

# Geometrically Shaped Balloons, or UFOs?

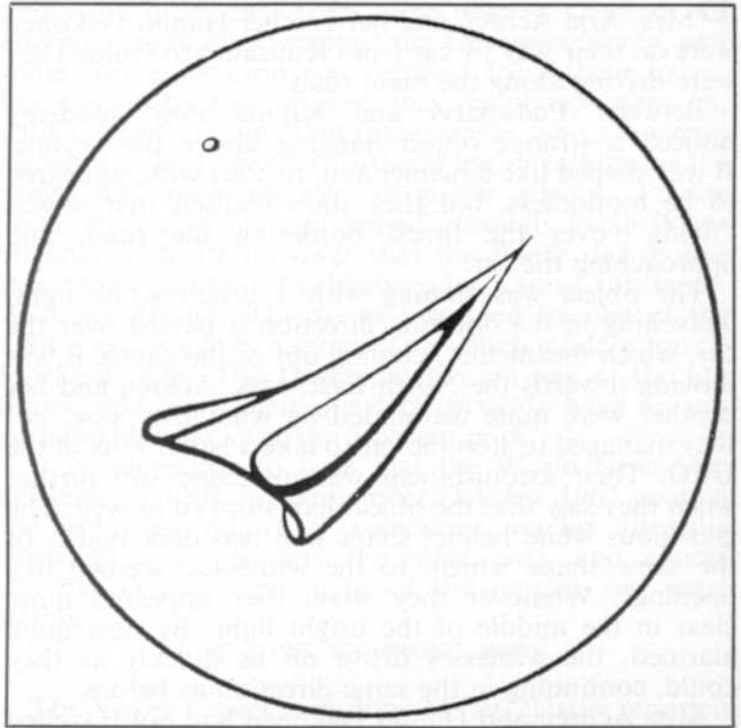
*Charles Bowen*

OVER the years since 1963, when in our issue for November/December (pages 26 and 29) we published photographs taken in the south-east of England on July 31 and August 1, 1963 respectively by R. Spier of Chatham, Kent, and Jan W. D. Willemstyn, FRAS, of Watford Heath, Herts, we have received a considerable number of reports of "Deltavolant" or triangular, or tetrahedral objects from various parts of the world, sometimes accompanied by photographs. A few of these we have published, but others we have preferred to ignore, in view of the great uncertainty prevailing about objects with these particular features or shape.

In the "Mail Bag" column of the issue of *Flying Saucer Review* for March/April 1966, Robin H. Sadler, one-time Hon. Secretary of the Cambridge University Group for the Investigation of Unidentified Flying Objects pointed out that there was firm evidence that the Spier/Willemstyn object was a large tetrahedral cosmic ray research balloon released at Göttingen, Germany, on the previous day, and other correspondents have reported to the same effect about other cases.

We notice that no reports of this type of object seem to originate from anywhere outside Europe, and we are inclined to think that this in itself is significant, and may confirm that all are tetrahedral balloons released in Europe. At the same time we note that our Romanian correspondent, the engineer Florin Gheorghita (in the article that follows—a contribution that we have had on file for more than two years) and others, have been impressed by (1) the manner in which these objects remained apparently absolutely stationary for many hours (in the Romanian case for four hours, while, in the case of the Spier/Willemstyn object there was at least one witness in Hertfordshire who claimed that it was stationary overhead from 2.00 p.m. until 7.00 p.m., and others who claimed that it was stationary for at least "several hours"). We note (2) that both Mr. Gheorghita, and others, have reported that when these objects depart finally they do so extremely rapidly. Also (3) that in one town in Romania the object was alleged to have affected reception of TV and radio, and finally (4) that the object reported by Fr. Antonio Felices as having been observed over Valladolid in Spain (see FSR for November/December 1965, pages 29 and 30) was registered by airfield instruments at Villanubla Air Base as being at about 76,000 feet, and that its size was computed as being about one square kilometre.

The problem is, of course, so far as we are concerned, merely of knowing whether, over and beyond the tetrahedral stratospheric research balloons of terrestrial origin there may not be, as Mr. Gheorghita thinks, *other tetrahedral objects of quite different origins*. We do not claim to know the answers to these questions and so shall continue not to make up our minds on the matter.



Sketch of the object over Valladolid on September 16, 1965, based on a watercolour by Father Felices who observed it through a telescope. Jet aircraft scrambled to investigate the object failed to get close enough to identify it.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FORTHCOMING ISSUE (MARCH-APRIL 1973) OF *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* . . .

