

# BEDFORDSHIRE CROSS-COUNTRY CHASE

*Ken Phillips*

Our contributor investigated these incidents whilst still an investigator with the British UFO Research Association. His completed report has now been submitted to UFOIN for publication in *Flying Saucer Review*, and consists of voluminous data upon which this summary is based. Drawings and map for this article by Pauline Bowen.

READERS may recall the story of two young fishermen and their close encounter one miserable night in the Summer of 1978. This incident took place on the River Ouse, near the village of Harrold in Bedfordshire. As will be seen from the sketch map accompanying this account that is right in the midst of the scene of these amazing events.

This particular story is fascinating for several reasons. Not only are at least 13 witnesses involved in each sighting, but the phenomena witnessed performs remarkable manoeuvres, leads its participants a merry chase, is repeated on four separate nights, and involves some associated close encounter effects. On one occasion the object was seen close-up *on the ground*.

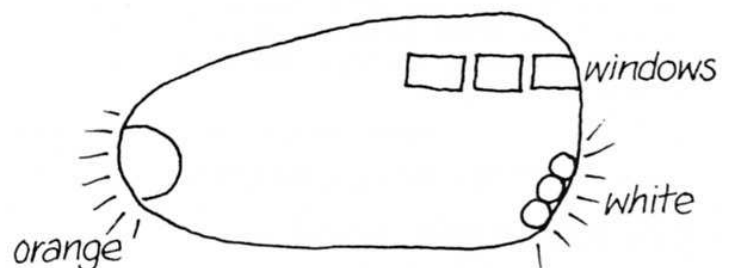
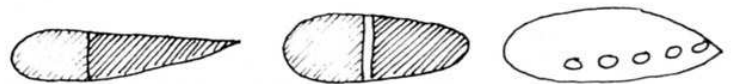
These remarkable sightings stem initially from the tiny village of Felmersham, Bedfordshire. This lies about 6 miles NNE of Bedford and the area is mostly open farmland. About 3 miles NW of here, however, is the Royal Aircraft Establishment works at Radwell. There is also the RAF base at Cardington, just to the SW of Bedford.

On the night of Thursday, January 19, 1978, we begin our story. At about 8 p.m. to 8.45 p.m. (estimates vary) a large group of children at the youth club in the village observed a strange light in the north east. This would, of course, place it in the direction of the aircraft establishment, although they considered it to be much closer. It appeared to be hovering over a nearby cattle shed.

The youth club is situated in the grounds of the Pinchmill School and the witnesses were outside on a dark, starry and cool evening. Most of the children were aged between 10 and 12, although there were a few who were older. It is impossible to say exactly how many observed the phenomenon, but there were at least 13. Eight of them were traced to one school and their teacher was most co-operative. He got them to fill out UFO report forms under examination conditions. Their stories were very consistent under these circumstances. He is convinced that they are sincere and said that none of the children involved were of an over-imaginative type.

Basically, what it appears they saw was an oval or cigar shape that was surrounded by a whitish vapour. It consisted of a red band to the fore, and a green band to the rear. Most children said it was

silent, but two of them described a faint buzzing sound. The object moved to the west and appeared over the war memorial in the village. It hovered here for 2/3 minutes, during which time some of the boys became agitated. Several of them claimed that they began to feel unwell and became very hot during the sighting. Two boys admitted that they started to cry. Their youth club leader was told of the object and did, in fact come out to view it.



