

City astronomers welcome UFO expert — as new pic

The latest shape of things to come from outer space

STEVE Gibson's talk to the Cambridge University Astronomical Association was greeted with intense interest, and questions continued in the bar long after the meeting had finished.

"I did not know what to expect," he said. "But in fact they were keenly interested and took the whole thing on a very serious level."

This, he finds, is one of the biggest changes in the whole field of "UFOlogy" in the past decade or so.

One of the others is that a certain amount of agreement has begun to arise over what UFOs look like and what forms they take.

As long ago as 1964 the Aetherius Society had published, from its London base, a volume defining the various forms. First come the "mother ships", usually reported as cigar-shaped, some carrying up to nine scout vessels.

These are the most commonly seen UFOs around the earth, and from thousands of sightings the society has evolved a model which incorporates all the characteristics.

Startling

"The ones most often seen in the world are circular vessels with a dome on top, looking rather like an upturned saucer with a half smallish ball on top," said the original report.

"The most commonly used vessel . . . has a diameter of 35ft 6 inches, while the remote-controlled vessel, for certain kinds of freighter usage, seems to be more bell-shaped, having a small flange at the bottom."

Reports of unidentified flying objects continue to arrive at the offices of the Aetherius Society, an international body which records and co-ordinates all the information on them. When Steve Gibson, the society's London treasurer, arrived in Cambridge to talk to serious astronomers he wondered what sort of reception he would get. RODNEY TIBBS talked to him about that — and about visitors from outer space.



Just whether you regard this as prophetic or ludicrous depends on your UFO standpoint, but over the past few weeks apparent confirmation has come from an unusual source.

"Light Years", a volume by Gary Kinder and published by Viking at £10.95, tells the story of a Swiss called Eduard Meier who has produced some of the most startling pictures of UFOs ever seen.

They have been subjected to the most intense scrutiny by such bodies as Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory at Pasadena, California, and the US Geological Survey at Flagstaff, Arizona.

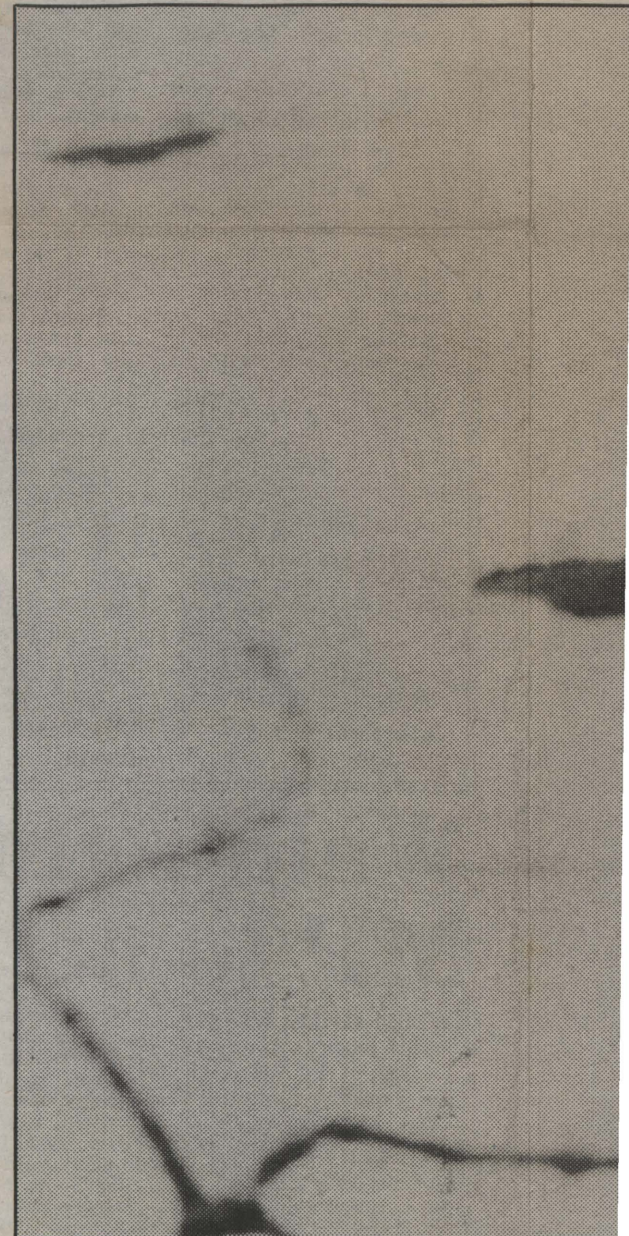
These and other authorities could find no evidence of faking, and various investigators doubt that Meier, formerly a caretaker living in humble rural surroundings in Switzerland, could possess either the knowledge or the equipment necessary to produce both still and moving pictures which could fool various world authorities on the subject.

