

on those terms? If the object of cosmic philosophy is to persuade us to a greater awareness of universal truth, then no more disastrous method could have been employed. It is an extraordinary way to go about converting a person by first insulting his intelligence. But that is precisely what is being done. It explains why those who rely solely upon the contact claims find themselves isolated. And why the majority remains either critical or openly hostile.

The scientific group is undoubtedly making remarkable progress in the task of conversion. It uses the language and the caution of the scientific method: it talks in terms that even the die-hard sceptic must, finally, accept. Michel's article on Global Orthoteny which appeared in our May-June issue was read by many who had previously closed their eyes, their ears and their minds to our subject. We have all wondered, at some time or another, how the truth about flying saucers could ever emerge. There is now one certain answer: orthoteny, if it can continue to be developed, must bring the subject first to respectability and finally to acceptance. Trips to Saturn will have to wait: you cannot arrive before you have started. If, when we do arrive, we find that George Adamski has been there first, the scientists will owe him an apology and nothing more. If he has to wait some time for recognition he will have only himself to blame. It will not just be that the claim was too much for his contemporaries to take. It will be that he made his claim in the wrong way.

Those who rely on faith as the key to turn the mystery will find the scientists' approach both tedious and slow. Their contempt for their opponents is equalled only by that of those who oppose

them. No wonder one side hardly ever refers to the other. Throughout the world there are a number of journals and bulletins devoted to flying saucers. In only a very few of them can you read a balanced view. The cosmic philosophy mongers have no room for Michel. The scientists speak only with contempt of Adamski. While it is true that the former are making the greater headway at the moment, it is also true that the latter are better known. It cannot be denied, however, that those who wish to convert the greatest number of people must choose global orthoteny as the more efficient instrument. Once again, it matters much not only what one says but also the way in which one says it.

Perhaps it has appeared that it would be better to take the advice of the scientific group and to keep silent about these wild contact claims, to buy respectability at the price of suppression and to dismiss Adamski and his fellows as fantasists or something worse. This is tempting counsel, but for one consideration: it happens to be unscientific. It would ignore all the evidence which, whether we like it or not, favours Adamski in his earliest claim at least. And this favourable evidence, argue you as you may, cannot be denied. Time passes and first principles are forgotten, but there is evidence that his photographs cannot have been pure invention or even the image of a lamp-shade. There are at least three classic sightings in England alone that go to support this statement. On another page we recite this evidence in support of the photograph. Until the scientific group can destroy, by methods of their own election, a doubt remains. That doubt until that time remains most firmly in George Adamski's favour.

Perils of Weekly Journalism

"The decision to deal with the Charlton mystery hole as a straight forward meteorite affair must be disappointing news to some. When I saw it, one man was excitedly taking cine-camera shots, while another was quickly turning the pages of the

Flying Saucer Review. A third, gazing steadily down the hole, refused to leave with his friends, saying he wanted to stay there 'and just think about it all.'"
Punch, July 31, 1963.

THE WILTSHIRE CRATER MYSTERY

The meteorite that never was

by Waveney Girvan

JULY 16, 1963, will long be remembered in the annals of British UFOlogy. It brought the subject of flying saucers back into the headlines of the newspapers, attracting widespread comment and speculation and leaving the sceptics bewildered. That was not all: it exposed once and for all the deception practised by Whitehall upon the public and the Press. Although the mystery was occasionally bedevilled by inaccurate reporting at the time, the picture is now reasonably clear as to what actually hap-

pened both in public and behind the scenes.

Something appeared to have landed on Farmer Roy Blanchard's field at the Manor Farm, Charlton, Wiltshire.* The marks on the ground were first discovered by a farmworker, Reg Alexander. They overlapped a potato field and a barley field. The marks comprised a saucer-shaped depression or crater eight feet in diameter and about four inches in depth. In the centre of this depression there was found a three feet deep hole variously

described as from five inches to one foot in diameter. Radiating from the central hole were four slot marks, four feet long and one foot wide. The object must have landed—if landed it did—unseen, but Mr. Leonard Joliffe, a dairyman on the farm, reported he heard a blast one morning at approximately 6 a.m. It is not known whether this noise had any connection with the mystery.