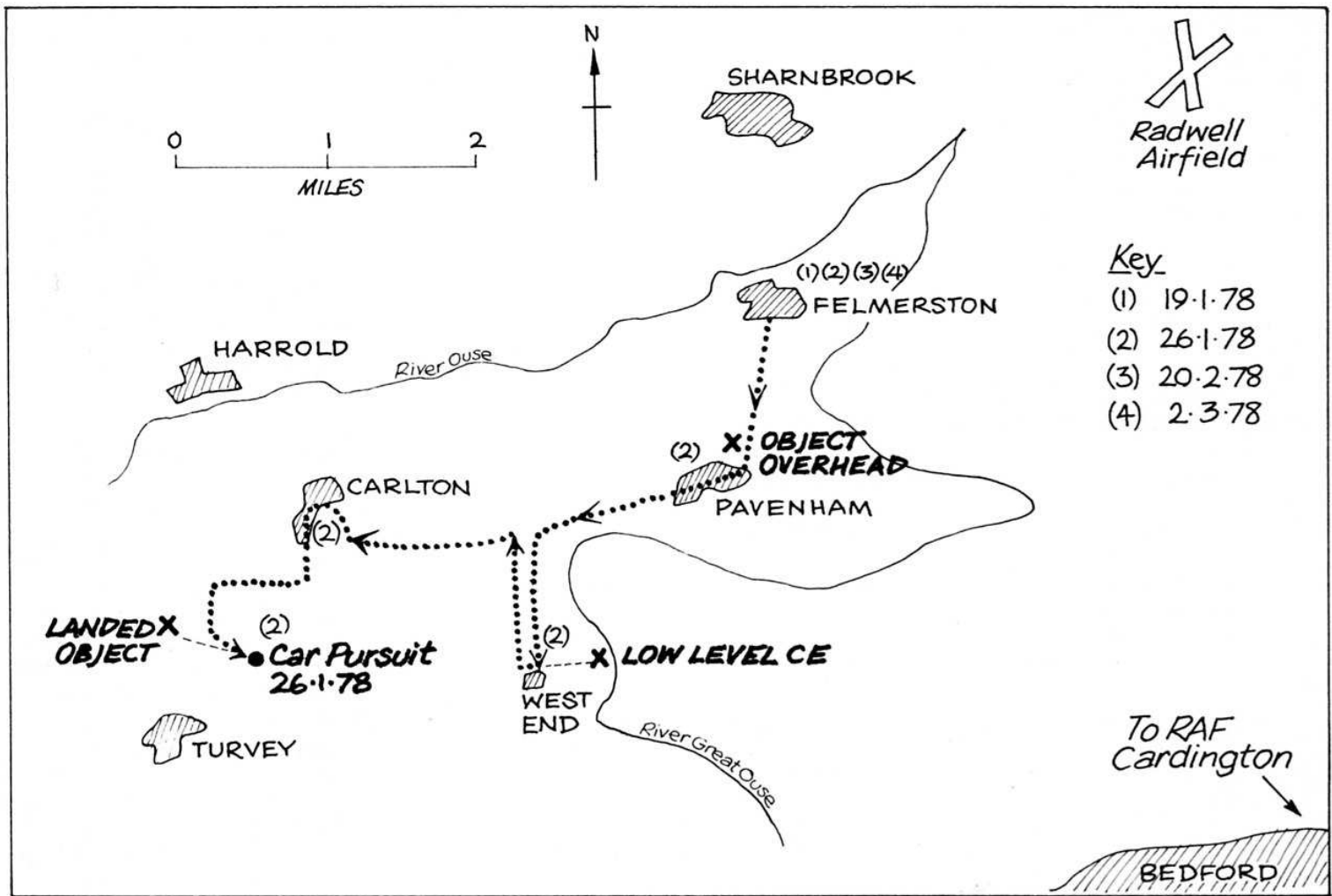
Above: Samples of the childrens' sketches of the red/green object seen on 19 January 1978.

Below: The "bubble-car" object (see page 30).

Two of the children were Stephen and Robert Honeywood (aged 12 and 17), who lived nearby. They dashed home to fetch their father, but when he arrived the object had gone. The other witnesses had watched it move off very fast to the west after being seen for about 4 minutes.

Mr. Howard Honeywood, aged 39, is an agricultural manager and a very practical man. As he says: "I didn't really believe them that night, but on the next sighting I saw the objects too."

