

Their height was around 1 metre 65 cms. (5ft. 5in.) and they were more or less of lean build.

#### Medical tests and solitary confinement

At the request of the Chief of Police, Doribio was sent for a medical examination by a physician, Dr. Antônio Geris. The doctor talked to him for a long time, asked questions and gave him various

tests, and concluded that he was entirely normal.

In the meantime the Police authorities had been in touch with the Brazilian Air Force, and by the time Doribio got back to Police Headquarters from the doctor's surgery, orders had been received to hold him in solitary confinement until two military men arrived.

The report concludes by saying that at the time of writing Doribio

Pereira was still being held incomunicado somewhere in Lins. Meanwhile, the whole of Lins is agog with talk of UFOs and meetings with entities, and the public remembers the case of Maria José Cintra who, only a few weeks previously, had been asked for water by a strange woman, strangely garbed and speaking an incomprehensible language, and also *wearing a hood (capuz)*.

## THE ALDEBURGH PLATFORM

THE *Daily Mirror* of August 8, 1968, contained an interesting short letter from a Mr. A. E. Whiteland of Saxmundham, Suffolk, about an extraordinary phenomenon seen by his mother some time about the middle of the First World War, i.e. 1916 or 1917, writes Gordon Creighton.

I at once got in touch with Mr. Whiteland, and the following is the remarkable account which he has sent me—an account of something that must surely have been a brief glimpse of another sort of reality or of something from another world or time, and very like the American happenings of 1897:

"My mother (now aged 84) has often told the following story over the years, and I would like to find out for her who these mystery men were and what they were doing.

"This is the story. It was about the middle of World War I, and on a weekday. Mother was living then at Aldeburgh, Suffolk. She had gone upstairs just before the midday dinner, and opened a casement window and looked out to see who might be on the road. Having looked both ways and noticed that nobody was in sight, she was about to step back when something urged her to look again (see sketch).

"A little above the level of the house, at a height of about 30ft., eight to twelve men appeared, on what seemed to be a round platform with a handrail around it. This they were gripping tightly.

"She could see them so clearly. They were wearing blue uniforms and little round hats, not unlike sailors' hats.

"She heard no sound from the machine as it came off the nearby marshes. It turned a bit, and went over the railway yard, to disappear behind some houses.

"My mother is unable to give a date, month or year, as it is now such a long time back. All she can say is that it was on a bright day, and on a Thursday, because Thursday has been her day for "doing out" the bedrooms for all her married life.

"The time was close to 12 o'clock noon. When she first caught sight of this platform with men on it coming towards her, it was about 100 yards distant, at about roof-height, and seemed to have come over the Marsh Gate. This was a five-barred gate with a smaller one beside it for the footpath, and a few railings with a fairly large house on the left as seen from where Mother was at the bedroom window.

"The thing came straight along the road, and then when she thought it was going to pass her house (one of a terraced block of six), it suddenly turned away at right angles from her and went between the Railway Hotel and the sheds on either side of the railway yard. The shed opposite the house was maybe 23 to 25ft. high; it was two-storeyed, and hay was stored in the upper part, and the thing just cleared its roof, from what Mother said.

"She says the number of men was between 8 and 12, and she is certain it was nearer 12, as they stood around on this circular platform, holding tightly on to the handrail. The rail was of brass, and a second rail, also of

brass, was at the height of the men's knees. As she was trying so hard to take it all in, she cannot say of what material the platform seemed to be made. She says: 'It made me think of a bathing-raft'. These were the type of rafts used in the sea at that time, about 12 feet across and six-sided, so that people could dive off them. (This is not to say that the 'platform' was six-sided, but just to give an idea of its size). Mother thought that the thickness or depth of the 'platform' was about 12 to 12in.

"The men were dressed in blue, with round blue hats (round without any stiffening) pulled tightly on to their heads. They stood shoulder to shoulder looking straight outwards, with ordinary faces like us, but staring straight ahead.

"Mother says that she kept wondering what was making the thing move, and looked up in the sky and then at the men and then in between their legs to see if there was an engine there in the middle, but she could see nothing there. There was nothing in the middle, just a hollow, with the men around the sides.

