

UFOs INVADE THE BAVARIAN ALPS - PART I

The following report of a landing, and subsequent events, is the result of collaboration by investigators of MUFON's newly formed Central European Section

Adolf Schneider, Ernst Berger, et alia

THE Hochries sighting of December 10, 1973 was completely ignored by newspapers outside Western Germany (with the exception of *Tribune de Lausanne* and *Le Parisien Libéré*). Nevertheless, it was not only an important event in the Central European UFO scene but was the catalyst, together with the "Traunstein Snails" reported in October that year, that accelerated co-operational efforts among German, Swiss and Austrian amateurs. In the summer of 1974, at Innsbruck, Austria, immediate integration of all German-speaking and scientifically orientated researchers into a Central European section of the Mutual UFO Network was decided at a two-day, privately organised UFO meeting.

MUFON's Central European Section is an investigative body trying to cover the long-neglected Central European scene with a broad spectrum of enquiries. All findings of MUFON C.E.S. will be published by "Skylook", and the most interesting items also by FSR.

Meanwhile, the Hochries affair expanded into a local flap. The same effect was noticed at Traunstein. Field investigations at the sites of numerous Hochries observations have been conducted by Dipl. Ing. Adolf Schneider of Munich, an electronics engineer and author of a German UFO book, Illo Brand, German Representative of MUFON, co-ordinator of MUFON C.E.S. and a systems analyst, Mario Bertossi, Michael Arends, and Ernst Berger (who has translated and edited the voluminous Hochries files for FSR).

Local features

Mt. Hochries (1569 m.) with its alpine hut is a prominent mountain peak of the Northern Calcareous Alps at the Austrian-Bavarian border, 70 km. south-east of Munich, 15 km. south-east of Rosenheim and about the same distance south-west of the famous Lake Chiemsee, Western Germany.

Mt. Hochries, Mt. Geigelstein (1808 m.) and Mt. Kampenwand (1669 m.) are the last alpine summits of the Chiemgauer Mountains overlooking the colourful plane of Bavarian Alpenvorland (pre-alpine country), with sweeping vistas over the Rosenheim and Chiemsee region as well as over the Austrian Alps to the south. On a clear day you can see the snow-covered peaks of the Stubai and Zillertaler Alps in the Northern Tyrol. The beautiful surroundings have made the Hochries region a popular skiing ground and a cable-car has been constructed to take skiers from Grainbach up to Hochries hut.

An interrupted supper

December 10, 1973 was one of those typical

Bavarian winter evenings with a full moon over the snowy slopes. Herr Friedrich Lennartz, aged 33, landlord of Hochries Hut and a mountain rescue service man, had his supper together with Hochries porter Peter Zettel, aged 29. The two men were sitting at a table in the dining room, and Zettel sat before the large panorama window overlooking the dark south-east towards Mt. Geigelstein, which is eight kilometres distant.

Suddenly, at approximately 8.30 p.m. CET, Zettel noticed a fiery spot on Mt. Weitlahnerkopf (1611 m.), somewhat to the north of Mt. Geigelstein. He pointed it out to Lennartz who later told us: "Really, it was something big and easy to spot, bigger than a fire. First we thought of mountaineers in danger, signalling with magnesium torches, or a burning hut, because of the brilliance. The ground was illuminated all around it."

It was a quiet night with excellent visibility, no clouds, and only a slight southern breeze. Lennartz and Zettel got their Zeiss Ikon binoculars 12 x 50 and 10 x 50 respectively, opened the window and pointed their instruments at the "burning spot" in the snow. They were amazed to see a mysterious fiery object, which had apparently touched down near the cross on the summit of Mt. Weitlahnerkopf and was now resting motionless in or above a shallow trough. Had there been an air crash? Or was it a wrecked helicopter of Bavaria's air rescue? The general reaction of Lennartz and Zettel followed the "escalation of hypotheses" pattern, according to Dr. Allen Hynek.

At closer examination it was a strange sight even to Lennartz, who had been a member of the German navy at a special marine division for air control, and later in tactical close defence reconnaissance from 1958 to 1962.

