offer Major Keyhoe and his Committee all our support and encouragement. We have been critical of NICAP in the past, but in this present struggle we must close our ranks, especially as we believe that the moment of full revelation about the flying saucers may be not too far distant.

Having so pledged ourselves, perhaps we might be allowed to make one or two suggestions, particularly as we have gone on record to the effect that we have not favoured the bringing of pressure on any government as a means of arriving at the truth. We have felt that any government, if really pressed, has all the trump cards when it comes to influencing public opinion. And there is no doubt that, for one reason or another, most of the governments of the world would prefer its public not to think seriously about the flying saucers. Our aim has always been to try to influence the public direct, though we appreciate that our method seems to take much longer. The quick break-through is always tempting and, it must be admitted, it sometimes works. Equally, a failure can be disastrous. However, we do wish Major Keyhoe every success.

In the December-January, 1960-61, issue of the *U.F.O. Investigator*, NICAP's official bulletin, there is a long and interesting account of a television debate between Lt.-Col. Tacker and Major Keyhoe. Without having witnessed the telecast it is very difficult to comment, but there would seem to be no doubt that Tacker brought sarcasm and even downright rudeness into play in his attack on NICAP's director. Major Keyhoe mentions this as proof that the Air Force has something to hide, but we wonder if that is strictly true. After having read this account very carefully, it would seem to us that Lt.-Col. Tacker's attitude could as readily spring from downright stupidity. People who hold important positions in any government are not necessarily wise. The Tackers of this world we know well: some of them get themselves promoted, and this particular one happens to think in an engrained manner that flying saucers are absolute nonsense. It is extraordinary, too, how bigoted some people on our side can get. We must occasionally allow our opponents to hold mistaken ideas quite sincerely and even passionately. Lt.-Col. Tacker's rudeness could quite easily stem from his "will-not-to-believe." There *is* such a thing as invincible ignorance.

Might we suggest to Major Keyhoe that the misinterpretation theory put forward by the U.S. Air Force will be almost impossible to disprove? And that the only way to break through may be by way of the despised contact claims? As we have remarked before, no weather balloon, no temperature inversion, no conventional object can bring us visitors in human or near-human form. This is perhaps the reason why these stories have often met with the strongest ridicule of all, and not always from those who disbelieve in flying saucers. And might we also remind Major Keyhoe that not all the saucer sightings and contact claims have come from America? Occupants of saucers have been seen—or so it is claimed—in countries as far apart as Scotland, France and Papua, to name but three. Could not NICAP help us in our search for proof of the existence of visitors from outer space? Such proof would spell the final victory and place the issue beyond all possible doubt.

A test of truth

It is a canon and a just canon that instead of assuming that people are perjuring themselves, you should, if there is a view by which you reconcile all the testimony, prefer that to the view which places people in the position of contradicting each other, so that they must necessarily be swearing what is false.

The Earl of Halsbury: Law Reports (1900), *Appeal Cases*, p. 238.

THE MYSTERY OF SPRINGHEEL JACK

by J. Vyner

In the November-December, 1960, issue of FLYING SAUCER REVIEW, Waveney Girvan called for evidence of extra-terrestrials in our midst as a check on the stories put forward by a number of contact claimants. This challenge aroused considerable interest and has produced both modern and historical evidence. In the following article, the author suggests that a notorious and almost legendary figure may have been a visitor from outer space. The facts in this article are taken from contemporary accounts and have been checked against all available records for accuracy.

ON June 30, 1837, King William IV of Great Britain and Ireland died in his bed. Simultaneously, the eighteenth century ended and the Victorian age began; already noisy with railways and steamboat whistles, waking suddenly to modernity. Within easy walking distance of Guildhall, Londoners could discover isolated hamlets, leafy lanes and lonely commons.

About the middle of November, 1837, the lanes and commons became places of dread. Through them stalked an intruder, an uncatchable monster of superhuman powers, easily evading detection and arrest.

Old reference books—few modern ones mention him—refer to the being known as "Springheel Jack," as if his identity had been positively established. They admit the name as an alias of the second Marquis of Waterford, a post-Regency Corinthian, a blue-blooded thug.

Admittedly, the Marquis's doings were wild and extravagant enough: today they would land him behind bars in a blaze of headlines. But they were always tempered with a rough good humour, and were followed by compensation for any damage done. Cockneys regarded him with a wary affection. Terrorising a countryside and scaring old ladies into fits was not characteristic of him. For once his lordship was exonerated.

