

# IN SEARCH OF A STEREOTYPE:

An early Bedfordshire sighting, and some comparisons

W. P. Dillon and J. Randles

THIS first case relates to a sighting of one of the well-known UFO types, seen many years ago, but the witness, Bill Dillon, was so impressed that he has retained a very clear memory of it. During the time that has elapsed, since 1957, he has become aware of the existence of a considerable number of cases, throughout the world, which appear to involve precisely the same type of craft or something remarkably similar to it, and in selecting them for study now we may find emerging the identikit-picture of — at any rate — one of the UFO prototypes.

## Part I: The Bedfordshire sighting (W. P. Dillon)

Date: May or June or July, 1957. 13.20 hrs. EST.

Place: Ramridge Junior School, Luton, Bedfordshire.

We children had just finished our lunch-break and were assembling again in the playground. I chanced to look up towards the west and caught sight of what I thought was an aircraft. (I was interested in aircraft, my father was employed at Luton Airport, and our home was near the Airport). At first the object looked like a small dark line and seemed to be too slow for an aircraft. Moving from the area of Point A (see sketch), it was descending at a shallow angle. Having reached Point B, it seemed to change direction and now was heading straight towards us. By this stage many other children had noticed it too, and I felt that I was observing something extraordinary — a “flying saucer”.

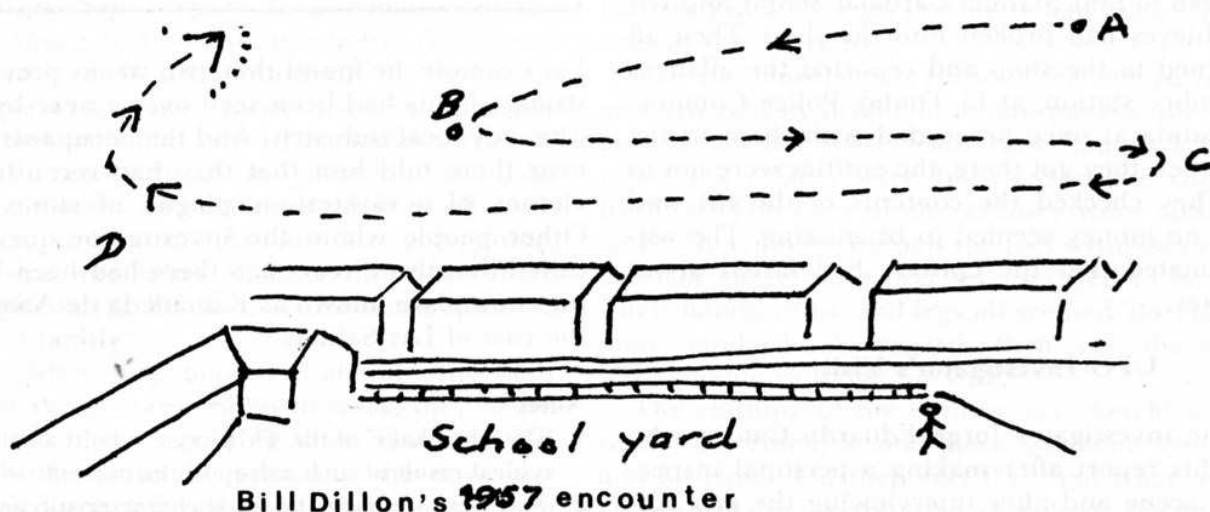
The object was now moving across our field of

vision from left to right, on a trajectory that would have soon taken it out of view. But at Point C it performed a manoeuvre akin to a very tight arc, possibly without banking, and began to move back from right to left. This brought it to its point of closest approach, and the excitement in the playground was intense.

Travelling at a speed which in retrospect I think may have been 50 m.p.h. or so, the UFO vanished from view behind the main school building. Then suddenly, at Point D, it began turning to our right again and, gaining altitude, presented us with a fine view of its topside. Some light cloud cover lay in the object's path, and I think a slight reddish tinge was seen at this stage as the object passed through it. Now high in the sky away to the south-east of us, the object took up a stationary position, standing on its edge and appearing a ‘bright white’ (reflecting sunlight? J.R.).

