

Unusual Sky Phenomena in 1852-53

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SOME time ago I was searching through a collection of ancient copies of the *Illustrated London News* when I chanced upon a number of items which could be of interest to readers of *Flying Saucer Review*.

The reports are of observations of unusual sky phenomena. Not for a moment do I claim that they were of UFOs, but there is just a possibility that they could have been in that category. I do suggest, however, that in view of the existence of these reports, some attention should be devoted by UFO researchers to the years 1852 and 1853. It is just possible that there could have been a minor UFO wave at that time.

The first item appeared in a letter to the Editor of the *Illustrated London News*, and was signed by a Mr. G.F.L. of Holyhead, Anglesey, on August 13, 1852. The letter appeared in page 150 of the issue for August 21, 1852. It ran:

"I beg to call your attention to an extraordinary meteoric appearance in the heavens which occurred in this neighbourhood on the evening of the 12th instant. At 9.20 p.m. (Greenwich Time), my attention was suddenly attracted by what appeared to be a peculiarly vivid flash of lightning, and on turning towards the S.S.W., the direction whence it came, I saw a magnificent body of meteoric light, of the form shown in Fig. 1a, the colour being a most beautiful and intense blue.

"It occupied at least a fourth part of the visible heavens, inclining towards the earth at an angle of 45 degrees, and lasted for thirty or forty seconds, gradually diminishing in width to a narrow streak of light, the length remaining the same as when I first saw it (Fig. 1b).

Just previous to its fading away it became fluttering and wavy (Fig. 1c). The sky at that time was clear and cloudless, and a fresh breeze blowing from the N.N.W. I am, etc., G.F.L."

There followed an editorial footnote to the above letter:

"Mr. Glaisher, F.R.S. would be glad if observers of this meteor would furnish him with their accounts—particularly noting its path among the stars, its elevation at the time of its appearance and disappearance, etc.—directed to 13 Dartmouth Terrace, Lewisham, Kent."

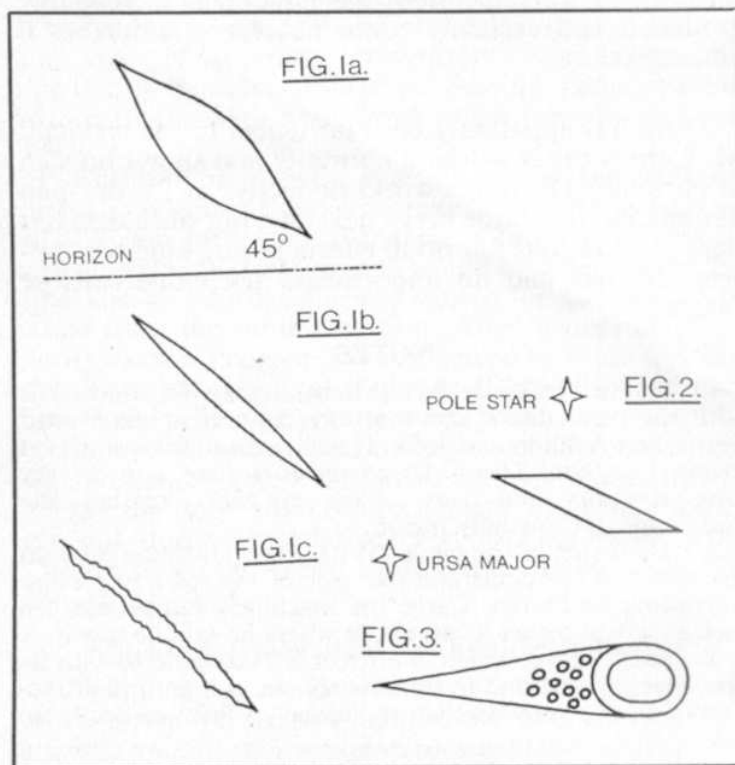
A second letter containing a report of what may well have been the same "object", was published on the same page of the *Illustrated London News* for August 21, 1852. It appeared under the heading **Extraordinary Meteor**. It was signed by a Mr. R.W. of Stoke, Sub-Hamdon, Near Yeovil, Somerset, on August 13, 1852:

"A meteor of an extraordinary appearance was seen here last night (August 12) at about 9.20 Greenwich time, to which my attention was directed by a very brilliant flash, as of lightning; and immediately turning my eyes to the north, the body of the meteor (if any) had disappeared, having left a brilliant mass of light about 15 degrees in length, of which I send you a Diagram. This continued visible for nearly ten minutes, gradually fading but (what I consider most remarkable) it resolved into two or more distinct bodies nearly of the apparent magnitude of the planet Saturn, which remained so long visible that I almost doubted if they were not stars in that precise spot which I had not noticed. They, however, became less and less visible and had disappeared in about 10 minutes after. I hope to find that this meteor has been noticed by other observers in distant parts of the world, and its place correctly marked, which may lead to a calculation of its distance, etc.,—R.W." (See Fig. 2).

