

UFOs RELIABLY REPORTED . . .

Airline pilots' sightings in North California

William Murphy

Our contributor is a reader of long-standing of *Flying Saucer Review* and an APRO investigator. He lives in Redding, California.

FOR your records, I would like to submit two older sightings. One from the early 1950s and the other dated June of 1968. Both were by qualified and reputable commercial pilots known to (and recently interviewed by) me.

Observation near Shasta Lake

On a June afternoon in 1968, Mr. Jack Humphrey—who is now a high school teacher but was then flying commercially—and his teenage son were outside their summer cabin on O'Brien Mountain near Shasta Lake in North California.

"Look at that" said the young Humphrey, pointing to the WNW at about a 45° elevation. They saw a cigar-shaped object loping lazily towards them and heading SSE while maintaining a constant altitude. Mrs. Humphrey was a later witness. It turned end over end, but inclined at a slight angle from the vertical.

When I first heard of the sighting from Mr. Humphrey in 1968 he said it was as large as a cigarette held at arm's length. More recently he felt in retrospect that it was not so large, perhaps as big as a Boeing 707 fuselage at about 30,000ft. However, as it was not observing aero-dynamic principles, it was presumed to be beyond the atmosphere. If either estimate is close, and if it were at an altitude of 50 miles, it must have been of prodigious dimensions. If it were lower, it would have had to be burning up unless air friction were somehow controlled.

The colour of the cigar was silver or aluminium, and a wisp of smoke unlike a vapour trail came from the blunt end. There was no noise. Jet noise is usually easily audible in the quiet woods.

As the object departed to the South East, an orange and white object was seen to detach from or be

ejected by the cigar. After a short falling leaf descent the orange and white object moved off to the North East. Mr. Humphrey and his son thought the orange and white device was a parachute, and they thought they could detect its cargo dangling below as it wobbled. But this seemed unlikely when the thing moved off horizontally and at too great a speed for even a guided parachute.

The "cigar" was observed for three or four minutes and the "parachute" for ten minutes or more.

When Mr. Humphrey was able to get to a phone he called the FAA Flight Service Station at Red Bluff and talked to a controller whom he knew. The FAA agent said that they knew of the incident and that a military jet had checked it out. (The Humphreys had observed a single-engined jet apparently following the track that the orange and white object had taken.) The FAA *thought* it probably was a rocket launched from Vandenberg AFB, over 400 miles to the South East. If it were that it must have decided to turn around and go home, because it (the cigar) was going South East.

As far as I know neither this sighting nor the one that follows has been published elsewhere.

Montagu airport incident

Mr. Leo Purinton has been flying the skies of Northern California and the world for more than three decades. He is a commercial pilot and flight instructor, and is accredited to do almost any kind of airwork in almost any type of aircraft.

Mr. Purinton currently operates Shasta Aviation at Sky Ranch Airport just South of Redding, California. In all of his experience he has observed only one phenomenon

that he could not rationalise as either natural or man-made.

On a quiet summer afternoon in the early 1950s (perhaps 1952) Leo was on the ground at Montague airport a few miles North West of Mt. Shasta and not far from the California-Oregon border. Up in the air he noticed what he thought was a page of a newspaper caught in a thermal, but it wasn't a day for "dust devil"-type air currents, and there was no ground wind at all. The "paper", furthermore, was just standing there wobbling or rocking slightly, neither descending nor ascending.

The device remained relatively stationary as Leo Purinton looked more closely and intently. The thing appeared to be of more substantial construction than a newspaper page. Suddenly it shot westward for a few miles at sonic speed and stopped again to hover near the town of Yreka.

It must have been relatively large, he said, but since he is used to observing airborne objects Mr. Purinton is quite cautious about estimating the size, speed and distances involved.

After hovering about 20 seconds at Yreka it shot back until near to its original position, stopped there for only a few seconds, and then sped off to the North at great speed.

The entire sighting lasted only a minute or so. When first seen, the object was at an elevation of about 80°, i.e. almost overhead. It was darker than the clear blue sky. There was no noise. When it moved the acceleration and deceleration seemed instant. There was no vapour trail and it moved so fast that Leo could not tell (or remember) if it rocked or wobbled when in flight.

There was no one nearby to share the sighting, and no others with whom he discussed it later had seen it.

MAIL BAG

The lights of 1905

Sir,—With reference to Roger Sandell's fascinating piece of research on UFOs in Wales in 1905 (FSR, July/August 1971), I am sure that readers will like to see the following curious item of supporting evidence placed on record in our pages.

My grandfather, William Creighton, a Scottish farmer from Lockerbie, in the County of Dumfries, was, as I well remember him, a man who (considering his limited background and education) had a marked sense of curiosity about the stranger or, as we might term it, the "Fortean" side of life. When he passed on at a very ripe age (as did my own father after him) he left behind two scrap-albums which cover the opening years of the XXth century and, in particular, contain much valuable newspaper material on the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905.