I looked around quickly at the scene in the playground, and noticed that the most visible effect was being registered on the face of the single teacher who had been on duty there. Clearly shaken, and still glancing up at the stationary object, he brushed his way past several of the children and went into the school buildings. Looking upwards again to relocate the object, I found it had vanished. I asked a boy in front of me where it had gone, and he simply replied: “I don't know. It just disappeared.”

I did not know it at the time of course, but I had just observed evidence of an important UFO characteristic — the incredible ability to ‘vanish on the spot’.



## The Shape of the Object

My sketch, drawn from memory, is my attempt to recapture the shape and appearance, and I consider it the most accurate of the numerous attempts that I have made to reproduce it.

Essentially, there was an upper hull (2) of a silvery or light-grey colour, and covered by areas of slightly darker coloration (visible as the UFO climbed). On the left of the top, as I viewed it when it was travelling from our right to our left across our field of vision, there was a very low cupola or dome (1), which was wedge-shaped and ended about 'midships' on the top of the craft. This low cupola tapered and was lighter in colouring than the rest of the object, except for a small sphere or 'button' (13) attached to the lower part of the upper hull, towards the front, which was of the same lighter colour. The top of the 'tail' of the craft was cut off squarely (3). This 'tail' had what looked like wrinkles or vents around its middle portion (4), and close by to them there was a dark patch (5). (N.B. Items 4, 5, and 7 were seen to be present on both sides of the UFO.)

Next to the patch referred to there was a small antenna or aerial, arising from the tail or fin and having a small ball at its top (6).

The points marked (7) and (8) refer to apparent wrinkles or changes in the texture of the surface that put one rather in mind of the 'wrinkled' effect produced by setting down a hot surface on to a plastic tablecloth. What seemed to be an exhaust-vent is shown at (9). There were two associated flanges, the smaller one being on top, and the area inside here was darkened, suggesting that this was inset from the main hull of the craft. (10) represents a dark line stretching across the hull at this point. Separating this complex upper hull from the lower, leaden-grey coloured hull (12), there was a distinct line of what one might term equatorial struts (11). These were rectangular and slightly convex, bulging out towards the observer. The spaces between these struts presented a blurring effect to the eye and were accordingly impenetrable to our view.

Such an astonishing wealth of detail as I have given here was possible only because the UFO passed so close and was travelling slowly enough for everything to be taken in. I would estimate that at its closest approach it came to within 450 ft. of us, and that the total duration of the sighting was between two and three minutes. I recall that one boy remarked that it "looked as though it was made of millions of dots". (There is a definite similarity here with the recent encounter case at Livingston in Scotland, where the witness, Bob Taylor, said that the outer appearance of the landed object seen by him was "like sandpaper".)

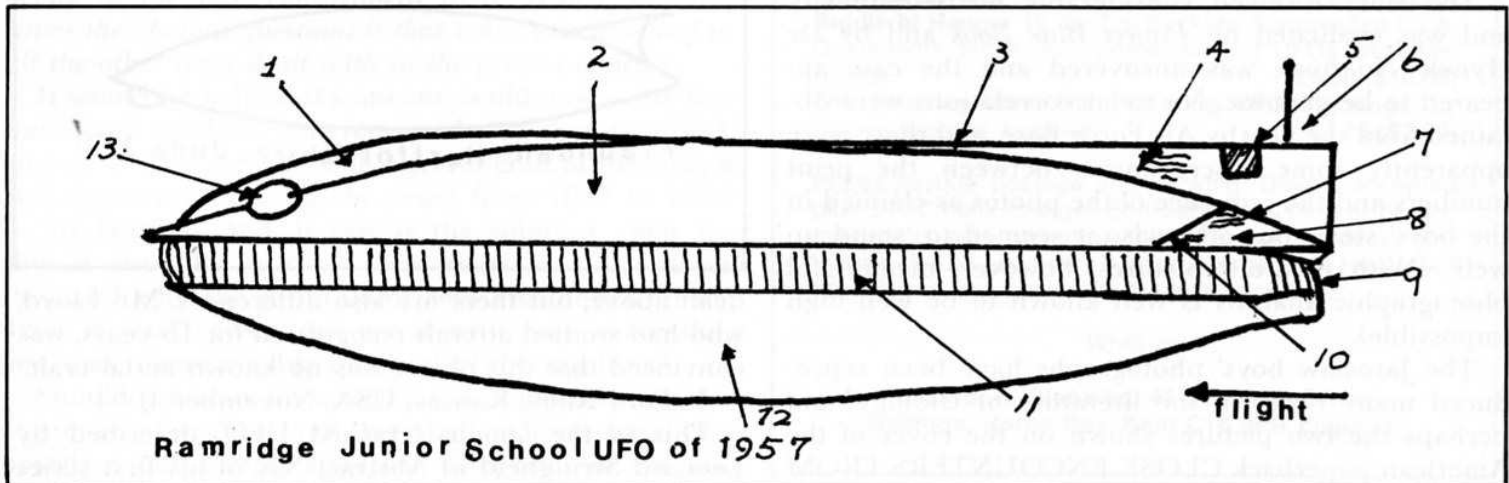
The wind on the day in question was blowing from the north, and the UFO seemed to be quite uninfluenced by that, as might be conjectured from its numerous changes of flight direction. There was a slight heat-haze, but visibility was good. A weather front moved in from the north and it began to rain later in the afternoon, poor weather being firmly established by the evening.