"I asked her about noise, or anything that she might have heard. She says there was no sound at all. 'It just came along straight, not up or down or anything, till it turned away and over the top of the roof of the shed and away over the railway-station yard and straight towards Aldeburgh Lodge and the trees,  $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile away. It kept getting smaller, and went behind the trees or the house. If they had not been in the way, I would have seen it go right out to sea.

"The whole occurrence lasted

for about five minutes or so, as Mother says the platform moved as fast as a man can run.

"When Father returned in the evening, Mother told him of her strange experience. He commented: 'They might have been Germans. All kinds of things are being done now. There's a War on, so I'd forget it!'

"There were plenty of soldiers, coastguards, and ordinary people about, and she was puzzled to find that nobody else ever spoke of having seen it. (Had it happened half an hour later, there would

have been many men actually on the road, returning to their homes to dinner.)

"Next morning she did tell neighbours about it. One man said there were rumours that the German airships (the Zeppelins) had men who spied on the countryside. After that, it seems that she never spoke again about it until after the War was over, when she began telling her children and friends of her weird experience. And she has been wondering, and is still wondering, what it was that she saw . . ."

### The Milakovic Report (from page 3)

did not go near the airfield and, from the way we left Hanbury, it seems unlikely that he would have passed it on the return trip either. From this it appears that he had forgotten the exact route that he took to Hanbury and, a fairly safe assumption, the exact location of the sighting. We are satisfied that the location of the sighting was *not* the airfield because of Mr. Milakovic's assertion that he *thought* it was an airfield simply because he at first thought the object was an *aircraft*; he did *not* see the hangar at the same time as the object.

The situation is frustrating for us because Mr. Milakovic does not think it necessary to make another trip to Hanbury as he maintains he took us to the right place, although he still can't account for the fact that there was no house there. Mr. Milakovic is, incidentally, a strong-willed person and nothing will make him change his mind once he has made it up on some particular point. Slavic, who accompanied them, will not say much for fear of offending his father.

Mrs. Milakovic, however, holds out most hope for the future as she maintains that they did not go to or from Hanbury by the exact route that *we* took and, more promising, that she would definitely recognise the house if she saw it again. Moreover she mentioned that, because they were lost, they had to ask directions from an elderly couple who lived in a white cottage about four miles from Hanbury; we believe we have located this cottage

although there was no one in when we called.

### Problems

On two occasions we have arranged to take Mrs. Milakovic to Hanbury; the first time she was unexpectedly out on business and on the second the family had just become involved in a domestic crisis which is in no way connected with the sighting.

We have decided to suspend investigations until Mrs. Milakovic gets in touch with us again—which she has promised to do.

In the meantime one of the co-authors of this report has been making enquiries in Hanbury and the surrounding district, but no one can remember seeing anything unusual at any time. Police at Draycott-in-the-Clay, the nearest village to Hanbury, could not help and neither could the police at Uttoxeter, the nearest large town, although both were very co-operative. Similarly the press in Uttoxeter, Burton - on - Trent, Lichfield and Rugeley could offer nothing, and neither could staff at the airfield. It seems that a light aircraft landed at about the time but this could not possibly have been what was seen by the Milakovics.

As a point of interest both Mr. and Mrs. Milakovic have watches which, since the sighting, have been running slow; suggesting, perhaps, that they could have been magnetised. We have not been able to check their car for residual magnetisation.

## CONDON REPORTS . . .

The report of the USAF-sponsored Colorado University UFO Investigation was published on January 9, 1969. To date we have seen only newspaper comments on its contents, but it seems our warnings were not in vain. The report is a damp squib, negative, long and tedious (1,480 pages), an exercise to underline the recommendations of the Robertson Committee of 1953. We hear too that there are several innuendoes against individuals in this 'scientific' report: what more could be expected of the authors of the notorious 'trick' memorandum? More in our next.

Finally, two more 'phone calls have been received from the "Students" at Lichfield, and we have asked Mrs. Milakovic to try to obtain their address next time they call; in each case they wanted to make arrangements for another photographic trip, but to date nothing has materialised.

### Postscript by Wilfred Daniels

Milin Milakovic said, and his wife concurred, that as the object moved off after hovering about five minutes over the building it went in a series of jerks (he made a sideways, spasmodic movement of his hand palm downwards to illustrate this) and as it went away it was climbing steadily.

Milakovic gives the impression of having plenty of physical courage, but nevertheless that "jerking" progression quite unnerved him, and he hustled his wife and son into their car and left the scene in a hurry.