But, among the more "Fortean" elements in these albums, which are now among my treasured possessions, I find there is a press-clipping from the London evening paper *The Star* with the text of a piece of doggerel. There is a little uncertainty as to the precise date of the clipping, as my grandfather had not developed that sharp eye for dates and sources which characterises the readers of FSR. But from its place in the album it is certain that the date of the clipping falls around December 1904 or January/February 1905—in other words just the right time for the beginning of the burst of Welsh phenomena turned up by Mr. Sandell in his browsings in the Newspaper Department of the British Museum. (The "poem" has its domestic political touch which will amuse many, and which seems to suggest that, in at least one respect, things have not changed much since 1905!)

THE LIGHT THAT FAILED

There are lights in the mountains of
Wales

With a ghostly importance invested,
Though I see the phenomenon fails
When the scientist's handy to test it.
There are lights o'er the city of Leeds
Which appear to be comets in training,
And even the scoffer concedes
That they need a great deal of
explaining.

There are lights at the Motor-car Show
O'er Olympia nightly arising.
The Cockneys attribute the glow
To smart, up-to-date advertising.

Correspondence is invited from our readers, but they are asked to keep their letters short. Unless letters give the sender's full name and address (not necessarily for publication) they cannot be considered. The Editor would like to remind correspondents that it is not always possible to acknowledge every letter personally, so he takes this opportunity of thanking all who write to him.

But the light that has failed, be it said,
Though 'twould meet with a welcome
most hearty,

Is the one that some radiance would
shed

On the plans of the Liberal Party!

But the poem seems to indicate quite clearly that there were also local "UFO flaps" going on at the same time over both Leeds and London, and that, as usual, the standard "explanations" were forthcoming. It will be interesting indeed if any of our readers can dig up any further material about those comets over Leeds, and the UFOs engaged in industrial espionage at the Motor Show at Olympia.

For the benefit of overseas and foreign readers I should perhaps add that Olympia is in the Hammersmith district of south-west London.

Finally, I must say that what surprises me most about this poetic effusion is not the suggestion that there were UFOs in 1905 over Wales, Yorkshire and London (for by now one has come to take all this for granted), but that the Motor Show at Olympia dates so far back as 1905!

Gordon Creighton
21/11/1971

Monsters and UFOs

Dear Sir,—I find no difficulty in believing in the Loch Ness Monster—or rather Monsters, because there must be a breeding herd. Only the very gullible could believe there is nothing in all that long and vast array of impressive testimony and evidence. Anyone who has read F. W. Holiday's *The Great Orm of Loch Ness* (easily the best book on the subject) knows just how formidable that evidence is. Yet now we have Mr. Holiday himself (September/October 1971 issue) putting the case for a paranormal Monster. And a very impressive case it is, based as I understand it on (1) the occasional apparent fluidity of the Monster's shape, (2) its incredible speed at times, and extraordinary manoeuvrability, but most of all (3) its sheer persistent bloody-minded elusiveness, and refusal to be pinned down. I think it reasonable to conclude that a supernatural factor is operating, but this does not mean that the Monster itself is necessarily supernatural. It seems to me possible that we have here a fully-fashioned, copper-bottomed supernatural jinx, mischievously frustrating every attempt at identification. Bricks and mortar houses, steel and plastic aircraft, flesh and blood men and

women, can be "jinxed". We cannot explain it, but we know it happens, in all kinds of ways.

This does not meet objections (1) and (2) above. There *could* be naturalistic explanations here, I suppose. In fact, whichever way you look at it, there is a puzzle here so bizarre, and perhaps so far-reaching in its implications, that the mind reels. The parallel which Mr. Holiday draws between UFOs and the LNM is astonishing, but one cannot lightly dismiss the idea "Are monsters the UFOs' Achilles Heel?" he asks. And I would ask: "Has the Loch Ness Monster perhaps a 'familiar'?"

Yours sincerely,

Peter Jackson,
5 Walsingham Road, New Addington,
Croydon, Surrey.
December 22, 1971.

A case of "elf-burn"?

Dear Sir,—Regarding the manifestation in your current [September/October '71] issue (*The Humanoid At Kinnula*) in which the witness seized an entity and was badly burned—it is worth remarking that there is an expression in Icelandic which may have a bearing on this: *álfabruni* (elf-burn). Nowadays it seems to be used to describe a form of skin disease in animals.

This reference is in *Myth And Religion Of The North* by E. O. G. Turville-Petre (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964).

Professor Turville-Petre also remarks: "It is an old and widespread belief that elves cause illnesses and old English terminology is rich in expressions which show this."

Researchers with a taste for etymology may care to unearth some of these terms and lay them beside some of the modern "burning" reports.

Yours faithfully,

F. W. Holiday,
Glan - yr - Afon, Hayscastle Cross,
Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire.
December 2, 1971.

Hoax exposed

Dear Sir,—May I refer to the World Round-up columns of the September/October 1971 issue of FSR and in particular to "Sights in the Hampshire skies"?

After exhaustive research into these reports, it seems that the letters concerning "G. Barnes" and "S. Pink" are hoaxes.

Regarding Mr. P. Martin, Peters-