

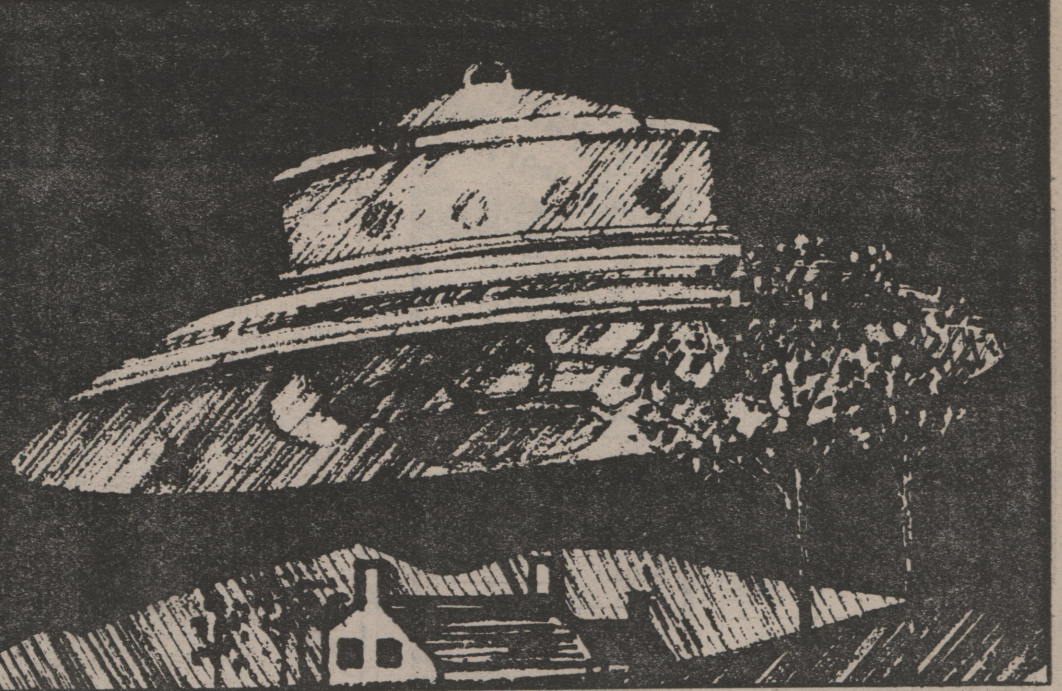
RIDDLE OF THE AGE

FLYING SAUCERS

CONTROVERSIAL AND CHALLENGING

Amazing eye-witness stories of strange startling events in this country and abroad

PROBED FOR THE WEEKLY NEWS BY A SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR



TERRIFIED WHEN MYSTERY OBJECT FOLLOWED HER ON NIGHT JOURNEY

THE phone rang at the bedside of Mrs Lillian Middleton. It was 2.30 a.m., and a friend needed help. He was stranded, out of petrol, on a lonely moorland road.

Lillian dressed, jumped into her car and set off from her home in Seaton Delaval, near Whitley Bay.

Off on a journey which was to end in a nightmarish experience for her . . . being chased for miles by a UFO — an unidentified flying object.

The close encounter left 33-year-old Mrs Middleton terror-stricken — and added yet another case to the files of the British UFO Research Association.

For the UFO remains the most baffling Riddle of the Age.

Are we being visited by alien space craft from other planets? Is intelligent life in space keeping an eye on us because we have become space travellers ourselves?

Bodies, like the British UFO Research Association, probe, investigate and try to give rational explanations to what is the world's biggest and most baffling mystery.

They go it alone because governments and military authorities seem to play down reports of UFOs. And many scientists dismiss them as pure fiction.

But what happened to sensible, down-to-earth Mrs Middleton in the early hours of August 21, 1980, was no hallucination.

"I have never been interested in UFOs and know nothing about them," she told "The Weekly News."

Zoomed down

"As I drove along to the aid of my friend, I reached a dark stretch of country road when a bright flash occurred. I thought a plane had caught fire or exploded in the air.

"I slowed down and peered out of the window. I was shocked to see a huge rugby-ball shaped thing giving off a brilliant light hovering in the sky.

"As I watched, it suddenly zoomed down towards me.

"I was terrified. The UFO seemed to be about the size of two big cars. I put my foot down and was soon speeding along the road at

70 miles an hour in an effort to get away from it.

"But it kept up with me, hovering just above the roof of my car. Sometimes it moved first to one side of the car and then the other as if trying to see who or what was inside.

"A few minutes later — it seemed an eternity — I saw my friend by his car.

"He'd also seen the UFO which now looked like a big shiny moon in the sky.

Lonely road

"We decided to drive to a service station a few miles away and, as we sped along, the UFO followed.

"At the service station a taxi driver rushed towards me. 'Have you got a camera? I want to photograph the thing which followed you here,' he said.

"There was another couple at the station in a car. They too said they had seen the thing following us.

"We picked up a can of petrol for my friend's car and drove back the way we had come but this time the UFO zoomed right down low to car rooftop height.

"This time my friend became as scared as I was. I turned the car round and returned to the service station. I was not going on down that lonely road.