The object seemed to be egg-shaped, pointed end up, and stood upright in the snow (see sketch). The nearby cross of Weitlahnerkopf was a good comparison and Lennartz estimated the object's size as 9 x 12 or 14 metres. Its upper third looked like a yellowish dome, and rotating coloured lights sped around its lower body and the outer circumference. Both men kept their "air crash opinion" and went into action. The landlord signalled with his powerful US flashlight and they switched all the lights in the hut on and off - but no reaction was discernible at Weitlahnerkopf.

At 8.40 p.m., Lennartz fetched the mike of his Sommerkamp TS 600 wireless set to transmit an emergency exercise call. We have to add that Lennartz is no simple ham operator or hobbyist, but uses his TS 600 professionally for alpine rescue purposes and has built a 15 metre antenna east of his hut which gives his set an average broadcasting range of 300



View of Hochries hut, with Geigelstein summit in the background

km. His code name "Romeo Golf I" is well-known among 11-metre band operators in southern Bavaria; 11-metre band conversations usually take place between 27 215 and 27 275 Megacycles. The Hochries wireless set is connected to the grid, not to a battery, and has an output of 2.8 Watts.

"Romeo Golf I" in trouble

Lennartz reached "UTO II", "Höslwang", "Oskar Echo" and other stations in the Munich-Rosenheim area. At 8.50 p.m. he decided to fire a red signal rocket into the object's direction. The rocket type he used explodes 300 to 400 meters away on the average. Then he listened again to the wireless conversations, but watched the object closely. And he did not wait very long for a reaction this time. Suddenly the object became enveloped in a red glow that hid the rotating lights (Lennartz later selected a colour between red lead and salmon pink in shade on a colour table), and started to rise slowly. It took four or five minutes for the "egg" to clear the mountains, i.e. a minimum height of 200 metres above the landing site. It was a dazzling red, with only the cupola remaining yellowish.

Scarcely had they time to exchange opinions when the "egg" accelerated rapidly. It dashed towards Hochries hut at terrific speed, growing larger every second. Said Lennartz: "Suddenly I noticed static on my carrier wave, but at the same time my transmitting power was rising. I have no test for transmitting power on my set, but Munich and

Rosenheim told me they were reading me extra loud."

At a moment's notice he picked up a crackling, continuous carrier, similar to statics from an un-suppressed motor-scooter, and some stations even complained about the "unidentified jamming station." Lennartz's voice spread with maximum volume, although he was unable to explain why. With the mike in his hand he watched the object's approach and had his first lesson in E.M. effects associated with the UFO phenomenon. Within ten seconds, the "egg" had travelled between five and six kilometres and it came to a standstill less than two kilometres away over the Klausenberg slope. Assuming Lennartz's estimate of a velocity of ten seconds for five kilometres (measured on the map) is correct, the object approached Hochries hut at supersonic speed (the speed of sound is 330 m./sec. for 0°C). Its trajectory proved to be straight, not parallel to ground level, but descending from 1800 to 1540/50 metres.

"When it was near, you could see once again the running lights," Lennartz explained, "It was soundless and looked like that..." He managed to draw a sketch for us showing all the salient details they had observed at 1700/1800 metres distance with binoculars.

The curved dome reminded Lennartz of a cockpit made of perspex. Its indirect illumination was a soft, dull-yellow colour, or like white light shining through a semitransparent cupola. Three or four dark ledges



Friedrich Lennartz, landlord of Hochries Hut and mountain service rescue man

reached down from the object's apex to the lower rim of the "pilot cabin", giving it the appearance of "pieces for an unfolded parabolic antenna or the 'greenhouse' of an old B-52."† The really startling effect, however, was not the dome. Below the rim, four rows of pulsating coloured lights whirled around the dark body, Lennartz compared them to strobe lights of a discoteque – red, green, blue and white, white being the lowest line. In our summer investigations, we talked with him about the "strobe belts" for quite a long time and Ernst Berger arrived at the conclusion that the effect was basically different from common psychedelic lights, or strobe lights. Lennartz made it clear he did not see rotating dots, chains of bulbs or the "phi effect" known in the psychology of visual perception, where sequential flashes give the impression of movement. He said, "They always went from left to right (anticlockwise), without much system, not all at the same time. One light appeared at the left edge earlier, the next one a bit later and so on. Like tubes which would lead all around the body and brighten up." One light maximum (no point) per "strobe belt" moved along at two rotations per second. "Smear light peaks" is a better term for the hard nut. At the circumference one more bright light seemed to circle the large oval clockwise. Whatever it was, one thing is certain – the whole show puzzled Lennartz and Zettel and effectively hid the object's dark surface. "The surface was rather grey – maybe metal. Goodness knows."