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# High Altitude Objects over Romania

Florin Gheorghiuță

Translated from the French by Gordon Creighton

FOR the people of Cluj and vicinity the second part of 1968 was full of strange aerial sights. The reports of observations of peculiar objects in flight commenced in June and reached a peak with the photographs taken in August and September (see my first article, *Flying Saucer Over Cluj, Romania*, in FSR Vol. XV, No. 6 (November/December 1969)).

I received a whole series of very interesting reports about these cases, investigated many of them, and published them in various Romanian newspapers. By pure chance I was able, on four occasions, to observe UFOs performing spectacular evolutions and on each of these occasions I was accompanied by several fellow-witnesses. All this served to deepen my conviction regarding the great technical and scientific importance of the UFOs.

The Cluj photos of August 18, and my detailed account of the analysis of them, showing as they did the close approach of a UFO to the ground, had aroused great interest, and this interest swelled to lively discussion when, on September 19, 1968, another UFO was seen stationary over Cluj by thousands of the town's inhabitants, for a period of several hours. There were subsequently also lively discussions in the capital, Bucharest, where the photographs were shown before various specialists.

## I. The incident of September 19, 1968

At Cluj the morning of September 19 was a typical fine one, as is characteristic of the Romanian autumn, with a friendly sun shining in a blue sky flecked with white clouds. At about noon the wind began to blow more and more strongly from the west. It reached a velocity of 73 km/H by 3.00 p.m., as was reported by the local meteorological office, and this velocity was indeed exceeded at times between 3.00 p.m. and nightfall.

On the previous day, September 18, the Romanian national press and television had carried the photos of the saucer seen over Cluj on August 18 (see photos illustrating the article in FSR referred to above), so it was a curious coincidence that another UFO should now be seen over Cluj on the 19th. By some of the eye-witnesses this was described as a strange sort of balloon, by others as a conical object, while others thought it was tetrahedral in shape. *Its behaviour was, however, quite unprecedented, for it remained virtually stationary right overhead for four hours.* The peculiar nature of the occurrence was moreover enhanced by the fact that, during the same period of four hours, other very strange aerial objects were observed over the whole of Transylvania, the Romanian province which abuts on the Carpathians in the north-west, and in which Cluj itself is situated.

The mystery cone appeared and took up its stationary position suddenly at 2.30 p.m. above the south-central

part of Cluj. But it had apparently already been seen some 15 minutes earlier, as I was told by witnesses M. Radu (a 31-year-old technical worker) and Z. Martou (a 57-year-old civil servant). Said the latter: "I was returning home from work at 3.15 p.m. when I saw a big triangular balloon travelling westwards rapidly. I was struck by the fact that, despite the strong wind, the object was travelling so fast *against the wind.*"

Having taken up its stationary position overhead, tens of thousands of people were able to observe it between then and 7.15 p.m., when a thick belt of cloud came up quickly and hid it from view, covering the whole sky.

During the afternoon, however, the object stood out clearly against the blue sky. The upper part of it was of a transparent white colour, evidently plastic, which shone in the rays of the sun. When first seen, its observable dimensions gave the impression that it was at no very great height. Most of the passers-by whom I questioned gave the opinion that it was at about 2,000 metres, but this estimate must have been wrong and caused by the "balloon's" great size. Air pilots flying on the line from Bucharest gave its height as 8,000 metres [just over 26,000ft.—ED.]. One pilot, flying in a machine belonging to the Ministry of Health, went up to over 3,000 metres, but estimated the height of the object at over 9,000 metres. Dr. Peligrad, head of the local meteorological office, reported as follows in an article which appeared on September 26 in the Cluj paper *Tribuna*:

"The shining cone-shaped object seen over Cluj was not a radio-sonde balloon. At the altitude of 8,000-9,000m. (at which it was estimated to be) the wind velocity was between 72 and 86 km. per hour, predominantly from the WSW. In such conditions, a balloon would soon have been out of sight."

Another witness, engineer-surveyor S. Muresan, who observed the object by theodolite for almost one hour, told me: "The cone-shaped object was at between 9,000 and 10,000 metres. Its plastic upper portion or roof looked as though not fully inflated, as though the top of it had fallen in. In the object itself, near the base, there was a large yellow-coloured body which had its own light." A few days later I received a completely similar report in a letter from G. Narodot, a technical worker in the survey service, who was at the time in a village more than 25 km. from Cluj.

University professor G. Chisu, of the Astronomical Observatory, who watched the object through a telescope, told a press reporter: "Seen through the glass, it appeared to be a quarter the size of the full Moon. In the centre it had a convex part which shone more brightly than the plastic upper portion—which itself was reflecting the sun's rays."

I myself first learnt of the presence of the strange "balloon" at 4.10 p.m., when I began to receive phone