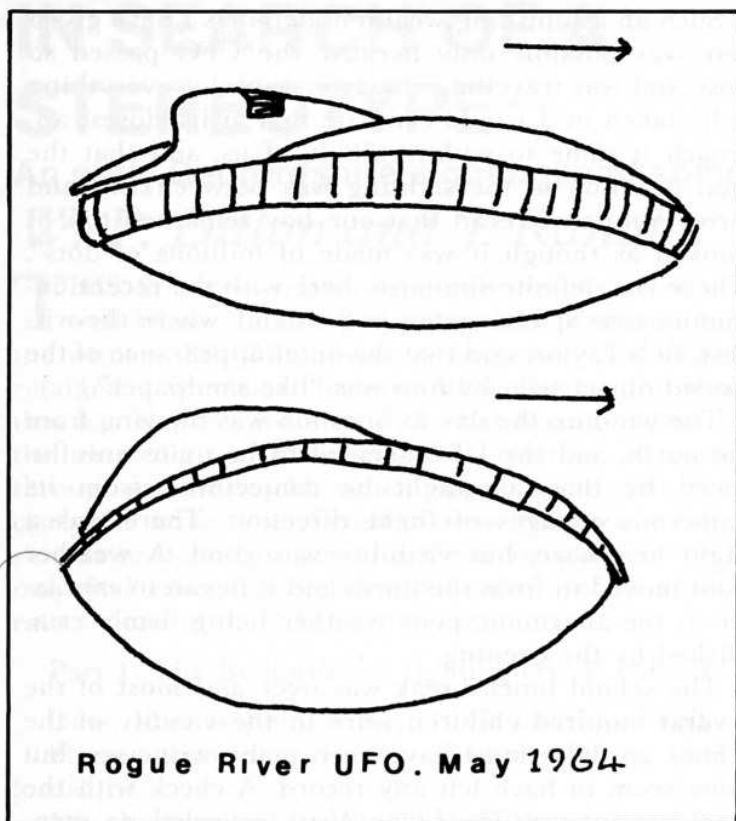
The school lunch-break was over and most of the several hundred children were in the vicinity of the school, so there must have been many witnesses, but none seem to have left any record. A check with the local newspaper (*The Luton News*) revealed no mention of the sighting there. What about the rest of the large population of Luton? (Once again we see here this very well attested 'isolation factor', and the 'limited sphere of influence' within which so many UFO encounters appear to take place. J.R.)

## Part II. Some other cases (Jenny Randles)

1. Rogue River, Oregon, USA. May 24, 1949. 1700 hrs., local time ( $42^{\circ}$ , 25 N.,  $124^{\circ}$ , 24 W.)

This object was seen by five witnesses who were out in a boat fishing. The similarity indicated by the illustration is obvious, and some of the features of the craft's described behaviour closely resemble the account given by Mr. Dillon. The witnesses described an upper and a lower hull separated by a row of convex apertures, as well as a tapering tail on the rear of the upper surface. Even a 'patch' was shown on the





**Rogue River UFO. May 1964**

sketch in the same place as on the Dillon sketch, and the witnesses referred to the dirty and spotty nature of the surface of the UFO.

One remarkable feature emphasised by Mr. Dillon is that, when first sighted, the UFO at Rogue River was described as “standing on end and discharging much light” — which is remarkably like the description of Dillon’s own Ramridge School UFO just before it vanished from sight.