It was exactly a week later, January 26, 1978 — this time at about 6.30 p.m. The night was very cold, with some localised frost. A large group of children were again at the club, but this time the sight that greeted them was fantastic. Over to the south west,



towards some woods surrounding the nearby village of Pavenham, was a complex series of lights. There were about eight of these moving about in a bizarre aerobatics display. They would twist, turn and zig-zag, performing what seemed impossible manoeuvres. They were orange and white, but totally unlike aircraft lights. They flashed irregularly. Sometimes there would just be a second or so between flashes, sometimes there would be several minutes when they would remain steady before the next flash.

This performance lasted some time, and again the Honeywood children went to bring it to the attention of their father, aware that he had considered their earlier sighting to be a product of their imagination. Mr. Honeywood takes up the story as they knocked on his door.

"A number of lights were hovering over Pavenham Woods. Some of them were performing unbelievable aerobatics and what is more, we could see some of the lights through the trees – they were very close to ground level. We watched this performance for half an hour. Then I decided to get into my van. All the kids (about 13 of them) piled into the back and we drove over to Pavenham Woods (about 1½ miles South South West) for a closer look. When we arrived there one of the objects was right overhead. Suddenly, the lights veered away in the direction of Carlton (west) and we followed behind in the van. At least eight objects were cavorting about in the sky and several times we got quite close, but on each

occasion they veered away. Still we chased them, reaching lunatic speeds on those dark, country lanes, keeping the eight objects in view."

This crazy pursuit took them through the villages of Pavenham and Carlton, the only ones with lighting. On reconstructing the drive some weeks later with Mr. Honeywood and his eldest son, they were able to remember a point that they had previously forgotten. Between Pavenham and Carlton they took a detour south to the village of West End. Here they came very close to a very large object in the south east that was hovering over the River Great Ouse, apparently quite low. When this moved off towards Carlton they continued in pursuit.

The frantic drive over 6/7 miles of English countryside took an unknown period of time, when several stops are taken into account – but they estimate that the total length of observation of the objects may well have been 2/3 hours!

In the words of Mr. Honeywood here is how the chase concluded:

"We ended up at a place called Turvey (1½ miles south of Carlton). We pulled up at a bend in the road just outside the village to observe one of the objects that was hovering by a tree just off the road. Suddenly this light veered off towards the village. Then we looked around to the north west and saw three lights arranged in a triangle in a nearby field. The formation was about 150 feet from where we were parked and the lights were spaced at an

estimated 35 feet away from each other ( an equilateral triangle in fact). We could see a clear structure behind the lights. It was a transparent dome-like outline. I know it was transparent because we saw a car's headlights on a road some distance behind the field *through the dome*. We did not approach closer because I began to feel a certain eeriness about the whole affair, and my unease was increasing, I did, however, turn the van around 180 degrees so that I could shine my headlights at the object, but I was not successful. For some reason a kind of mist seemed to surround the object and I failed to illuminate it properly. Our unease was now so great that we chickened out. I decided to get away from the place and head for home."

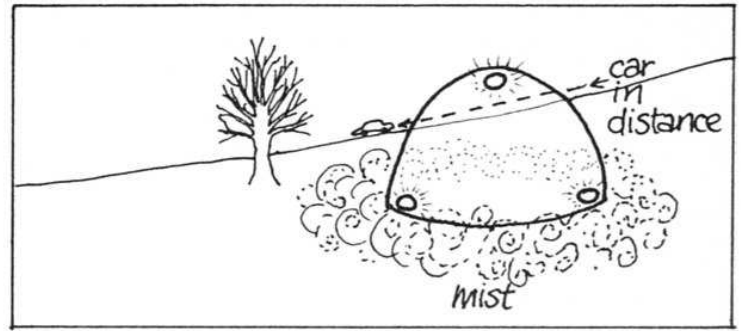
On specific questioning it seems that the sightings ended suddenly. Nothing else was seen on the way home and Mr. Honeywood returned to the deserted field the next day but found nothing at all. There were no apparent traces either, on examination. It is of interest to note, incidentally, that the van used was a diesel engined (presumably excluding it from any possible electro-magnetic effects that may have been present).