* The Manor Farm, Charlton, is in Wiltshire not Dorset. The confusion in many reports was caused by the fact that the postal address is Charlton, near Shaftesbury, Dorset.



The crater photographed soon after discovery.

Copyright: A. J. Bealing, Shaftesbury, Dorset

Farmer Roy Blanchard is a man of sound commonsense. He sent for the police who, in turn, summoned the Army. Captain John Rogers, chief of the Army Bomb Disposal Unit, of Horsham, Sussex, arrived on the scene to conduct investigations. It is necessary in view of certain criticisms that will be made later to say that the brave men who undertake these dangerous operations deserve nothing but the highest praise. It is a pity that their work should have become involved in mystification resulting from official policy.

Captain Rogers's preliminary report indicated that there were no burn or scorch marks, nor any trace of an explosion. "My superior and I are baffled," was all he could say. Farmer Roy Blanchard was more forthright. "There isn't a trace of the potatoes and barley which were growing where the crater is now. No stalks, no leaves, no roots," he pointed out, adding: "The thing was heavy enough to crush rocks and stones to powder. Yet it came down gently. We heard no crash and whatever power it uses produces no heat or noise. I believe that we have received a visit from a spaceship from another world." (See *Daily Sketch*, July 17.) When interviewed by Mr. Gordon Creighton on behalf of the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW, Mr. Blanchard gave the impression that he had been warned to restrict his comments. When asked what was his opinion of the cow found with burn marks on its hide, he quickly answered that that had nothing to do with the case and that he knew what had caused the damage. When Mr. Creighton told him that similar occurrences in Brazil had caused a drop in the milk yield, Mr. Blanchard, not unnaturally, said he was very sorry to learn this.

On July 19, it was reported that Captain Rogers had sought permission from his superiors to sink a shaft and said that his readings so far were rather unusual and indicated a metallic object of some size, deeply embedded. He added: "We have never encountered anything like