2. Mount Clemens, Michigan, USA. January 9, 1967, 1430 hrs. local time.

This case relates to the UFO allegedly seen by two teenagers, Grant and Dan Jaroslaw, who claimed that they had observed a craft for the space of about ten minutes and taken four photographs of it with their Polaroid camera. The object left by moving away to the south-east (as did *both* the Rogue River and Ramridge objects — for whatever this fact may be worth).

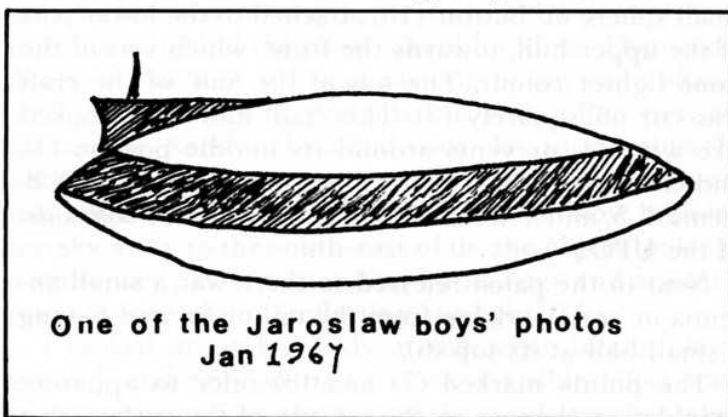
The story received considerable media publicity and was evaluated by *Project Blue Book* and by Dr Hynek. No hoax was uncovered and the case appeared to be genuine. No radar correlations were obtained from the nearby Air Force Base, and there were apparently some discrepancies between the print numbers and the sequence of the photos as claimed in the boys’ story, but otherwise it seemed to ‘stand up well’. (With polaroid pictures, however, meaningful photographic analysis is well known to be well-nigh impossible).

The Jaroslaw boys’ photographs have been reproduced many times in the literature of Ufology, and perhaps the two pictures shown on the cover of the American paperback *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS FROM*

*FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* (New American library, 1977) are clearer than most.

The curious little twist to all this is that, as we learn from Alan Hendry’s *UFO HANDBOOK, The Jaroslaw brothers — now adults — wrote to Dr. Hynek in 1976 and described how they had faked their pictures!*

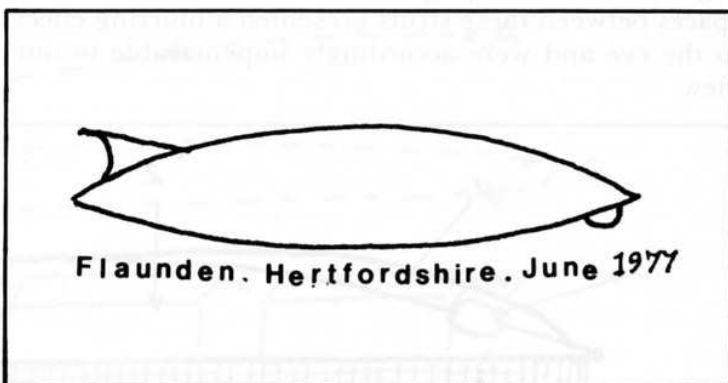
However, the obvious questions remain. *Are the Jaroslaws telling the truth?* Since there appears to be no possibility that they could have known in 1967 about either the Rogue River or the Ramridge cases (neither being publicly available at that time) how did it come about that the boys decided upon this extremely unconventional shape for their fake? This is a question that still calls for an answer. Perhaps American readers can throw more light upon it for us.



**One of the Jaroslaw boys’ photos  
Jan 1967**

3. Flaunden, Hertfordshire, England. June 8, 1977, 1830 hrs. BST.

According to the report (BUFORA files), Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd were sitting in their car in this village when they saw a strange object moving very slowly above them, and then coming to a halt overhead and providing them with an excellent view for ten minutes. Mr. Lloyd observed it through a telescopic gunsight, so that the details as recorded by him may be expected to be reasonably correct. In colour it was a ‘greyish-pewter’. As can be seen, the craft presents some similarities with the others with which we have



