

THE EXETER INCIDENTS

by Jean Fuller

Our contributor, who lives in Texas, is relatively new to the subject of UFOs, having approached it by way of Dr. Jacques Vallée's books and the **FLYING SAUCER REVIEW**. Mrs. Fuller is not related to the author of the book which she analyzes so brilliantly in her article.

THE correspondence from *Aviation Week* on the plasma theory¹, and the **FLYING SAUCER REVIEW** editorial on "explanations"², prompted me to take a second look at *Incident at Exeter*³ by John Fuller, since I understand that Mr. Klass (of *Aviation Week*) used the book to help work out his plasma explanation of the UFO problem. Mr. Fuller interviewed some sixty witnesses before writing his book, and described some twenty-one of these cases in detail. I have made a summary of these twenty-one cases, and I imagine readers of the **REVIEW** might be interested in the results.

Most of the sightings were made in the vicinity of Exeter, New Hampshire, in the late summer and the fall of 1965.

Muscarello Sighting

September 3. A huge red glowing object was seen to follow a car prior to the sighting, which occurred around 2 a.m. when an object 80ft to 90ft in diameter dived from the sky towards the witness, backed off, and hovered over a house. Later, when officers Hunt and Bertrand observed it with Muscarello, it was seen to rise from behind trees. One hundred feet in the air, the length of a football field away, it was observed as a huge red glow with lights around the rim which pulsed in a 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, pattern. When it left, it flew towards Hampton, where a badly frightened man only minutes later reported that a flying saucer came right at him. Said police officer Bertrand: "In fact, the first reaction I got was that it was a huge red fireball. But then I could immediately see that it wasn't. It was a huge, compact, round thing, with lights going back and forth." Said Patrolman Hunt: "... it was definitely a craft—a big one. . . ."

Smith Sighting

September. At 11 p.m. a white glow with a red light was seen to come out of the sky and pass over the car four times. About $\frac{1}{2}$ mile in the air, larger than a B.52. Sighting lasted 15 minutes, ended as object "zoomed right off".

Shipman and Kalogeropoulos Sighting

On a foggy morning at 4 a.m. two boys were badly frightened by object which came in from over the ocean, buzzed their car, and "shot off out of sight". Sighting investigated by Coast Guard.

Davis Sighting

September. At 2 a.m. witness thought she was observing an aircraft until one small green light changed to a large red light "too big for a plane". Sighted from a hill three miles distant, object travelled from south-east, hovered, changed direction. Observed from five to eight minutes.

Spinney Sighting

September 27. Object seen at 10 a.m. on a clear day one mile away, nearest approach 200-300 feet. Described as "definitely

metallic", no wings, no glow, about 30 ft in diameter, 200 ft in the air. It flew slowly, hovered, then "went furiously off" upon departure.

Hale Sighting

October. At 6.25 p.m. witness observed bright, dome-shaped object, flat underneath, with a tail or fin, twice the size of a B.47. Came in slowly from over the Atlantic, hovered over the house at distance only three times the height of the chimney, then left at great speed. Kept in sight nearly twenty minutes.

Pearce Sightings

1. October. Seen at night at treetop height, object with dome, fins, appearing to be of hammered metal and of "enormous span". Had small lights all over it, red lights around rim, and square white lights, or ports, on the bottom. Big as a jet, it hovered 8 ft to 10 ft above the car, illuminating pavement. Several witnesses present in car, and one witness present in another car, who saw it over the first car.

2. July. Object "big as a car" with bright red lights, seen hovering below treetop level beside road, 30 ft from witnesses (2) as they approached, thinking it was a wreck. Seen to take off.

3. September 17. Object with red, green and white lights seen hovering over house for two or three minutes, during which time its lights went out twice as jet passed over, to come on again as plane passed by. Seen to depart. Several witnesses.

4. October. Seen by a neighbour of the Peaces. Object with two white lights the width of a wingspread crossed the road, dipped, flew over the car, and went up into the sky.