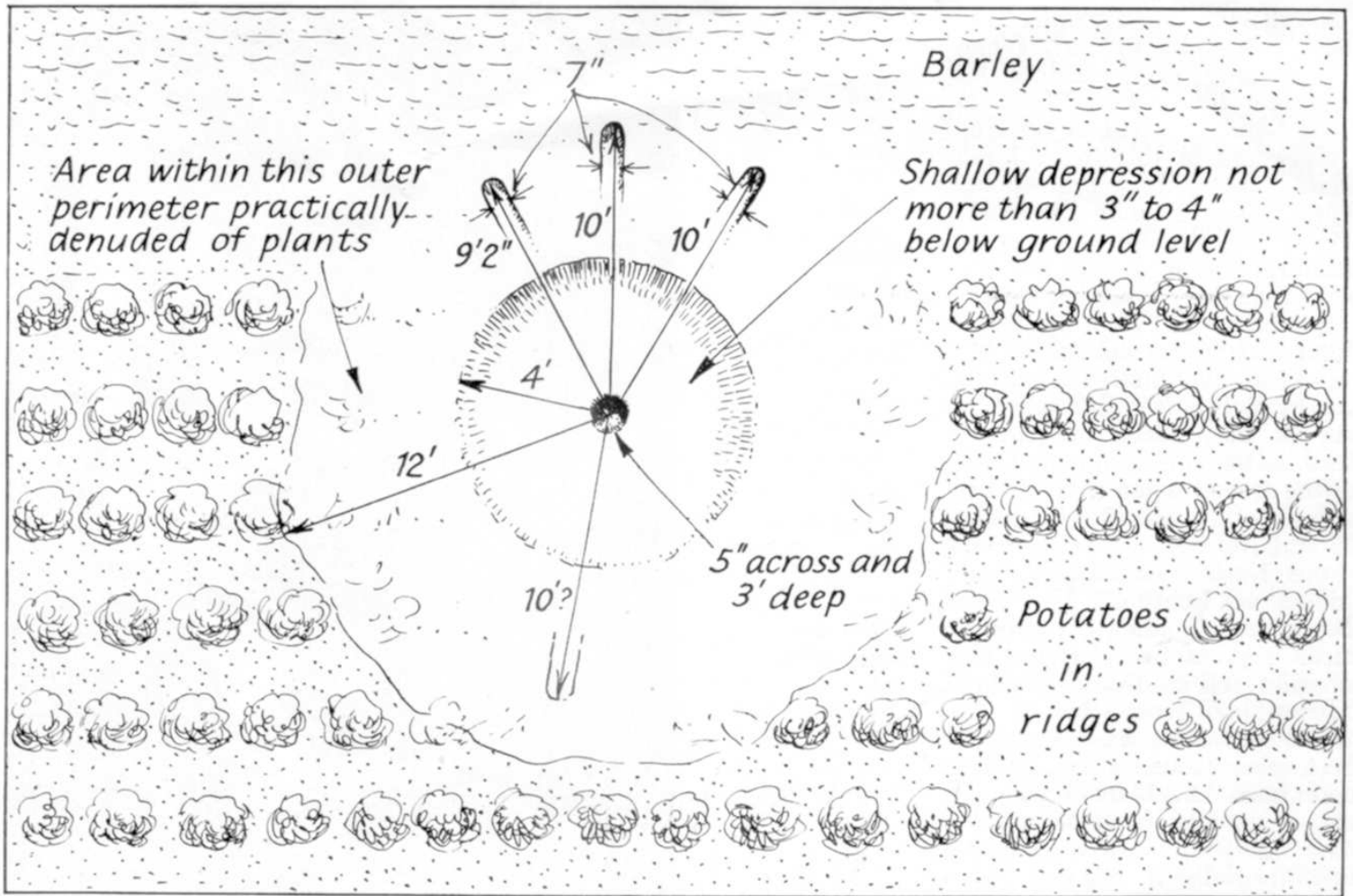


this before." One of his men later told reporters that his detector behaved wildly. This is a crucial point in the mystery in view of the sequel. In these two statements lies perhaps the vital clue.

It was fortunate that the investigations were initially carried out by the Army and not the Air Ministry. Otherwise the cloak of official secrecy would have descended much earlier. At this stage the investigation was open and above board. The Southern Command Public Relations Officer at Salisbury told me that a small piece of metal had early on been recovered from the hole but that it held no special significance.

In the *Southern Evening Echo* of July 20, the name of Dr. Robert Randall first appeared and it was he who first propounded the "spacecraft from Uranus" theory. Subsequently, other newspapers suggested that he was officially helping the

Bomb Disposal Unit to solve the mystery. After Dr. Randall's appearance on television, the *Daily Telegraph* on July 24 printed his theory that a three-legged spaceship from Uranus had landed in the field for repairs. In other papers it was reported that he was an astro-physicist from Woomera, Australia. When I telephoned Dr. Randall, however, he denied having made such claims though he had lived at Woomera. He also denied that he was a physicist, but claimed to be a medical doctor. Further enquiries disclosed that he was, or had been, a process-chaser at Vickers aircraft factory at Weybridge, Surrey. Later, he became rather elusive and for the purposes of this story we must bid him a temporary farewell. Our enquiries, however, continue. The mystery of Dr. Randall remains — the solution may be simple or it may be more pro-



found—but his intervention must not be allowed to confuse the main stream of the narrative.

On July 23, the *Daily Express* reported that it had become known that the village policeman, Police Constable Anthony Penny, stated that he had seen an orange object flash through the sky on July 10 and vanish near the field in which the strange marks were found. He had not reported this fact earlier as he had been on holiday. Meanwhile investigations continued and the matter was given very serious attention as was proved by the fact that Dr. John Lishman, medical officer for health for Mere and Tisbury rural council, had been called in to discover if there was any hazard to health.