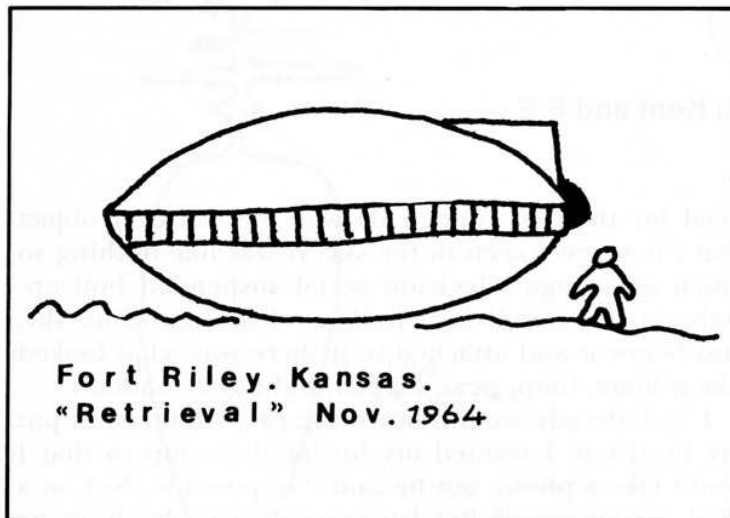
**Flaunden. Hertfordshire. June 1977**

dealt above, but there are also differences. Mr. Lloyd, who had studied aircraft recognition for 15 years, was convinced that this object was no known aerial craft.

4. Ford Riley, Kansas, USA. November 1964.

This is the famous ‘crashed UFO’ described by Leonard Stringfield in Abstract XX of his first series

in FSR on *Retrievals*, and portrayed on page 10 of FSR Vol. 25, No. 6. And it made a profound impression on Mr. Bob Dillon when he first clapped eyes on the drawing.



The object allegedly seen, intact and upon the ground, in this case at Fort Riley, is remarkably like the UFO prototype which we are attempting to track. It will be recalled that it was "approximately 35 to 48 feet in diameter and 12 to 18 ft. in height. It was perfectly round, shaped like a hamburger bun. In the middle, or at the equator of its smooth aluminium-like surface, was a black band made up of squares, each jutting out about 10 inches. A.K. (the witness) could not determine if the squares were windows, or what purpose they served. The only protruding part of the UFO, said A.K., was a fin-like device, and beneath it an aperture which may have been an exhaust unit."

It will easily be agreed, I am sure, that of all the cases related by Stringfield, this seems to be the one that comes closest to the particular prototype which we are seeking.

*But it is here that a very interesting and very crucial point is raised. Stringfield's Abstract XX describes an object seen on the ground at an American military base, and with no related occupants in evidence. There is nothing in A.K.'s report to Stringfield which proves conclusively that the object seen was not a secret experimental device of the U.S. Government itself. Which, in turn, raises the obvious question: is that what was involved in all the other cases dealt with in the present article?*

It would be helpful if someone could now come forward and produce concrete evidence that the USA and/or Britain were testing a secret craft of this shape and appearance during the years from 1947 to 1964 — or later — and, if this is the solution, then we should also like to know were there any records of this, and why the programme was abandoned (if indeed it was?) given the apparently very successful, fast, and manoeuvrable qualities of the machine?

Should someone be successful in demonstrating the existence of such a craft, we shall at least have disposed of one of the apparent categories of the so-

called "UFOs", and we shall be in a position to understand what it was that the Jaroslaw brothers were able to photograph in 1967.

#### COMMENT

This discussion reminds me that, some years ago, I discovered an apparently unknown Law, which I have called *Creighton's Nineteenth Law*. To be succinct, this Law states that, *given enough time, all UFO reports and all UFO photographs will be proved to be fakes*. I have watched with great interest the exemplification of this law in a number of notable cases.

With regard to the vitally important matter of *secret prototypes* — of which there must be a great many around nowadays in the skies of our planet — I recall that this is what they assured us the disc-shaped UFOs were when Kenneth Arnold had his famous sighting of them away back there in 1947. Their performance, as reported by Arnold, was nothing short of amazing. I have never ceased to be astonished when I see that in 1983 we still persist in building lumbering, antiquated aeroplanes in such large numbers.

But now take a look at the article which follows.  
G.C.

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# THE AIRSHIP OVER THE STRAWBERRY FIELDS

*Margaret Fry*

**Mrs Fry, who lives at Bexleyheath, in Kent, is the North Kent and S.E. London Area Investigator for CONTACT (UK).**

**T**HIS report concerns an experience which my husband Ron and I had in the summer of 1978, when we spent the day strawberry-picking on a farm in Kent.