His most striking pictures show not only saucer-like craft, which strongly resemble the models produced by the Aetherius Society. One actually shows a Swiss fighter jet coming in behind the saucer on an investigative run. Both appear very clearly in the picture.

The further the subject of UFOlogy goes, the more seriously various sections of society seem prepared to take it.

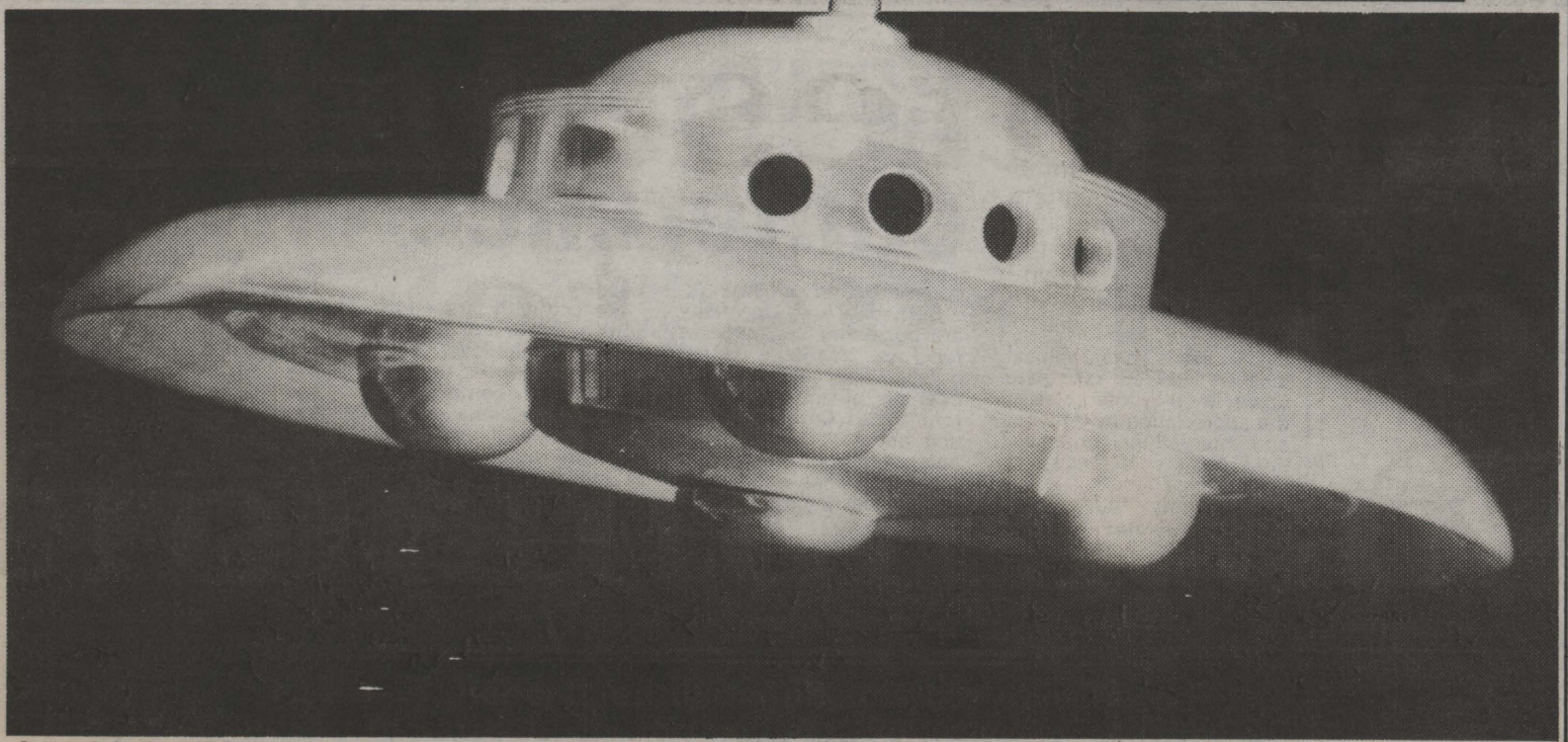
"I cannot imagine that I would have received such a polite and attentive reception in Cambridge had I given a similar talk to a scientific body say 10 years ago," said Steve Gibson. "Then the subject was seen as little more than a joke."