It was not very difficult to prophesy what would happen next, particularly when it was reported that two Air Force officials had arrived on the scene. It was obviously no use pretend-

ing that a weather balloon had made a hole in the ground and had penetrated to some six feet. It was bound to be a meteorite and when the object was finally dug up, with Mr. Patrick Moore present, the object was in a way buried all over again. Mr. Moore's verdict: "It is something from outer space and almost certainly a meteorite, though a shrimp-sized one compared with many others on record. However, by crashing down at something like 45 miles per hour it would have turned itself into a very effective explosive, and its blast effect would account for the peculiar 'wheel with spokes' shape of the crater." (See the *Guardian*, July 26.) The Southern Command announced that the half-pound lump of matter was being sent to the British Museum for investigation. It should be remembered that Patrick Moore had already committed himself to the opinion on television that the object was a meteorite and as a fanatical

opponent of the flying saucers he would be determined to seize upon any possibility to debunk them.

The one part of Patrick Moore's statement which was to be proved accurate was the shrimp-like size. By comparison, the crater was a veritable whale. It was impossible that the former could have caused the latter. Neither could it have caused the four radiating slot marks.

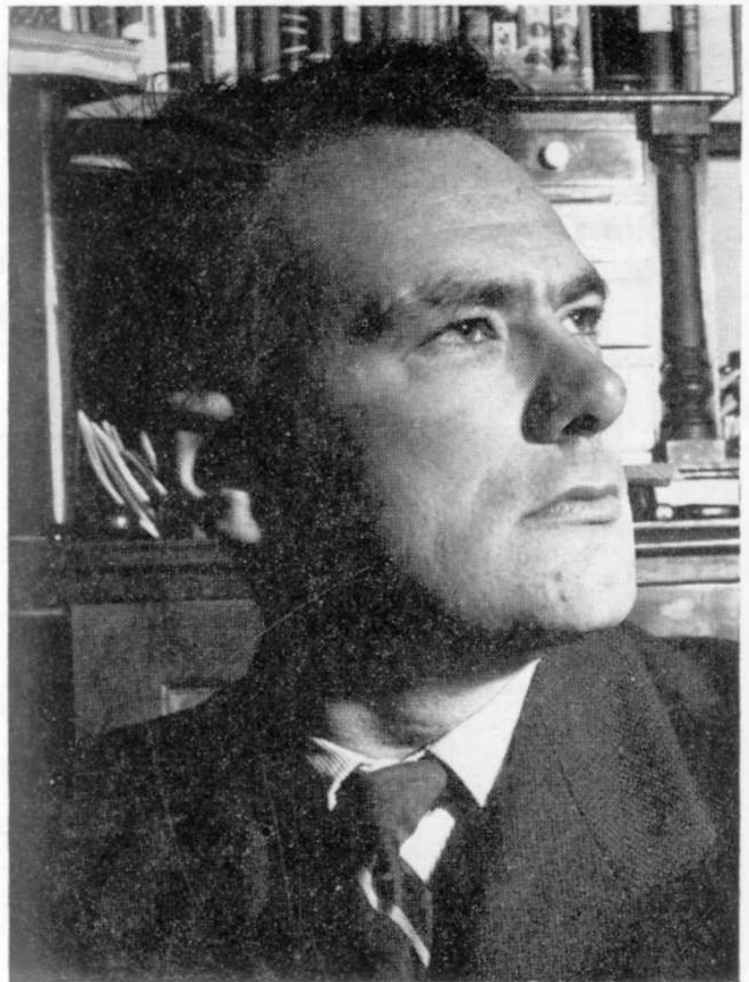
Time was running short. Previous and similar experiences had taught me how difficult it is to revive a story that has been killed. (Authority, no doubt, relies upon this as part of its technique in blocking information.) While it is true that Southern Command and Patrick Moore had protected themselves with a "probably," the public would tend to ignore this and accept the meteorite as the final explanation. Action that day, July 26, was imperative. But what action?