Then who was Springheel Jack? If he were an impostor, then he was at least a super-impostor who carried a super-weapon—a raygun.

Springheel Jack had been prowling the lanes of Middlesex for some weeks, scaring (and sometimes tearing) the pants off the inhabitants, before the press noticed his existence. Allegations were made at the time that the newspapers had been paid to ignore the story by unspecified interested parties. Only the receipt of a letter by the Lord Mayor sitting in Common Council breached the censorship. The letter came from a stalwart friend of order who still, as then, signs himself "A Resident of Peckham."

The Lord Mayor laughed it off, and was immediately deluged with confirmation from magistrates, retired admirals and other substantial citizens. They related hair-raising accounts of outrages daily committed by a gang of maniacs dressed in unearthly garb. All the accounts agreed in their descriptions of the culprit.

His appearance

The intruder was tall, thin and powerful. He had a prominent nose, and bony fingers of immense power which resembled claws. He was incredibly agile. He wore a long, flowing cloak, of the sort affected by opera-goers, soldiers and strolling actors. On his head was a tall, metallic-seeming helmet. Beneath the cloak were close-fitting garments of some glittering material like oilskin or metal mesh. There was a lamp strapped to his chest. Oddest of all: the creature's ears were cropped or pointed like those of an animal.

The Lord Mayor could not act outside the City boundary. But he approved the setting up of a vigilante committee, formed by magistrates, army officers and others. And he informed the police. Horse patrols scoured the suburban area. Admiral Codrington organised a reward fund. The old Duke of Wellington himself set holsters at his saddle bow and rode out after dark in search of Springheel Jack. Even the most desperate of impostors would have been deterred by such opposition.

Not so Springheel Jack. He broke laws as they impeded him, physical laws as easily as parliamentary statutes. Folk called him a "Springald" —a jumping jack. They said he wore springs on his boots which enabled him to clear a road in a single bound and leap over-eight-foot walls. The truth, of course, is that you can only get out of a bounce what is put into it, and the German parachutists who attempted in 1938 to ease landing shocks with sprung boots learned that the result was an 85 per cent. incidence of broken ankles. Jack continued to soar over the heads of would-be captors, took hedges in his stride, and on one occasion overleapt a standing wagon with a canvas tilt over it. Nobody ever caught him out of training.

Starting south of the river, Jack had worked upstream to the westwards before crossing the Thames at Teddington. Then he worked his way from village to village until he reached the grounds of Kensington Palace, where he stayed some time. He was seen climbing over the park wall at midnight and dancing fantastic measures on the wooded lawns. His itinerary had taken him on a circuit of the metropolis, avoiding towns, and leaving a trail of unnerved villagers behind him. It was odd that he seemed to base himself on private parks, resting a few days in each.

Folks who had no servant to escort them stayed in after dusk. Top-hatted police, appearing in unlikely places, were mistaken for their quarry and attacked by bands of vigilantes. Then Springheel Jack started to pay calls on his neighbours.

The incident at Old Ford

On February 20, 1838, Miss Jane Alsop, a girl of eighteen who lived at Bear Bine Cottage, in the lonely village of Old Ford, near Bow, was disturbed by a violent ringing of the front-door bell. She went out, and found there a person who seemed to be wearing the top-hat and cloak of the horse patrol.

Only when she brought a light did she see the "most hideous appearance" of Springheel Jack, who cast aside his cloak to reveal close-fitting, shining garments and a flashing lamp at his breast. His eyes resembled red balls of fire!

Miss Alsop screamed, and only then did the visitor become hostile. He seized her arm in an iron grip of clawlike fingers, but one of her sisters came hurriedly to the rescue. Jack at once spurted balls of fire into the girl's face and fled, leaving her unconscious. In his flight, Jack apparently dropped his cloak, which was immediately snatched up by another person lurking in the shadows, who sped after him and was lost to sight in the darkness.

All accounts of this episode agree that there was a wanton attack on Jane Alsop, but the facts do not bear out this theory. Before her screams roused the household, Jack made no attempt to molest the girl. Indeed, her reaction seems to have come as a shock to him. Was he expecting to be received as a friend?

