

## Flying saucer over the Channel

**"A solid object constructed of highly-polished metal"**

**TWO** experienced British European Airways pilots have reported to London Airport that on a recent flight to Paris they watched **FOR 30 MINUTES** a mysterious object in the sky that might have been a "flying saucer."

Captain Peter Fletcher, of Putney, has been a pilot for 18 years, first with the R.A.F. and, since its beginning, with B.E.A.; First Officer R. L. Lemon, of Iver, Bucks, became a pilot in the R.A.F. 14 years ago. Both are therefore trained observers as well as skilled pilots.

Each described the incident technically and dispassionately. Neither has the least doubt that he saw an "unusual aircraft" of some description.

They agree, although they cannot prove it, that they were not deceived by a trick of light.

Here is their story, factual and unvarnished. It is told by Captain Fletcher:

**OUR**

**Elizabethan**

**U** flight left London on the morning of October 9. There was a certain amount of low cloud and fog, but when we climbed we found ourselves in an absolutely clear atmosphere.

The sky was intensely blue. There was not a cloud. The sun shone brilliantly. It was one of those rare days when you could see an aircraft 50 or 60 miles away.

It was so clear that when we were over the English Channel we could see aircraft over the airport at Orly, 100 miles away, and if we had been high enough we could have seen the Alps.

I had reported our position to Control when we were over Seaford, Sussex. We were en route for Paris on a course of about 150 degrees. London radar said that an aircraft was overtaking me on my left.

This aircraft, a Constellation flying some 50 knots faster than ourselves, passed on ahead and a few minutes later reached its cruising altitude of 13,500 feet and was in a position immediately ahead of me and above.

At this stage the relative position of my aircraft to the Constellation and the sun was such that the sun's light was reflected to me from the top surface of the aircraft's wing, making the lit surface very clear to see, while a darker shadow etched in the lower part.

## **First sighting**

**T**HIS is important in view of later observations.

It was then that I first noticed the "flying saucer." It was apparently another aircraft above the Constellation and a little away to the left, and it seemed to have similar sun reflections.

Bearing in mind that all airliners flying around Europe are basically of similar linear size—that is a wing span of 100 feet to 150 feet, I judged this other aircraft was flying at approximately 20,000 feet, and was about the same distance from me as the Constellation, or probably a further 20 miles away.

After watching the two aircraft—and I had no reason up

craft—and I had no reason up to now to think that the other object was not an aircraft—it became apparent that there was a subtle difference between the two.

I must get a little technical here. Both my aircraft and the Constellation were on precisely the same course and therefore its bearing from me remained exactly the same, but as it was drawing away from

**DURING Royal Air Force exercises last year two officers and three airmen reported seeing a silvery circular object following a Meteor jet which was landing at a Yorkshire aerodrome.**

**They said that the flying saucer" was at about 10,000 feet and after an-**

**10,000 feet and after apparently revolving on its axis it sped to the westward at a terrific speed.**

**The R.A.F. made a serious investigation into the report and did not dismiss it as "meteorological phenomena."**

**Last month the Air Ministry said that the special department which was set up to investigate reports of "flying saucers" has received Captain Fletcher's report and experts are now evaluating it.**

me at a greater speed, its relative position to me slowly changed.

As slight irregularities occurred in the path of the Constellation's flight, the intensity



***Captain Fletcher and First Officer Lemon.***

of light reflected from the upper surface varied.

Even when the Constellation was getting on for 30 miles ahead of me the irregularities of fuselage, engines and tail could still be distinguished breaking up the reflecting surface of the top wing.

**face of the top wing.**

**But it was quite different with our "flying saucer."**

**First Officer Lemon and I studied it intently. We had plenty of time.**

## **"It seemed still"**

**IT had the appearance of two shallow saucers with their rims together. We noticed that:**

- **Its relative position to ourselves remained completely unchanged for the whole of the 30 minutes that we had it under observation. It appeared to be still.**
- **The intensity of reflected light from the top surface remained absolutely steady until the last ten minutes of observation when it gradually dwindled away at a**

**ally dwindled away at a speed consistent with the changing position of the sun.**

- **The top reflecting surface was smooth and unbroken. It was more highly polished than is normally the case with an aircraft's "skin."**

**At first I had automatically classified the "stranger" as the Elizabethan that had taken off two or three minutes before me bound for Nice and reporting his cruising altitude as 19,500ft. But on crossing the French coast at Dieppe this aircraft reported his position behind me.**

**No aircraft reported crossing the French coast at a time that would have put it in the position of the mystery craft.**

**I was at once interested in my**

**I was at once interested in my unchanging neighbour and be-**

**gan to check up on the other aircraft in the vicinity.**

**I noted the following facts:**

- **Low fog had prevented aircraft not only leaving London Airport, but by and large most of the U.K. aerodromes up to approximately 8.40 a.m. and I was the fourth to take off from London.**
- **The three preceding me were a D.C.4 to Amsterdam, the Elizabethan to Nice, and D.C.3 to Brussels.**
- **No civilian aircraft leaving Northolt would comply with the height, direction, etc., of the mystery craft.**

**This eliminated all civilian**

**This eliminated all civilian aircraft flying from U.K. to France. I was left with the possibilities of a Service jet or an Air France Comet.**

**We ruled out the latter possibilities because neither a jet nor a Comet would maintain for 30 minutes a course exactly the same without showing some variation in apparent position relative to our own aircraft, for they would be flying twice as fast.**

**Remember also that we could see variation in the apparent position in the Constellation.**

## **Not a balloon**

**THE most striking thing to both of us was the absence of fluctuation in the intensity of the reflected light.**

**I admit that at one time**

I admit that at one time I toyed with the idea that it might be a balloon. But it would obviously have had to be an enormous balloon and later observation confirmed the elliptical shape. In this it had the properties of an aircraft wing, being roughly one-tenth as deep as it was long.

It was impossible to estimate the size of the object because we did not know how far away it was from us. The day was

so clear that it could have been an extremely large craft up to 100 miles away.

Given the size of an object one can estimate its distance away. Given the distance one can estimate size. We knew neither

neither.

It certainly looked as big as the Constellation and was farther away from us. How far we could not judge but we estimated that it was somewhere over Northern France.

Neither of us has any doubt about one thing: We were not deceived by a trick of light.

We have no doubt whatsoever that the object was solid, having a shape approximately that of an aircraft wing and that it was constructed of a metal similar to that used for aircraft construction only much more highly polished.

In 18 years of flying I have never seen anything like it. If it had been visible for a few seconds or even for a few minutes I would have dismissed it as an illusion or a trick of light.

light.

But we had our "saucer" under observation for a full half-hour. We had time to consider it, to estimate its size. Our radio officer saw it and we brought along the steward to confirm what we saw.

Certainly we saw something material in the sky. Whether or not it was a "flying saucer" we cannot say.

But we will not dismiss it as a trick of imagination—not after 30 minutes of wondering what it could be.

If it wasn't another conventional aircraft, and I have given my reasons why we do not think it was, then what was it?

Maybe your guess is as good as mine, but we saw it.