Of all unlikely people, Dr. Menzel came to my aid. I had that morning been reading his fascinating book, *The World of Flying Saucers*, which is referred to elsewhere in this issue. I felt certain that this professional sceptic would not overlook meteors as possible sources of misinterpretation. I was not disappointed: he devoted a section of the book to this subject. He added that it was difficult to disabuse the witnesses because meteors very often burn out as soon as they reach our atmosphere. Only infrequently can they be traced when they land in the form of a meteorite. On pages 102 and 103 of his book he refers to the Norton County, Kansas, incident of February 18, 1948, when a fireball (allegedly causing saucer reports) was seen. The meteorite fell in Furnas County and weighed more than a ton and had made a six-foot crater. The impact occurred in a field. I quote from Dr. Menzel who, in turn, is quoting from an article, "Tracing the Norton, Kansas, Meteorite Fall," in *Sky and Telescope*, Vol. vii (1948), p. 294, which refers to the field as:

"... so overgrown with weeds that even the large crater made by the record-breaking main mass of fall was finally located only when by chance a caterpillar tractor started to fall into it." Two points immediately struck me. A meteorite weighing more than a ton had made a six-foot crater, yet a "shrimp" weighing half a pound had done much better with eight feet. In the Kansas case, the vegetation had not disappeared.

Armed with these facts, I telephoned Southern Command at Salisbury to confirm the weight of the Charlton object. I began to notice a great reluctance to answer my questions openly and it became obvious that the P.R.O. wanted to wash his hands of the whole affair. I became more and more suspicious. I therefore decided to inform a colleague of mine, the Science Editor of a national newspaper. By a lucky chance he knew the expert at the British Museum to whom the object had been sent for investi-

Patrick Moore, F.R.S., F.R.S.A. Expert's opinion: "Shrimp-sized . . . crashing down at . . . 45 miles per second."



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gation and he was promptly informed that the object was a piece of common or garden ironstone which could be found buried all over Southern England. On further enquiries, I was told by Southern Command that this was the case. I then asked if they proposed to issue a correction, but the reply indicated that this was not their job, nor would they say who would or could give the facts to the public. To prevent the story being killed I informed the Press Association in London and a number of newspapers individually. It was in this way that, through various media, on July 27 the public learnt that the object found in the Manor Farm field was not a meteorite. For the first time, the sequence of mystery followed by "explanation" and culminating in silence had been broken. The accusation against authority is not in the first place for having misled the public (though why a meteorite should even "probably" be offered in explanation before

it was investigated is suspicious in itself) but, when the real truth was known, in not putting the record straight. In another day's time all attempts to explode the "explanation" would have been frustrated.

It is significant that Dr. F. G. F. Claringbull, Keeper of the Department of Mineralogy at the British Museum, who finally destroyed the meteorite explanation prefers to keep an open mind on the subject and made this significant remark: "There is more in this than meets the eye." (See *Yorkshire Post*, July 27.) Students of the flying saucers will be heartened to know that many scientists of repute are becoming less and less inclined to scoff at the saucers.

There are a number of lessons to be learnt from the Manor Farm mystery. Editors of newspapers, for the most part, are much too easily hoodwinked on the subject of flying saucers. They never get the hang of the

three-card trick: they always draw weather balloon or meteorite, never the flying saucer. The time to start probing is after the "explanation" and not only before.

The investigator can learn a trick or two as well. Investigation on the spot is always valuable but it should be conducted with caution. Ask questions but give no opinion at an early stage. Remember that someone, somewhere, is planning a way to kill every flying saucer story and to make the UFOlogist look silly. It may not be Heaven that sends "experts" like Patrick Moore and "Dr." Robert Randall to try us. It could be some other agency. To knock down Aunt Sally you must first find someone to erect the poor old lady. The lunatic fringe we cannot control, so let the sun-worshippers and the cultists sacrifice themselves if someone has to go. Gazing into craters is valuable work, but it is the "explanation" that has to be watched above everything.

