donald E. Keyhoe
25s.

If ordering by post please add 2s. for postage

(If remitting dollars, please send \$4.75 to cover packing, postage and exchange for a 30s. book; \$4 for a 25s. book)

JOHN M. WATKINS

21 CECIL COURT
CHARING CROSS ROAD
LONDON WC2



WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY

Jacques Vallée
Antonio Ribera
Coral Lorenzen
Aimé Michel

Gordon Creighton
Donald B. Hanlon
W. T. Powers
Charles Bowen

This exciting, enlarged hard-cover edition of the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW classic

THE HUMANOIDS

is in great demand. No ufologist's bookshelf will be complete without this remarkable work of reference, which now contains the full story (with Dr. Fontes' medical reports) of the A. V. Boas 'seduction' case, the Villa Santina encounter, and a new chapter on intriguing comparisons of reported entities.

256 pages
Price 30s.

Neville Spearman Ltd.
112 Whitfield Street
London W1P 8DP

FLYING SAUCER REVIEW

Annual Subscription U.K. and Eire £1.10.0, U.S. and Canada \$4.20, or Overseas equivalent of £1.12.0 English Currency. Single copies 5s. 0d. plus 4d. postage.

Please address all letters to:

The Editor, Flying Saucer Review, 21 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2.

Subscriptions: 49a Kings Grove, London, S.E.15.

Telephone: 01-639 0784

Remittances payable to "Flying Saucer Review".

Artwork by Pauline Bowen