"Tall, thin and gentlemanly"

Two days earlier, though not revealed until after the Old Ford incident had made headlines, a Miss Scales, of Limehouse, was walking through Green Dragon Alley. The alley was a dim-lit passage beside a public house, and when she saw a tall figure lurking in the shadows Miss Scales hesitated, waiting for her sister who had fallen behind.

The sister, who described the loiterer as "tall, thin and (save the mark) gentlemanly," came up in time to see his long cloak thrown aside, and a lantern flashing on the startled girl. There was no time to scream; Jack's weird blue flame spurted into his victim's face and she dropped to the ground in a deep swoon. Whereupon, Jack walked calmly away.

There is a suggestion here that Springheel Jack had a rendezvous in Green Dragon Alley. Possibly he was waiting for that companion who had retrieved his cloak at Old Ford. Conceivably, he was to meet, by appointment, some contact who would take him to the safe house he had been seeking for the past three months. In any event, Springheel Jack's anabasis was nearing its end.

A week after the Old Ford adventure, on February 27, Jack paid his last call. He knocked on the door of a house in Turner Street, off Commercial Road, and enquired for the master of the house, a Mr. Ashworth. The servant lad, confronted by this startling apparition, screamed the place down, drawing neighbours to the spot. Jack, who had learned the lesson of Old Ford, promptly withdrew.

It was the last time that Springheel Jack's exploits roused headlines from the London papers. From that day, he vanished as abruptly as if the earth had swallowed him up. Rounding off the loose ends of their investigations or dropping them as they stood, the police never troubled to ask the obvious questions. Hoaxers were to invoke Jack's name from time to time, and for years afterwards night encounters with white-clad bakers, stray donkeys or inoffensive ghosts revived the legend. Under the infamous name of Springheel Jack the Marquis of Waterford was duly canonised.

There is no comment, anywhere, on coinci-

dences. But it is notable that, within a radius of less than a mile, Jack paid two visits and was encountered once within the space of ten days. This is the pattern of intention, of purpose. Immediately Jack localised his activities all trace of him was lost. I suggest that a contact had been made.

Unremarked by contemporaries: that in the metropolis—perhaps nowhere alse—was triplicity of Green Dragon Alleys or Passages, duplication of Turner Streets. That in the distortion of the unfamiliar names like Ashworth and Alsop may sound similar.

Unknown to 1838: Aircrew, baled out over hostile territory. Strange the suggestion of evasion, living off the land, stealing clothes and food. Hard to find the safe house where lives the agent who can put them on the road home.

Known to 1838: Springheel Jack—tearing clothes from men's backs, stealing the pieman's stock. Whose outlandish uniform passes muster only by night. Who bases himself in parks where game abounds.

A great ball of fire

Inspector Hemer of the Liverpool police may unwittingly have witnessed the final escape of Springheel Jack from his incarnation of 1837-1838. He was patrolling the long boundary of Toxteth Park, near Liverpool, on the night of July 6, 1838. A vivid flash of "lightning" drew his attention to a great ball of fire which hung motionless over a nearby field.

The object remained stationary for about two minutes, then, emitting showers of brilliant sparks, it sank swiftly to the ground and disappeared. The Inspector wheeled his horse about, and rode away from his chance of apprehending England's most-wanted character.

Inspector Hemer's reactions show that policemen and flying saucers haven't much changed in the past hundred and twenty years. Neither has Springheel Jack. In subsequent incarnations he has been seen, at intervals, throughout the years, usually in isolated encounters which suggest a run ashore to stretch cramped limbs after days of close confinement.

He turned up at Aldershot, Hants, in 1877, dressed in his uniform of tights and shining helmet. He soared over the heads of two sentries posted by the magazine, landing noiselessly beside them. Both men fired without effect, whereupon Jack stunned them with a burst of his blue fire and made off.

Is this blue fire a stupefying gas? Or is it the visible product of a magnetic effect transmitted along a beam of polarised light from Jack's mysterious lantern? Intense magnetic fields produce effects comparable to those experienced by Jack's victims—and by those who have ventured too near grounded saucers. Though the inverse square law governing radiation is commonly thought to prevent development of paralysing ray devices small enough to be easily portable, a concentrated beam might trigger off a magnetic disturbance in the vicinity of its target.

The reappearances

In 1944, towards the end of August, Springheel Jack appeared at Mattoon, Illinois, U.S.A. In this incarnation, he appeared by night at open windows, as if in search of someone known to him by sight. Those who saw him—mainly women—were left stunned by a device pointed at them which made consciousness dissolve in a fiery whirl. This time, however, a strange, cloying smell was left behind in the room he had entered.