Healey Sighting

September. At 6.15 p.m. witness and her husband observed large, round, red object with several "silvery things hanging down from it". High in the sky at first, it came down towards power lines, hovered just over them, as plane circled area. Upon departure it "moved away—fast".

Jalbert Family Sightings

1. September. At 6.45 p.m. a bright glowing object the apparent size of the full moon, with several silverish things hanging down from it, was seen in the sky, later departed slowly. It was seen for 30 minutes by the Jalbert family. It occurred the same evening as the Healey observation.

2. September or October. At 10.45 p.m. an object "as big as a car", with red lights and white lights, "like a house window when its lit", came from the end of the power line in the distance, going over trees. It was seen to go up over a large tree in its path.

3. October or November. Reddish, cigar-shaped object seen in the air, from which emerged a small reddish disc. Approaching from a quarter of a mile away to within a few hundred feet of the witness, it hovered over power line, extended a silvery, pipe-like protrusion which touched the wires, remained in contact with them for one minute, and

was withdrawn. Object then rejoined larger one in sky. Mother of witness reported seeing similar phenomenon several days previously.

Observations 1 and 2 were part of repeated sightings in this area. The object was said to arrive around 6.45 p.m., remain nearly an hour. Stayed near power lines, appeared and disappeared, with small red lights on top and bottom, which went on and off. A plane was sometimes seen to circle the object as if in pursuit. Seen in unusually clear weather. Of departure, witnesses said: "It goes way up in the sky finally."

Bolduc Sightings

Fall, 1965. Object or objects seen several times by Bolduc family near their house. Appeared football-shaped with lights around middle. Twice a plane was seen circling when object in vicinity. Once caused photoelectric cell lights to go out because of its brilliance.

Lucci Sighting

August 8. The Lucci brothers photographed a "saucer", which appears on the cover of *INCIDENT AT EXETER*, at 11.30 p.m., when their camera was set to photograph the moon. Large white disc-shaped light was seen to come up over the trees, hovered here and there 50 to 60 ft above power lines. Weather described as misty. In sight only long enough for two photographs to be taken, it "shot straight up in the air and was gone".

de Turca Sighting

August 11. Five miles away from the Lucci home, only three nights later, at midnight, a huge (60-70 ft diameter), humming, disc-like object with brilliant red lights whirring around its rim, came in from the west, stopped over a neighbour's house, where it hovered and moved about, three or four rooftops high, for half an hour. When it left it "took off faster than a jet". In this case the weather was described as "beautifully clear."

(These two sightings occurred in Beaver, Pennsylvania).

Blodgett Sighting

September 21. Between 1.30 and 2.00 a.m. an object, red on top and glowing on bottom, 100 ft diameter, seen from witness' bedroom window. Hazy night. Object spun, "went zoom—and it was out of sight".

Bunker Sighting

Fall, 1965. At 10.45 p.m. an object was seen approaching from north-west. Red green, white lights, silent, treetop level, object made "a long, graceful bounce" $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile from the witness. Continued towards south-east.

Doughty Sighting

October 1965. Between 9 and 9.30 p.m. a lighted object with red and green lights around it was observed stationary in the sky. Two witnesses stopped car to observe it. Object began to move, dived directly at car, causing witnesses to depart with haste.

Mazelewski Sighting

September 1965. Wakened by light at 2 a.m., witness called husband. Both observed humming object covered with lights like a Xmas tree which blinked, hovering low over field 15 ft from their window. They observed it for 15 minutes. Witnesses left window, noticed that humming had stopped, looked out to find it gone.

Analysis

Of these 21 sightings I noted the following:

1. Size: from "as big as a car" to 100 feet in diameter. Extremely large objects described in seven cases.

2. Distinct and separate lights, as opposed to simply a "glow" described in 13 cases. Two were daylight sightings.

Michel's "jellyfish" described twice. (Probably the same sighting from different witnesses.)

Colours diffused or object all one colour: 3 cases.

No description: 1 case.