Let us return to the scene of December 10. The object had arrived over Klausenberg slope and stopped for half a minute, then continued with a right-angle turn, travelling in the direction of Klausenalm hut,

† The term 'greenhouse' is applied to a glazed crew cabin raised above the general line of an aircraft, the Boeing B47 and Martin B57 (photo *FSR Case Histories* No. 6) are good examples. The Boeing B52 has a smoother profile more nearly resembling the familiar Boeing 707 airliner.

which in winter is an uninhabited property across the border, in Austria. Two or three minutes later they saw it hovering ten to thirty metres over a snowy pasture on a kind of ridge between Mt. Klausenberg and Mt. Zinnenberg (1564 m.). The statics kept crackling in the receiver, so they switched off the set. At 9.00 p.m. Lennartz heard a whimpering sound outside the western door of the dining room. When he unlocked the door, he found his St. Bernard dog, Barrie, and Dachshund, Susi, and let them in, but he wondered why they had tried to get in there, because the western door is locked throughout the winter season. Had the object confused the dogs?

Klausenalm hut gave a good size comparison for the next two hours and Lennartz found his estimates to be correct.

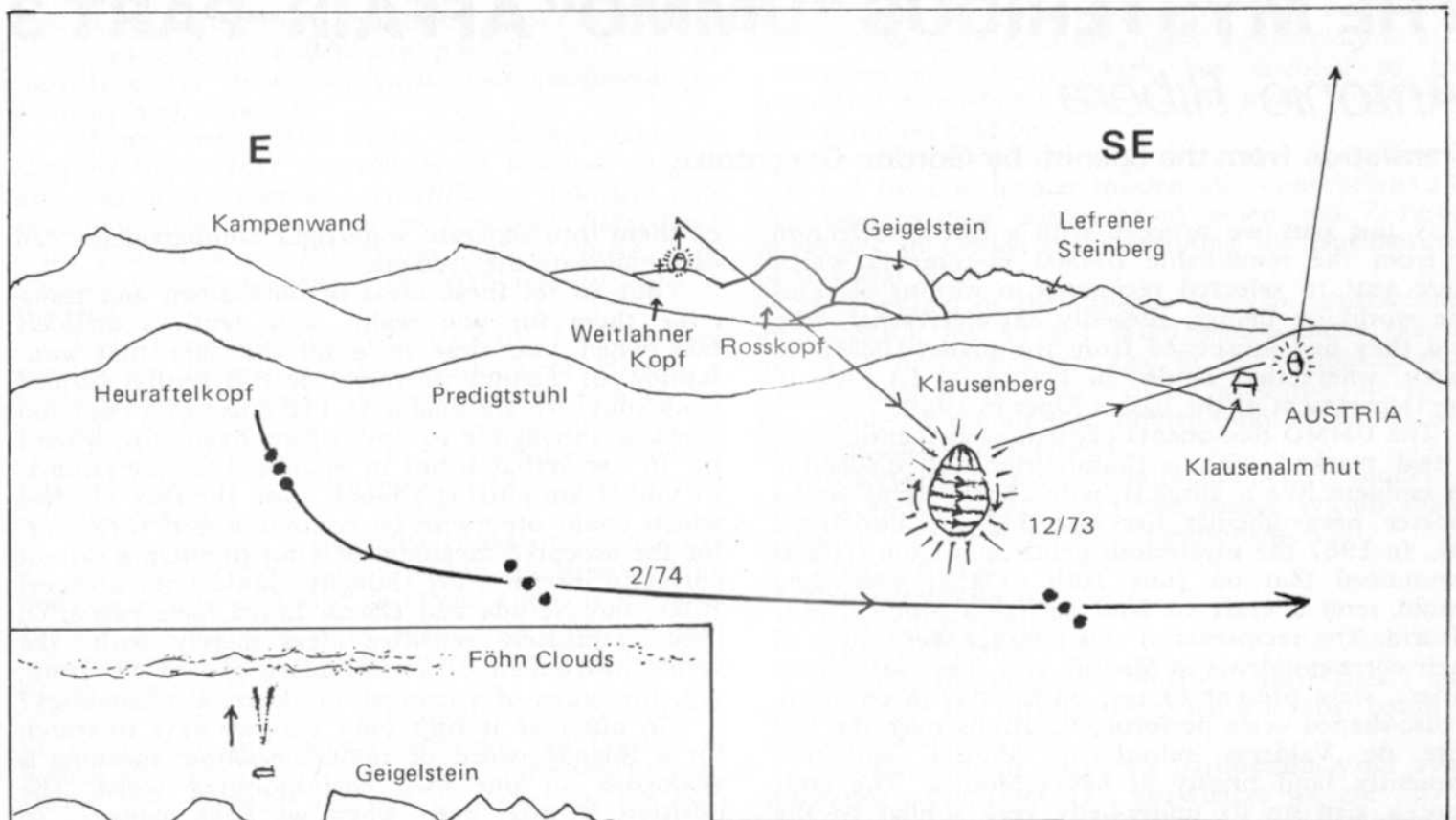
Take-off

Nothing happened until 11.40 p.m., so the landlord decided to try his "trick" again and fired another red signal rocket into the south. Quick reaction again. The red mantle enveloped the "egg", it accelerated from zero velocity to an extreme rate and ascended with a slight western deviation. "It sped upwards at breakneck speed and we lost it among the stars. When it was gone, reception was clear again." The object had shrunk into a "star" within 30 seconds and into nothing at 11.45 p.m. CET.

The Hochries case made headlines in Bavaria on December 13, but the details given were sketchy to say the least. Adolf Schneider dug under the surface and following his interview at Hochries some corroborative sightings came to light. Brigitte Drexel, a schoolgirl, and two of her classmates had been out with their toboggans on the Zeller mountain near Neubeuern, when at sunset an oval, orange-coloured object appeared in the sky. A Rosenheim