# UFOs AND BALL LIGHTNING

*Anthony Durham*

This article is based on a lecture delivered to the BUFORA Northern Regional Conference in Liverpool on November 4, 1967. A fuller version, with a complete list of references is available.

At long last UFOs are becoming legitimate objects of scientific interest. Professional scientists are realising that there is "paydirt" beneath the mountains of rubbish. I want to show that it can be found not only amongst the residue of genuine unexplained incidents but also in the very rare natural phenomena that must be invoked to explain some reports.

Imagine a car being vengefully followed along a dark road by a glowing football; or a globe of fire swooping down from the sky to remain stationary near the ground, and then exploding; or a silent sphere of light floating through a closed window into a room, before the eyes of a terrified witness. All these, and many thousands more, are genuine examples of ball lightning. It is not far from them to several UFO reports I have heard: a "toy balloon" that drifted lazily over some trees near Woodbridge; or an irregularly edged rectangle of glowing coals that floated softly behind some houses at Stroud; or a ball of fire that fell from a cloud near Cheam and exploded with a loud bang.

## Similarities

No one can ever be sure that a particular UFO report was definitely caused by ball lightning, but a significant number have all the right characteristics. Even more have great similarities, but would not fit precisely with what is known about the phenomenon at present. Perhaps anything between one and five per cent of all UFO reports fall into this category. I am at present engaged in a project to collect accounts of ball-lightning-like objects and would be very grateful for any that readers could send me. So here are the details of what lightning balls are believed to look like.

**Appearance.** Ball lightning is generally spherical or ellipsoidal, but sometimes cylindrical, about as bright as domestic light bulbs. Usually they are uniformly bright and of a single colour all over, but sometimes the centre may be brighter than the edge, or vice versa. All colours have been reported, with white and reddish orange the most common. Their size is generally a matter of inches, but a small proportion are up to several feet across. A variety of "electrical" noises have been reported, such as hissing, crackling or buzzing, and close encounters frequently give a smell of ozone. Accounts by witnesses will always be distorted by perceptual inaccuracies and often by sheer fright.

**Motion.** Occasionally the tip of a lightning flash may actually be seen descending from the cloud. Appropriately this is called Rocket Lightning, and it can perhaps

be regarded as a descending lightning ball. Balls of fire may often be seen running or rolling along metal surfaces, particularly aircraft: this too is an allied phenomenon, more familiar as St. Elmo's Fire. Most of the cases of ball lightning that are significant as UFO reports move freely in the air, regularly or irregularly, horizontally or vertically, with, or sometimes against, the wind, and at speeds less than 50 m.p.h. They may appear to spin or pulsate. Closed spaces seem to have a bizarre attraction for ball lightning: cases are on record of them coming down chimneys, squeezing through a keyhole, flying through a closed window, and even entering under a woman's petticoat! They are usually only seen to last a few seconds, but a small proportion persist for minutes. They end either with a loud bang or by abruptly disappearing, not by gradually fading away.

**Occurrence.** The majority of ball lightnings are preceded by a lightning flash, when their cause is immediately apparent. These seem to form near the foot of a lightning path to ground. However, the cases that give rise to UFO reports are more likely to be either when there is no lightning flash, or else when it is not seen. Quite a few are seen just floating freely in the air, some even in relatively clear weather. Most bizarre of all are those reports associated not with any electrical disturbance, but with a natural disaster like an earthquake. There seem to be no grounds for predicting where and when ball lightning will occur, except that obviously it is more common where there are more thunderstorms. The old adage that lightning never strikes twice in the same place is rubbish; high buildings, tall trees and high ground attract more than their share of lightning flashes.

It used to be thought that ball lightning was a very rare phenomenon. However, in one survey carried out on the subject, witnesses who had seen one or more lightning balls, were asked how many times they had seen lightning strike the ground. The two occurrences turn out to be about equally frequent. Now, it is known that in England, for example, there is one lightning ground strike for about every half a square kilometre per year. In other words, in Britain every year there must be something of the order of one hundred thousand occurrences of ball lightning.

What is rare is not the fact of a lightning ball forming, but rather the fact of someone being there to observe it. Some people whose occupations take them out of doors in the right places, such as pilots, have seen the phenomenon many times over. If all these mysterious globes of fire are being formed, some of them must