The importance of the piece of ironstone now becomes apparent. If ordinary ironstone is widely distributed and highly magnetic, then the Bomb Disposal Unit's detector would not be of much use. If violent reactions were obtained from the Charlton object then it must have been magnetised in some way, perhaps by proximity to a force field. This proves, in the first place, that the whole affair was not a hoax. Some evidence would surely have been apparent on the surface of the field, but nobody can suggest that the ironstone had been planted: the British Museum suggested that it had been buried in the ground for some time. Borrowing some of Patrick Moore's caution (but armed with sounder information) I would say that in all probability a machine of unknown origin landed in Farmer Blanchard's field some time in July and then took off again. The behaviour of the Army goes a long way to support this theory. The sense of the matter rests with Farmer Blanchard who, when faced with con-

ventional "explanations" replied: "But where have my crops gone?" Where indeed?

A chastened Southern Command commented: "The cause of the phenomena is still unexplained but it is no part of the Army's task to unravel such mysteries." (*Western Daily Press*, Bristol, July 27.) At last authority has admitted that there is a mystery! Perhaps in future it will be even more cautious and tell the public the plain truth without the trimmings. On July 30 I was able to give the public the basic facts on B.B.C. Television.

The facts quoted above were communicated immediately to Major Wall, Conservative M.P. for Haltemprice, who had put down a question on the subject in the House of Commons. The Government's answer was now highly satisfactory. The crater is a complete mystery. Major Wall is to persevere and is to ask whether further investigation is to be carried out.

One of the still unsolved problems is the exact role played in the mystery by Robert Randall. All UFO investigators should give the matter a top priority.

The reason why Robert Randall and his Uranus theory were given such publicity was because he seemed to have been "adopted" by the Bomb Disposal Unit. Sergeant James Reith of that Unit declared that he knew his name and had met him at Woomera. "You can take his name as an authority on flying saucers." The P.R.O. Southern Command at Salisbury now explains this curious endorsement as being due to the excitement of the moment. It will be noted that it was not just Randall's face that was familiar, it was his qualifications and his place of employment. But for this remark, and others, "Dr." Randall would never have been quoted on television nor, in all seriousness, in the *Daily Telegraph* on July 24. It is interesting to ask, if excitement on what the Army describes as a routine job leads to a misinterpretation of this magnitude, what would happen if

the men of the Bomb Disposal Squad got really worked up. The reply given to me about the whereabouts of the piece of local ironstone may have a double significance: "We have no further interest in it. All we could do with it would be to whitewash it and put it in the Sergeants' Mess."

NOTES

Main references: *Daily Sketch*, July 17 and 22; *Southern Evening Echo*, July 17 and 19; *Daily Express*, July 17, 19, 20, 22 and 23; *Daily Mail*, July 20 and 22; *The Times*, July 19; *Yorkshire Post*, July 19, 24 and 27; *The Guardian*, July 18, 23 and 24; *The Daily Telegraph*, July 23, 24, 26 and 27; *Daily Mirror*, July 26; *Western Daily Press*, July 27.

I am indebted to Mr. C. A. Stickland, Information Officer of the London UFO Research Organisation, for the sketch map reproduced in accompaniment of this article. He asks for details of any sightings in the area from mid-June to mid-July. His address is 22 Roseberry Street, London, S.E.16.

The sequence of events in the mystery of Randallism is in danger of being overlooked. It is as follows:

1. Crater discovered by Farmer Blanchard.
2. Military arrive to investigate.
3. "Dr." Randall appears on scene.
4. Randall endorsed by Bomb Disposal Sergeant Reith.
5. Randall appears on television with space ship theory. *Daily Telegraph* next day (July 24) publishes straightforward interview elaborating this theory.
6. Randall contradicted by meteorite "explanation."
7. Disappearance of Randall.
8. No meteorite after all. Randall, once so confident and now vindicated, remains incommunicado. Why should he be so shy now that he is re-established? Surely human nature being what it is, he would in the normal way turn upon his detractors.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE CHARLTON CRATER

What Mr. Selwood saw

WRITING in the *Dorset Evening Echo* on July 27, Leslie Mace wrote: "The mystery of the Charlton hole, near Shaftesbury, deepens. It wasn't made by a bomb and the meteorite theory has been exploded. That brings speculation right back to the visitors from another planet." As a result, one witness, at least, has come forward to give testimony which might otherwise have been withheld for the usual reason—ridicule.