The date was August 13, 1978, and it was in the morning. The day was bright, sunny, and windless. And we were travelling by car, bound for Beesfield Farm, near Swanley. Our route lay through Sutton-at-Hone, on the A225 road.

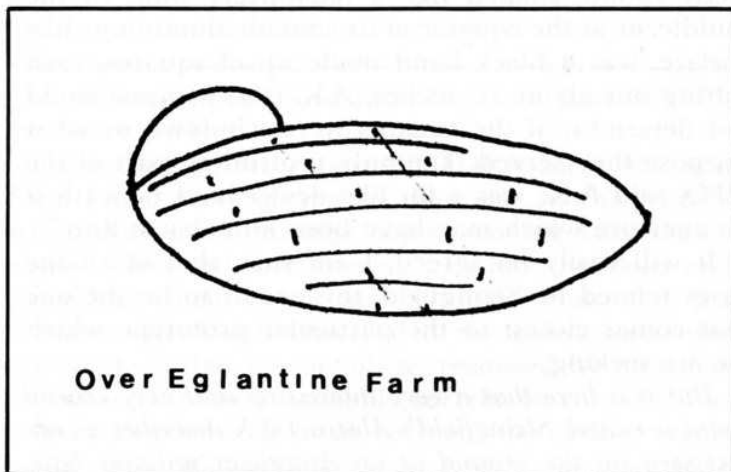
As we came to a cross-road point in the open country, near Eglantine Farm, a huge dull light-grey dirigible passed over the road in front of the car. My husband was the first to see it. Although he was driving and consequently had his eyes strictly on the road, the sheer size of this thing distracted his attention.

I have been investigating UFO reports for a number of years and I think I have learnt to judge pretty accurately the size of more close objects in the sky. This craft which we now saw seemed to be at least 300-400 feet long and about 40 ft. wide at its widest part in the centre. I judged its height to be about 700-800 ft. Ron shouted "What the heck is that!" Then I looked up, by which time the thing was over the area to the side of the road leading from Horton Kirby. It was thus virtually alongside of us, on our left, sailing serenely and majestically on an even course, very slowly and absolutely silently. I shouted: "Why, it's an *airship* — how exciting!" and my husband slowed down to about the same speed as the craft, about 10 m.p.h. Then we came to some hillocks by the road and lost sight of it behind them, so it was pretty low.

After that the landscape fell away to open ground and a wide valley, with hilly country in the near background to one side, a wide sweep of fields and low land with dense trees a few miles further on to the right. The dirigible was now slightly ahead, but still to the side of our route. I noticed several hundreds of people gazing up at the craft from the fields below, and there were again large numbers watching on the hilly slopes to our left, standing by their cars in the car-park on a hill slope in the near distance at Eglantine Farm. All these people (fruit-pickers) were looking up at the dirigible, which by now was slowly manoeuvring around over the open fields, its nose sharply tilting up. It then stationed itself to the right of, and slightly above, something else which I now no-

ticed for the first time. This was the weirdest object that I have ever seen in the sky. It was like nothing so much as a huge television aerial suspended bolt-upright in the cloudless, windless, clear light-blue sky, and below it and attached to it there was what looked like a huge, limp, pear-shaped, light-grey balloon.

I had already wound down the car window and put my head out. I wanted my husband to stop so that I could take a photo, but he said: "Impossible. Not on a dual carriageway!" But he was going as slowly as he dared, and glancing now and then at the dirigible himself. At this point the road was on high ground, with the fields below perhaps about 200 ft. down from the level of our car, so that in fact the objects were now only a few hundreds of feet above us.



## The Helicopters and Whole Fleet of "Dirigibles"

Helicopters were busily passing to and fro beneath the two objects (they would presumably be on the normal helicopter route between Gatwick and Heathrow Airports?). I wondered if the helicopter pilots were aware of the two objects, which were now both absolutely stationary.

Then, as I directed my gaze higher into the sky, I was startled to see that there was a whole fleet of dirigibles up there, in some sort of formation, stretched out over the distant wooded area right to the horizon, as far as the eye could see. And all were stationary. I was excited, thinking this must be some sort of Air Display, for we were not far from the Brands Hatch Circuit.