It could be that as modern technology develops, the gap between what is seen as possible and what is perceived as ludicrous continues to narrow. And perhaps it will not only be the beings of this planet that benefit.

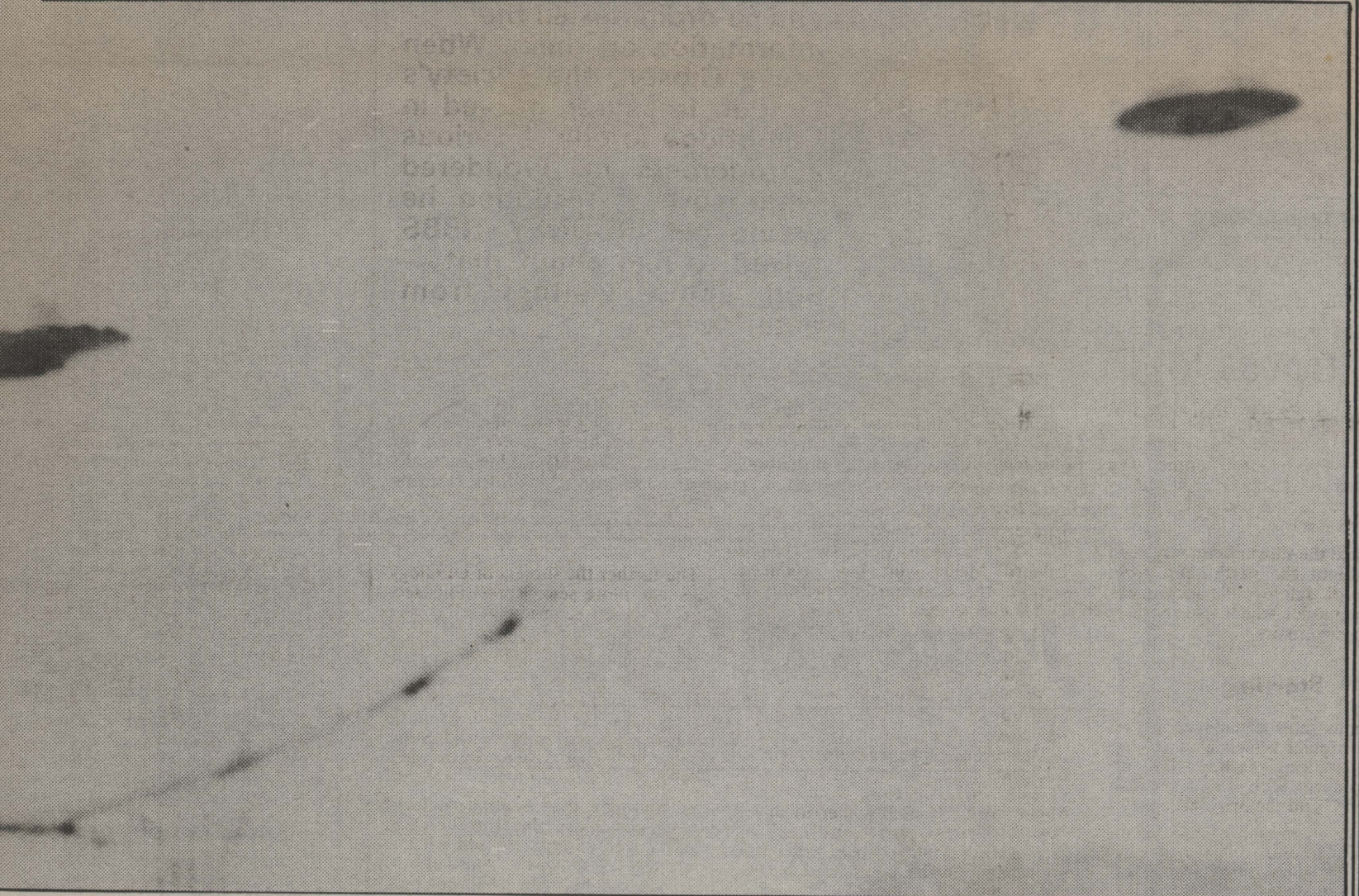


No longer a joke . . . the sight that appeared in

ictures suggest we are not alone after all . . .



A model of a UFO described to the Aetherius Society president, Sir George King.



in the skies over Switzerland, in a photograph subjected to intense scrutiny.