The heading "Extraordinary meteor" was quite popular in 1852-1853, for it was also given to our third report which was published in *Illustrated London News* for November 12, 1853 (page 410):

"One of those beautiful and extraordinary wonders of the heavens—a large and brilliant Meteor—passed over the northern parts of the county of Nottingham, on the afternoon of Friday the 28th October, and was witnessed by a great number of the inhabitants; had it not been for the broad daylight, it would have appeared one of the most luminous meteors that has been witnessed for many years.

"When first seen at Retford about four minutes past four p.m. it was somewhat to the westward and moving at an immense velocity from the S.W. into the N.E. Its course was not altogether direct, but somewhat serpentine; in size it was nearly that of the horizontal full moon, and considerably brighter than the moon appears whilst the sun is above the horizon. The general appearance was that of a luminous ball, nearly globular,



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Brazilian cases in 1968 and 1969—4

Dr. Walter Buhler

OUR catalogue of Brazilian events now moves on into 1969, and the incidence of reports "peaks" in February, a month remarkable for the number of landings and occupant cases which were recorded.

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 1969

69. Beginning of January, 1969. Belo Horizonte, State of Minas Gerais.

At just before 5.00 a.m., Sr. José Penido and his wife observed, for a space of 20 minutes, two luminous balls with slightly flattened poles. Their colour varied between an intense blue, through silver to orange. They were flying together, at high speed. They then separated, following "V"-shaped trajectories which also comprised lateral and vertical movements and brief stops.

O Jornal, Rio de Janeiro, January 4, 1969.

70. January 5, 1969. Pôrto Alegre, State of Rio Grande do Sul (R.G.S.).

At 9.00 p.m. soldiers of the Military Brigade observed, for 1½ hours, near the "Dique" (dyke) Vila Floresta, a "ball of fire" in the sky. It emitted an enormous "fiery tongue", but only when in movement. When it passed through a cloud, the ball of fire lost its intense brilliance and then looked merely like a light.

Zero Hora, Pôrto Alegre, January 7, 1969; *O Globo*, Rio de Janeiro, January 8, 1969.

71. January 7, 1969. Belo Horizonte, State of Minas Gerais. At 11.00 p.m. a student of physics, Eustáquio Teodomiro, saw an object which emitted a beam of light every 37 seconds, and he was able to check it with his chronometer for 45 minutes. A lawyer named Joaquim de Freitas also saw the object, and watched it for half an hour from his home on the Avenida J. Pinheiro.

Jornal do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, January 9, 1969.

72. January 15, 1969. Rodovia Pres. Dutra (President Dutra Motorway).

There are rumours that two persons who were travelling in their car along the President Dutra Motorway were transported by a flying saucer from there to a town in the USA near to the Mexican frontier. The car bore marks made by the hooks of the transporting vehicle. Another Brazilian couple (named Azambuja) are also said to have been transported to Mexico in their car in similar circumstances.

Diário de Notícias, Rio de Janeiro, March 18, 1969.

73. January 25, 1969. Campinas, State of São Paulo.

At 5.30 p.m. Professor Olney Diniz successfully took three photographs (Rolleiflex) of an object of the size of an umbrella. This object, its under part dark and its upper portion shining like aluminium, was spinning on its axis and emitting a humming noise and a blast of air such as occur with a jet aircraft.

Diário do Povo, Campinas, January 26, 1969, and also a letter dated 27/1/69 from Senhor Cataldo Bove to SBEDV.

74. January 27, 1969. Lins, State of São Paulo.

Early in the morning, some musicians returning home from a party caught sight of an egg-shaped object standing on a piece of waste ground behind the stadium of the Lins Athletic Club. The object, of the size of a large car or truck, had around it a halo of coral-coloured light, which turned to pale blue and then to white. When the witnesses were perceived, the object took off and flew towards the town centre.

Diário de Notícias, Rio de Janeiro, January 29, 1969.

75. January 31, 1969. Lins, State of São Paulo.

More than 100 people saw an object flying over the countryside outside Lins.

Diário de Notícias, Rio de Janeiro, February 6, 1969.

76. February 6, 1969. Pirassununga, State of São Paulo.

At 7.00 a.m. residents of the suburb of Pinheiro observed an object which, at low altitude, was moving up and down in the air. Tiago Machado, going to investigate, encountered a saucer and two of its crew, one of whom directed an immobilising ray at him as they were taking off.

O Movimento, Pirassununga, February 9, 1969, and also SBEDV Bulletin No. 66/68, January/June 1969, p. 78, article entitled "Crew member accepts cigarettes."

[A detailed account of this case, entitled *The Pirassununga Landing*, by Nigel Rimes, FSR's representative in Brazil, appears in FSR Special Issue No. 3, UFO PERCIPIENTS, issued in September 1969.]

77. First week of February, 1969. Lins, State of São Paulo.

At the Santa Terezinha Fazenda (ranch), ten kilometres from Lins and owned by Senhor Lindomar Genesini, a red ball "shaped like an automatic wheel" was observed from a distance of about 200 metres as it manoeuvred and flew

BRAZIL; FLYOVERS, LANDINGS AND OCCUPANT ENCOUNTERS, 1968 - 1969.