On several occasions, remember, the object/s were seen close up. A description of what was seen follows:

"It was something like a bubble car, only larger — about the size of a helicopter. There were no rotors or fins, and it made no sound, even at closest approach in the quiet country surrounds. There was a large orange light to the rear and several whitish lights that flashed irregularly to the fore. At the top was a series of 2/3 rectangular windows."

Mr. Honeywood had spend six years in the RAF as a cook and so had some familiarity with aircraft and helicopters. He was certain that these objects were not explainable as conventional craft but nonetheless contacted the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Radwell the next day. They told him that normally they had two Harrier VTOL aircraft that might conceivably have been responsible for the sighting, but one was away and the other was "on the ground in pieces." They had nothing in the air that could account for the observations. In addition they noted, "Our radar was off last night — the first time this has happened in months."

Slowly the incidents were forgotten by the village, as life returned to normal but Mr. Honeywood and his family remained alert. At 6.30 p.m. on Monday, February 20, 1978 they had an even closer



**A clear structure but transparent ...**

encounter. This time Mr. and Mrs. Honeywood, plus all four of their children (three sons and one daughter) saw it.

The aeroform, precisely like the ones they had previously seen close up, glided right over their house. It was low and very large and, again, totally silent. One additional feature to this encounter was that as it passed overhead both sound and vision were lost temporarily from their television set in the house.

So far as has been ascertained there were no other witnesses to any of these incidents, which is in itself unusual. These also appear to have been the last time that the Honeywoods observed strange phenomena. However, there is an interesting sequel.

On Thursday, March 2, 1978, Mr. Honeywood and his eldest son had travelled to my home in Milton Keynes to be interviewed. Whilst they were away from the village all the children at the youth club again claim to have seen four or five cigar-shaped lights hover and then shoot off. Mr. Honeywood notified me of this immediately on his return home at 10.30, an hour and a half after the sighting. I called RAF Cardington who said they had no aircraft flying at the time, but did have a tethered balloon. This, however, was hovering at 250 feet and since the airfield is about 8 miles south east of Felmersham they considered it highly unlikely that it would even be possible to see it from there. Radwell was closed and the only other potential source of aircraft, USAF Upper Heyford (34 miles south south west) had no aircraft in the area at that time.

I did, of course, check aerial sources for all previous sighting dates but found nothing at all. Radwell had no explanation for any of the sightings and in fact had nothing flying *at all* on January 19th. On the other dates they had only Devons, Nimrods and BAC 1-11's in flight all day. There was nothing



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performing low level aerobatics amidst Pavenham Woods on January 26th.

The investigator found several straight line alignments on the OS Map of the area, including one that passed through the landing site. This in fact is only

about one mile from the close encounter at the village of Harrold, reference earlier in the article.

It is the opinion of the investigator that the witnesses observed a very peculiar nocturnal phenomenon which reappeared on at least two subsequent occasions. Its nature is unknown.

## OTHER REPORTS OF UFOs NEAR LAS BARDENAS REALES

*Gordon Creighton*

IN a previous article<sup>1</sup> I have already given an account of the important case at the Spanish Air Force's polygonum at Las Bardenas Reales, where a UFO was seen to touch down briefly at about 11.00 p.m. on January 3, 1975.