newspaper received a telephone call from a Herr Zoefel, who claimed that on Monday he had seen from his flat on the fifth floor a luminous, multi-coloured shape over the mountains in the Hochries direction. At 10.00 p.m. the same evening, Herr Hoffman, a ham operator ("Neptune I") from Bernau at Lake Chiemsee spotted a yellow-orange light in the fog about three or four kilometres to the north-east, but only 50 metres above ground level, and "the size of a bungalow". Similar stories came from tobogganers at Grainbach, Frau M. at Neubeuern and workers of the Hochries cable car project.

Geigelstein again

On Thursday, January 3, 1974, Fraulein Violetta Karnapke, a Neubiberg schoolgirl aged 18, was waiting for her breakfast in the dining room of Hochries hut. The weather was fine for a new skiing day (about -4° in the open, with Föhn clouds over the Alps and good visibility. Violetta was looking out of the panorama window just before sunrise, at 7.45 a.m., when a bright light over Mt. Wandspitz (1687 m), to the north-west of Geigelstein, caught her attention. It soon turned out to be a hovering,



Above: Diagrammatic panorama from Hochries hut
 Inset left: January 3 object

(N.B. These sketches are not to time scale, but with selective enlargement)

elliptical shape, and she ran upstairs to alert her skiing comrades, Christian Schnitter (18) and schoolboy Christian Ganzert (18). They rushed to the dining room and saw the object which was rising straight up at moderate speed with a condensation trail behind it. It seemed to have changed into two vertical beams of a luminous golden colour. After 100 metres of ascent it stopped and the vapour trail dissolved. Meanwhile Uwe von Schumann, a 17-year-old schoolboy, had joined the three observers and they all agreed at an interview conducted by Adolf Schneider only two days later that the object eventually rose further and entered a layer of Föhn clouds approximately 2,000 metres in the air, where it was lost from sight. Naturally they told Herr Lennartz about "their one" at breakfast. A standard test done with the four witnesses indicated a size of 50 x 25 metres for the UFO at a supposed distance of seven kilometres.

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