"The couple in the car were still there, staring in awe. I cried with relief that someone else had seen what happened. We all watched the UFO for some time until it suddenly shot off at speed and disappeared.

"I drove home trembling with fear. Later I phoned the police to report what had happened. I felt a fool. Who would believe me? But they were very sympathetic.

"They said their own chief inspector had been out

in the early hours and had seen the UFO himself. It was a great relief to know I wasn't going crazy.

"I was in a state of shock for several weeks. Today I will not go out driving after dark. And I cannot bring myself to even look up at the night sky."

Over the past 20 years the British UFO Research Association has investigated an average of 400 reported sightings in Britain every year.

Norman Oliver, 54-year-old spokesman for the Association told "The Weekly News," "Most reports come from rational people, including police, pilots, radar operators, met. men, coastguards and the like.

Only way

"Of the 400 reported sightings each year, at least 90 per cent. are identified as being of known origin.

"The planet Venus is often mistaken for a UFO. Other reports have turned out to be things like migrating birds in formation, satellite debris, weather balloons, helicopters, aircraft refuelling in mid-air, rockets, flares, cloud formations and ball lightning.

"But that still leaves 40 instances of UFOs where no logical explanation is forthcoming.

"I suppose the only way we will learn more about them is to capture one and its crew. But I can't see that happening," he added.

However, attempts have been made to get to grips with UFOs.

At 9.30 p.m. on the night of August 13, 1956, men of Ground Control Radar at the U.S. Air Force station in Bentwaters, Suffolk, looked

"I drove home trembling with fear. Today I will not go out driving after dark"



at their radar scope in awe.

They had picked up something travelling at the seemingly impossible speed of 5000 miles an hour.

Half-an-hour later another high-speed radar object was plotted at 10,000 m.p.h. Again half an hour later another at 2000 m.p.h.

This time RAF stations at Lakenheath and Waterbeach were alerted. A Venom interceptor fighter was sent up to investigate.

The pilot achieved gun radar lock on a glowing object. This was seen by Group Ground control radar.

Ordered

But as they watched, the UFO suddenly flipped over and positioned itself right on the tail of the fighter.

Despite all efforts to shake it from his tail the pilot failed and was ordered to return to base. The UFO followed for a while and

then zoomed away at terrific speed.

On May 7, 1980, the pilot of a KLM airliner was flying over the Dachstein mountains when he suddenly saw a grey spherical object flying over him. He reported to the Air Control Centre in Vienna.

In turn Air Control contacted the Austrian air force.

Three fighters were sent up. Two to intercept and the third to film the object.

The fighters made visual contact but were unable to match the erratic manoeuvres of the UFO. Filming was also impossible. The UFO disappeared from sight.

Only once has a UFO been known to have caused a tragedy.

Going up

Back in January, 1948, Kentucky State police were flooded with calls from people who claimed there was a huge, circular object moving slowly across the skies.

The Commander of Godman Air Force base was contacted but he had already seen the object — so had the control tower staff.

Experienced World War Two ace Captain Thomas Mantell led three fighter planes to investigate.

The Control Tower waited anxiously. Soon the voice of Mantell crackled through. "I've sighted the thing. It looks metallic and is tremendous in size. There are rows of windows. It's going up. I'll climb to 20,000 feet."

That was the last message received from Mantell. Two hours later his wrecked plane was found 50 miles away. His body lay nearby. The American authorities refused to let anyone see him.

It was 18 months before the Air Force announced that Captain Mantell had probably fainted through lack of oxygen when he climbed to 20,000 feet.

The massive object which Mantell had described as having windows and being

metallic was dismissed as the planet Venus.

How could an experienced war ace faint? How could an Air Force fighter chase a planet?

Later the Air Force changed their story and said the object was merely a naval research balloon.

In November, 1979, Captain Javier Lerdo-Tejada, 34-year-old pilot of a Spanish airline, saw two very bright red lights moving fast towards him.

Tracked

The pilot, with 109 passengers aboard saw the objects when he was flying at 23,000 ft. He climbed to 25,000 ft. and the two UFOs did the same. Then they moved in and were on top of the plane within seconds.

The pilot turned sharply and descended to 15,000 ft. only to find the two UFOs following him down. He decided to make an emergency landing at Valencia.

Had he imagined seeing the UFOs which tailed him for ten minutes? No, the Madrid Early Warning system had tracked the objects all the time until they descended 12,000 ft. in 30 seconds and vanished.

Despite the mounting evidence that flying saucers do exist, psychologists believe many sightings are by science-fiction fans who see any flashing light in the sky as a UFO.

Some scientists claim all such sightings are really ball lightning.

Ball lightning has all the appearances of a UFO. It can streak across the sky at fantastic speeds and hover and shoot off in any direction, glowing like a ball of fire.

"I agree people can mistake ball lightning for a UFO and this comes under the 90 per cent. of sightings of known origin," said Norman Oliver.

"But ball lightning is not a solid object. It does not have port holes, flashing lights or figures.

"No. It is time for everyone to seriously accept that something very strange is happening."

"The couple in the car were still there . . . staring in awe. I cried with relief that someone else had seen what happened"



NEXT WEEK

Strange meeting with silver-suited alien.