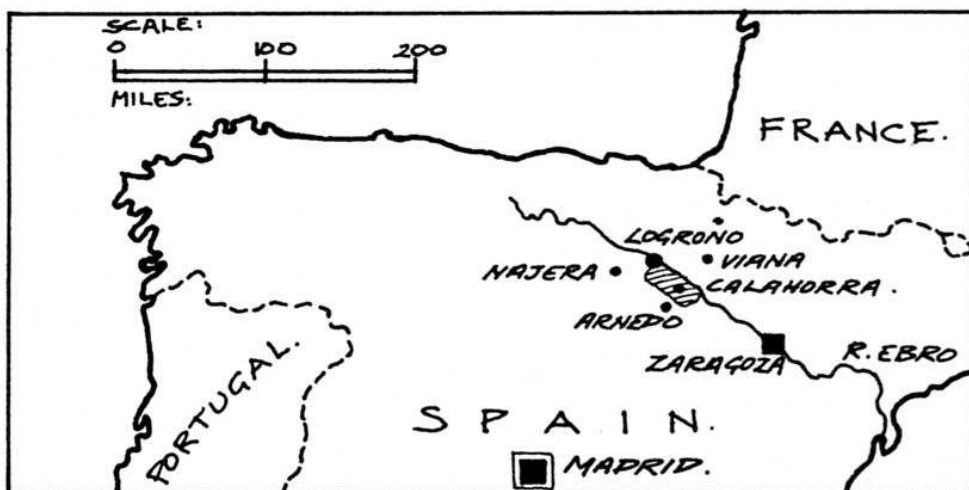
The Madrid newspaper *ABC* of January 7, 1977, carried a further report about past UFO activity in the same area, namely the district of La Rioja (running from the town of Logroño along a strip on the south side of the River Ebro eastwards towards the big Spanish Air Force base at Recajo). This is the same area in which the Las Bardenas Firing Range lies (see map).

The article consists of a résumé of nine previous UFO happenings in the La Rioja district, which occurred between August 1970 and December 1976. The details of these cases are as follows:-

1. August 27, 1970 In the early morning, near a football field at Las Gaunas, numerous witnesses observed a very bright blue luminous object which appeared briefly and then vanished among the trees. The object was spherical and emitted a beam of light. It was seen to be travelling against the prevailing wind.

2. At 2.00 a.m. on June 22, 1972, a student was listening to the radio at Logroño when an aluminium-coloured egg-shaped object some 30 - 40 cms. long silently entered his room and came to a halt about two metres above the floor, in front of him. On his tape-recorder the student secured curious sounds which technical experts have been unable to identify, and a beam of light some 5 cms wide was seen by the student to emerge from the UFO and play upon his transistor radio and his tape-recorder.<sup>2</sup>

3. At precisely the same time, i.e. 2.00 a.m. on June 22, 1972, a squad of soldiers on guard duty at the Recajo Air Force Base some 10 kms to the east of Logroño heard a loud noise of what seemed to be some powerful



Shaded area shows approximate positions of Recajo Air Force Base and Las Bardenas Reales firing Range

engine, and observed a machine, bathed in a great glow of light, flying at a staggering speed over the landing strip of the base. As the soldiers were unable to quit their posts they remained there until relieved at 2.30 a.m. The UFO was still flying around above them and continued to do so until 2.45 a.m. when it vanished. The number of men who saw it comprised two corporals and five enlisted men.

The UFO, which was very low, was shaped like a large cylinder. In fact it flew so low that the soldiers were obliged several times to throw themselves flat on the ground as it passed above them. A report on the sighting was forwarded from the Recajo Air Force Base to the Headquarters of the Third Air Force Zone, in Zaragoza.

4. March 23, 1974. A resident of Arnedo, who refused to give his name to the press, reported that he was driving his car along the Arnedo-Calahorra road (some 40 kms from Logroño) when he had three sightings of a luminous flying object.

5. November 28th 1974. A party of young men were travelling by car at dusk from Logroño to Viana (ten kms from the Recajo Air Base) when

their engine suddenly failed, although the petrol tank was full. A luminous beam was projected down on to the car, as though for the purpose of inspecting it. The men returned to Logroño and refused to give press interviews or reveal their names.

6. October 29, 1974. At 6.00 p.m. ten children from the school at Arrubal (4 kms from the Recajo Air Base) observed a silent, silvery-coloured craft with orange lights which was moving in a zigzag fashion and then halted for about one minute. The machine was elongated in shape, and the children claimed that it bore some kind of inscription.

The report included the names of all ten children.

Inscription on UFO allegedly seen by ten children near Recajo Spanish Air Force Base (item 6).

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