

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCES IN TRIANGLE OF THE DAMNED

A FEW weeks ago, the bodies of three of the four crew members of a missing fishing boat from an Italian port were retrieved from the water and brought back to land.

Their boat, the Carmela Madre, has never been found.

Just before it disappeared the crew complained to another boat over the radio of seeing a great blinding light.

The tragedy which befell the Carmela Madre was just the latest in a long line of strange disappearances of ships and aeroplanes, both large and small, in the sun-kissed area between Sardinia, Sicily and the western coast of Italy.

Its shape corresponds

Ship's crew described a huge, blinding light in the sky—then radio went chillingly dead

roughly to that of a triangle, which is why the area is now being called the Triangle of the Damned by frightened local folk.

Fateful

The first major incident involving the fateful triangle occurred in June 1980. A DC9 plane left Bologna,

in the north of Italy, for an internal flight to Palermo, the capital of Sicily.

The aircraft took off at 3 p.m. for a routine flight scheduled to take 1 hour 45 minutes.

There were 81 people on board. Four of these were crew members, 77 passengers, among them 13 children.

Thirty-seven minutes after

taking off, the plane's pilot radioed Ciampino Airport in Rome, giving his position as being in the region of Ponza Island, some seventy miles west of Naples.

He asked for permission to fly at a lower altitude. But when this was granted he did not reply.

Radio contact was then lost. The control tower never heard from the pilot again.

The DC9 was reported missing and a massive search operation involving warships and military planes and helicopters was launched.

Wreckage of the plane was found scattered in the Tyrrhenian Sea sixty miles north of the holiday island of Ustica.

Later, the bodies of more than forty of the people on board the doomed aircraft were retrieved from the water.

There were no survivors. An unusual aspect was that many bodies were found twenty miles from the wreckage of the plane.

Officials investigating the case of the disaster put forward the theory that the DC9 exploded in mid-air and the bodies of the passengers were thrown far and wide.

There were traces of blood and bruises on the bodies found, which supports this idea.

Fine spirits

A sudden explosion would also explain why the pilot and his co-pilot did not send out a Mayday message. It seems they didn't suspect anything was wrong until it was too late.

But just why did the DC9 suddenly blow up? That question has remained unanswered.

Since that incident scores of boats have been lost in the triangle. The tragedies culminated early in October this year with the disappearance of the Carmela Madre. She was a sturdy motor

vessel and the weather was good when she left her moorings.

The crew were in fine spirits during a radio call to another ship as they sailed south through the Tyrrhenian Sea until one of them cried suddenly — "I can't say any more. There's a huge light."

Then the radio went chillingly dead and the Carmela Madre was silent for ever.

Speculation is rife about what it can be about the triangle that is causing all the disasters.


Theories

Some say it might be bursts of freak weather or a great magnetic force in the Earth pulling craft downwards.