For nearly a month Jack flitted through the bedrooms of Mattoon with the energy of a Groucho Marx. Then, as suddenly as he had come, he disappeared in a night of strange and widespread hysteria. Such phenomena, indeed, as have been associated with intense magnetic disturbance—or with saucer landings. The hysteria did not, however, spread to the wall of state and local police who encircled the town so that no human being should have been able to evade their dragnet. Possibly Jack soared over their heads as he had done many times in the past.

The enigma of Springheel Jack's astounding leaps is, like the siren's song, not entirely beyond conjecture. It is possible that a being from a high-gravity planet might be able to duplicate some of his feats on our own; likewise, there is the possibility of his employing an individual rocket device, such as U.S. Army engineers have developed. Such a device can carry a man over wide rivers and standing trees, but what happens on landing?

All the accounts of Jack's feats seem to indicate that he had perfect control over his mighty bounds. In fact, his silent landings indicate buoyancy. The buoyancy of the balloon-jumper with a gasbag attached to shoulder harness. But, despite observations of Jack's "carrying something on his back," I am inclined to think the solution must lie in the possession of a device

for neutralising gravity. Normally, the user would reduce his weight to a point at which he could walk normally while retaining the capacity for tremendous leaps. Increasing the power would enable him to soar, or even float. But he would then lose control . . . unless he had wings. Light, collapsible wings, serving as control surfaces, requiring little muscular effort to use.

Springheel Jack in his former incarnation as Icarus. No fixed abode. Seen June 18, 1953, at Houston, Texas, sitting in a Pecan tree. Seen Louisville, Kentucky, July 28, 1880. Seen October 3, 1883, at Warwick. Seen over the Aegean Sea, October, 1954; at Chehalis, Washington, U.S.A, on January 6, 1948.

Incidentally, I believe that a fund initiated by Admiral Codrington in January, 1838, was deposited with a London banker as a reward for the apprehension of a certain Springheel Jack. So far as I can ascertain the reward remains unclaimed.

THE FIRST EARTHMAN IN SPACE

AS we were about to go to press the news was announced from Russia on April 12 that they had succeeded not only in launching a man into space but that they had also successfully managed his re-entry into our atmosphere and his safe landing on Earth. Whether he was, in fact, the first Earthman to enter space we may never know—or may not know for some time—for it is rumoured that at least one Russian pioneer died in outer space in 1960.*

The significance of this achievement cannot be over-estimated. A truly major step towards the stars has been taken by the Soviet Union in the person of Major Yuri Alexyevich Gagarin, former Red Air Force pilot. Until he is successfully challenged he can claim to be the only man to have seen the Earth and survived. The Russian spaceship Vostok (East) is also a pioneer in that it has actually travelled on a predetermined path in outer space with a human aboard and has returned to its home base on Earth. The Russians have set themselves the target year of 1967 as a date to land an Earthman on the Moon, but, as our contributor, W. Schroeder, has pointed out, the next most important step forward in space travel is the discovery of a more efficient and economical fuel. Such a discovery could advance the landing by several years: such a discovery can be predicted almost with certainty. The Moon and even the other planets of our solar system are nearer to us than we think.

Our natural jubilation at Earthman's pioneering success must be tempered by the knowledge that every step that is taken in outer space has been motivated by a military purpose. The pioneers in the new dimension—as in so many other adventures in the past—have been prompted more by fear than by a quest for knowledge. Those who may doubt this statement need only reflect on the uses to which our conquest of the sea and of the inner air have been put during living memory. While we applaud we must also tremble: if Earthman were allowed to use his new-found powers for destruction the future could contain nothing but uncalculated evil and disaster.

Every step towards the stars also leads us nearer to the truth. That we are not alone in the universe has been obvious to all our readers for some considerable time. The denial of this truth, therefore, cannot be much longer sustained. At some stage on this adventurous passage to the stars one spaceman will meet another and a new chapter of history, of a bewildering complexity, will have to be written and understood. Naturally, not a word about this aspect of the Russian achievement has appeared in the press of any of the countries of the world: the rearguard action against the truth of the flying saucers will be fought until the last possible moment. But Major Yuri Alexyevich Gagarin's epoch-making flight has brought that moment appreciably nearer.

* See FLYING SAUCER REVIEW, Jan.-Feb., 1961.