

QUENTIN CREWE



FLYING SAUCERS: HERE'S ONE MORE MYSTERY

THERE is something curious about flying-saucer men on TV or, indeed, any medium of communication.

They are invited on to some programme, and then not allowed to get a word in edgewise. Or they are interviewed and then pilloried.

It happened the other night to Mr. Gordon Creighton, a director of the magazine, *Flying Saucer Review*. He appeared on BBC's *Twenty Four Hours* and got a poor hearing.

Answered

Mr. Creighton is, in fact, an interesting man. He is a retired diplomat, and speaks twelve languages, including Russian and Chinese.

The first thing he said when I talked to him was that he did not know any answers. I liked that. "All we can say is that there is a question to be answered, and it hasn't been answered."

His point is simple. There have been, over the last hundred years, thousands of reports of unexplained objects in the sky. There was one last week from Carmarthen. There are similar reports in all cultures over the centuries.

"Some of them are doubtless fakes," says Mr. Creighton, "but they cannot all be fakes."

Well, that is arguable. We have the matter of ghosts, for example, which I stalwartly do not believe in. Yet I would never say I could not be wrong.

I do not believe in flying saucers, but again—and more easily—I recognise that I could be wrong.

Too many of the reports from different places have too much in common for coincidence to be probable.

Pooh, you say. Pooh, indeed. But that's what people—particularly scientists—have always said.

As Arthur Koestler pointed out in his great book, *The Sleepwalkers* (will the person I lent it to please return it?) scientists

have made most of their great discoveries against their own will. They reject evidence they do not fancy, they ignore beacons which guide them.

Twenty years ago many of them said there was unlikely to be any life outside this planet. Now they agree that the odds are on there being life elsewhere.

Explanation

Mr. Creighton has another rule: Think of everything, believe nothing.

All he and his colleagues on *Flying Saucer Review* are doing is asking questions, and imagining every possible explanation of what is certainly a mystery.

Mr. Creighton has been asked to appear on television some twenty times. Why do they ask him if they do not want to hear what he says?

There are all sorts of possible explanations of that mystery too. Mr. Creighton believes it is because "the subject just won't lie down. It crops up again and again."

I suspect it is because we all half-believe, but won't admit it. We have him along and knock him down.

A sort of propitiation, etc.