It is not, of course, known exactly when the Charlton crater was made, but it was discovered on July 16 and reported in the national press the day after. On July 14, Mr. Frank Selwood of 72 Albert Road, Parkstone, Dorset* may well have seen the object that caused the crater discovered in a field at the Manor Farm, Charlton.

Mr. Selwood told the *Dorset Evening News*: "I woke up at about 3 a.m. on Sunday, July 14,

looked out of the bedroom window and there towering over a large gasholder at the rear of the recreation ground at the back of my house was a huge cigar-shaped object as big as four terraced houses. It was wider than the gasholder and hovered for about 2½ minutes 300 feet up. In the middle of it was an intermittent flashing wavy blue-green light. I returned to the window after unsuccessfully trying to wake my wife up and it was still there. I could hear a quiet sort of whistle coming from it and flapping sounds. It sounded as if the motor, or whatever it was, was running rough—like a broken down dynamo. It continued to hover then suddenly the motor sprang into life, the intermittent light became continuous along the object's entire length, and it made off towards the west at a fantastic speed: faster than any jet I had ever seen." Mr. Selwood was asked if he had in-

formed the police, but he replied: "What was the use, they would not have believed me."

Our investigator, Mr. F. T. Marshall, interviewed Mr. Selwood and discovered the reason for his restlessness that night. He is a young married man, aged 30, with two young daughters and had got up to tend the younger one. It was about 3.10 a.m. and he was amazed to see a darkish object approaching from the east. When 500 yards or so away it stopped at the estimated height of 300 feet. It was quite stationary but made a noise which sounded like "a squeaky bearing in a running dynamo." Running from its two extremities was a varying bluish light described as "like a mercury arc rectifier." Mr. Selwood admitted that he was scared and his fingers stiff from gripping the window frame.

* Parkstone is approximately 25 miles south-east of Charlton.

RANDALLISM IN BRISTOL?

ON July 29, the *Western Daily Press* published in Bristol, reported two mysterious incidents in the sky above the city early in the morning. The first appeared to be a glowing orange ball and was seen by many people and photographed by staff photographer Graham Kilsby. Later it seemed to return to the sky and then shot off, according to some witness, at "terrific speed" upwards and over the Bristol Channel. The *Western Mail* published in Cardiff on the other side of the channel said that witnesses had reported the object over Lavernock Point.

Next morning, July 30, the *Western Daily Press* reported the alleged explanation—it was a flaming balloon let off in the "interest of science" by Rhode-

sian-born Murray Alexander, apprentice at the Bristol Aeroplane Company. Some other reports mentioned that he had attached a piece of carpet to his balloon and set fire to it. This has apparently been uncritically accepted, but as the newspapers will never ask the right questions (they have been indoctrinated against our subject by a series of phoney explanations over the years) we ask our Bristol readers to find out more about this curious incident. In the interests of what science did Mr. Murray commit his public nuisance? For how long has he indulged in his unnamed and, we would think, rather dangerous science? Is he now satisfied with his experiments or does he intend to pursue them? If so, does he intend to warn the police about

his activities in advance in order to prevent the spread of stories about those little green men so dear to the heart of gullible reporters?

The FLYING SAUCER REVIEW does not pretend to know what Bristolians saw in their sky. But after the Wiltshire crater attempted hoax upon the public we suggest that all newspapers should become rather more suspicious about the explanations than they have been in the past. The questions we are now asking should have been put to Mr. Alexander by the members of the press who pride themselves upon their perspicacity but who are, it seems, only too ready to fall for a lump of any old iron that is offered to their great big, open-hearted, trusting souls.