3. Two cases describe repeated sightings over a small area. In the Jalbert case we have "ball lightning" which repeatedly appears in the sky and descends to keep a 7 o'clock appointment with power lines on clear nights, remains over power lines for one hour, and zooms off into the sky when power lines cease to attract it.

4. In the Jalbert "cigar" case we have a large "plasma" from which a small bit is seen to detach itself, descend to the power line, touch it, presumably find it less attractive than supposed, return to the sky, and merge with the larger "plasma".

5. In two cases we have daylight sightings of large objects at fairly close range.

6. Out of the whole book I counted seven cases in which jets and other aircraft were scrambled to chase "ball lightning" across the sky.

7. The weather is described in two cases as clear, in two foggy. No mention of any thunderstorm associated with any of these sightings.

8. Duration of sightings: from $\frac{1}{4}$ -minute to over one hour. In the Muscarello case, the object was seen at different times over a two hour period. In five other cases the object was kept in view for 15 minutes or longer.

9. Arrivals and departures: there is mention of only one case (very briefly, and not described by original witness) of a sighting described in this way: "There was a big white flash from the thing and it was gone." However, this does not necessarily mean that the object disintegrated, and may only indicate rapid departure. On the other hand we find:

Approaches from the sky: eleven (two of these from over the ocean).

Approaches from over trees: one.

Approaches from over road: one.

Approach from over power line in the distance: one.

Witness came upon object when it was stationary: six.

Not indicated: one.

Departure from vicinity of witness described: fifteen.

Witness left first: two.

Actual departure not described: four.

Mr. Klass's suggestion that "cornea discharge" formed along power lines, became detached, and floated and zipped about, finds no confirmation in these reports, wherein the object was seen approaching, manoeuvring and departing.

There is no report in *Incident at Exeter* describing an object materializing on power lines and later disintegrating. And the Jalbert case is the only one in which an object was described as in actual contact with the power lines.

As you will see from these accounts, we have "ball lightning" described as giving the appearance of: an aircraft, an auto wreck, an object with square windows or ports, a red object with silvery cables hanging from it, and a metallic craft 30 ft. in diameter (definitely a craft,

with lights pulsating in a 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, pattern.) There was also an object flat underneath with a tail or fin, an object of hammered metal, and an object with two lights the width of a wingspread. (One wonders what scientists would say if such descriptions of ball lightning appeared in an encyclopedia!).

To me, however, one of the most remarkable things about this whole series of sightings is this: of the more than 60 persons interviewed, not one mentioned physical harm done by the "masses of charged particles". Not one person was hurt, not one car damaged, no grass or forest fires started, no trees or rooftops set afire by these huge globs of plasma which were floating around so freely in Exeter and vicinity for several months in the fall of 1965. This dangerous phenomenon called ball lightning, in spite of its durability, great size, and apparent attraction to a variety of objects, always managed to stop short of actual contact with environment, while one on a collision course with a tree was seen to go up over the tree.

This bafflement in the face of the explanations is probably "old hat" to the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW and its readers, but I am still new enough to the field to be bewildered by it. Consistent testimony from so many

would seem to indicate the phenomena was accurately described. I am not saying ball lightning cannot show the appearance and behaviour described here, but I do believe any explanation based on the "plasma theory" must account for the features demonstrated in these accounts, without any attempt to minimise or distort them.

One last point—about those "cloud cigars" and the tornado theory. Anyone living close to the "tornado belt" of the midwestern U.S.A. would know better than to compare the awesome but dignified "Type II" appearance and behaviour with the rampaging fury of one of nature's most terrible spectacles. Whether or not they touch the ground, tornadoes are not the kind of thing you just stand and watch! They do not remain stationary in the sky so that you can watch them for half an hour, wondering what they are. You know what they are—the accompanying clouds (black), hail, lightning, and noise leave little room for doubt. Nor do I recall any news account describing a fall of "angel hair" in the wake of a tornado.

NOTES

- ¹ Refer to FLYING SAUCER REVIEW January/February 1967 p. iv of cover.
- ² FSR January/February 1967
- ³ John G. Fuller, *Incident at Exeter*: Putnam.