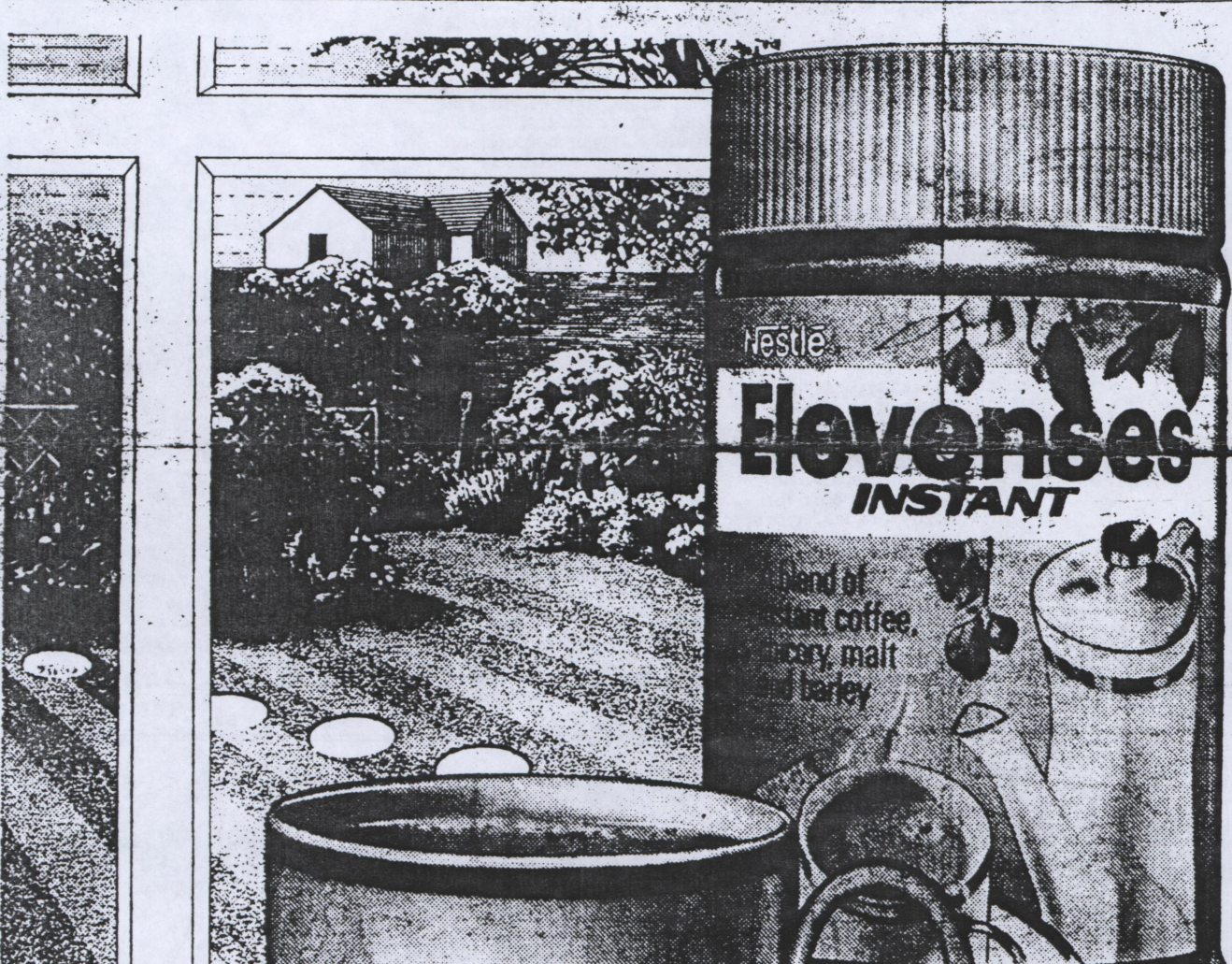
Others more fancifully suggest that UFOs or monsters might be involved. Some experienced mariners have reported seeing strange shapes they can't properly make out in the shimmering water.

But most of the theories are based on the fact that the disasters don't seem to have any pattern. Sometimes the missing craft are found intact without a crew. Other times boats simply disappear and the bodies of men who sailed them are recovered from the water.

It would appear that the Carmela Madre will not be the last boat to succumb to whatever lurks within the Triangle of the Damned.

LAUGH LINES 

● Man to sobbing wife — "For goodness sake, it's only a commercial. He comes back to her when she cleans her teeth!" — C. D., Bristol.



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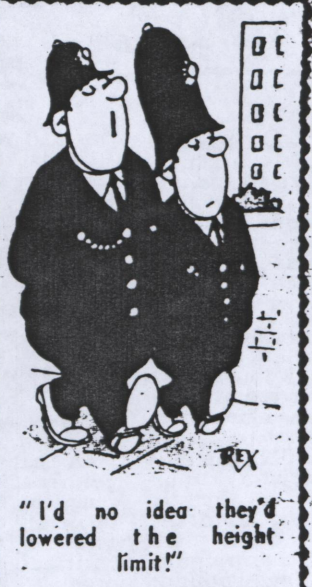
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READERS' TOP TIPS 

If you're cooking for a large party of guests, a good idea is to make the sauce for a pudding or gravy earlier in the day and transfer it to a vacuum flask. That way it will still be piping hot when you're ready to serve.—Mrs J. W., West Midlands.

- When polishing, a useful tip is to spray your polish lightly along the plastic curtain rail. The curtains then glide smoothly and easily along, as sometimes with smoke and condensation, the rail becomes sticky. — Mrs B. B., Nottingham.
- When knitting a button-hole band for a cardigan cut a piece of cardboard the length you need between buttonholes. This is much easier than getting the tape-measure out each time.—J. G., Ipswich.
- Try using an old pepper or salt pot to sprinkle buns and cakes with icing sugar. — J. J., Hull, Yorks.
- Keep your shower curtain secure while taking a shower by attaching rubber suckers at the bottom of your curtain on the outside at regular intervals. They will stick to the inside of the bath or shower base with ease and you can have a shower without getting the carpet wet.—D. G. M., Warley, West Midlands.
- Pastry-making always makes hands sticky, so, when you are baking, keep two plastic bags handy in case the telephone or doorbell rings. Then you can put your hands into the bags and avoid covering the house in sticky marks. — Mrs E. B., Essex.

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