

# SCIENCE SURVEY.

## WHAT ARE THESE THINGS CALLED "FLYING SAUCERS"?

This is the second of a series of three articles written by Dr. D. F. Martyn, who has made a study of the Flying Saucer phenomenon. The articles were delivered in broadcasts over the Australian Broadcasting Commission network and were kindly made available by the A.B.C. for publication in the "Times".

Last issue we described a number of incidents which have been called "Flying Saucers" and took a brief glimpse at the possible explanations of some.

But all these incidents were relatively harmless, although one of them, as you will remember, culminated in a dog fight for twenty minutes or more between a pilot and an object of that sort, but no tragedy occurred.

### Pilot crashed after chasing mysterious objects

On January 7, 1948, observers at Godman Air Force Base, Fort Knox, Kentucky, saw from the ground an unidentified object that they described as resembling an ice - cream cone topped with red. This report is well confirmed, both by military and civilian observers.

The Godman Tower requested that four National Guards F-51 planes investigate the phenomena.

Here the official Air Force release: "Three of the planes closed in on the object reported it to be metallic and of tremendous size."

One pilot described it as

One pilot described it as "round like a tear-drop and at times almost fluid."

The Flight Leader, Captain Mantle, contacted the Godman Tower with an initial report that the object was travelling at half his speed.

"I'm closing in now to take a good look," he radioed. "It's directly ahead of me and still moving at about half my speed. The thing looks metallic and of enormous size. It's going up now and forward as fast as I am—that's 360 miles an hour."

Captain Mantle reported then from his F-51: "I'm going up to 20,000 feet and if I'm no closer I'll abandon chase."

That time was 3.15 p.m.

That was the last radio contact made by Mantle with the Godman Tower, and later that day his body was found in the wreckage of his plane near Fort Knox.

Five minutes after Mantle disappeared from his formation the two remaining planes returned to Godman and a few minutes later one resumed the search, covering territory 100 miles to the south as high as 33,000 feet, but found nothing at all.

Investigation subsequently made showed that Mantle had probably blacked out at 20,000 feet from lack of oxygen and had died of suffocation before

had died of suffocation before the crash.

Now, at first it was thought that the object which these flyers saw and were chasing was simply the planet Venus, but when astronomers went into the details of the position of Venus, it was found it just couldn't be Venus at all at that particular time and place.

So, officially, it's still considered by the Air Force as an unidentified object, but I think Professor Mensel, in his recent book on "flying saucers," has put forward the correct explanation of what these pilots were chasing—they were chasing "mock suns" or "sun dogs," which are produced by ice crystals in the atmosphere.

However, I won't go further into the explanation of how this happened at the moment, but just mention that I think there's little doubt that they were chasing "mock sun."

I've mentioned that "saucers" are not confined to this age and time—that they've happened in the past as well.

For example, in the year 1882, Dr. Maunder, of Greenwich Observatory, England, observed the most remarkable phenomenon, which, had it occurred to-day, would certainly be described as a "flying saucer."

Now Dr. Maunder's account is

a flying saucer.

Now Dr. Maunder's report is possibly the most valuable report of any which we've got at all on this subject because he is an experienced astronomical observer of the highest reputation, so I'm going to give you his report in full because of its extreme reliability.

He says: "I tried to recall my most striking experience during the past 43 years and my memory has gone back to one that stands out from its unlikeness to any other.

"It was a quiet and fairly clear evening in the late autumn and the time was nearly two hours after sunset.

"The moon was near her first quarter and had crossed the Meridian a little more than half an hour before. There was, therefore, a fair amount of light in the sky and the principal stars were clearly seen.

"I was at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, and, as a violent magnetic storm had broken out at about 10 hours 15 minutes in the forenoon, was expecting an auroral display.

"I had, therefore, taken up my position close to the 'Sheepshanks Dome' on the 'library leads,' as the flat roof over the smaller library was then called, whence I had a view uninterrupted in all directions except

errupted in all directions except for the great dome towards the S.E.

"Nor was my expectation disappointed, for as the sunset tints faded away in the W.S.W. quarter a rosy glow, at first hardly to be distinguished from them, spread itself all over the N.W. and gradually strengthened until about 5.30 p.m. a brilliant ray, mainly of the same red or rosy colour, but with a greenish vein in it, shot up from the horizon in the north and reached the zenith.

"Other less conspicuous glows and rays showed themselves but presented no features of special interest.

"Then, when the display seemed to be quietening down, a great circular disc of greenish light suddenly appeared from lower down in the E.N.E. as if it had just risen and moved across the sky as smoothly and steadily as the sun, moon and stars and planets move, but nearly a thousand times as quickly.

"The circularity of its shape when first seen was evidently merely the effect of foreshortening, for as it moved it lengthened out and when it crossed the meridian and passed just above the moon its form was that almost of a very elongated eclipse and various observers

eclipse and various observers spoke of it as "cigar-shaped," like a torpedo, or a spindle, or shuttle. "Had the incident occurred a third of a century later, beyond doubt everyone would have selected the same simile—it would have been "just like a Zeppelin."

"After crossing the Meridian its length seemed to contract and it disappeared somewhere to the south of the west point.

"Its entire passage from rising to setting took less than two minutes to complete and it disappeared at 6 hours 5 minutes G.M.T.

"I watched for several hours longer but no repetition of the phenomenon occurred. A pale greenish glow fringing the upper edge of the great London smoke cloud in the north was observed but it showed little, if any, structure or movement.

"The 'torpedo,' on the other hand, was many times brighter even than the northern sky. Much brighter, even, than the Great Comet (of 1882) then in the early morning sky, and it had a clearly defined outline, but a plain and uniform surface.

"The greatest length which it represented was about 30 degs. and its breadth was from 2 to 3 degrees.

"But in colour the light of the 'torpedo' was evidently the same

'torpedo' was evidently the same as that of the auroral line and this showed me in the spectrocope the familiar auroral line in the "citron-green" to which, indeed, its colour was completely due, a line now considered to be coincident with a permanent line in the spectrome of krypton.

"This 'torpedo-shaped' beam of light was unlike any other celestial object that I have ever seen. The quality of its light was unlike any other celestial object that I have ever seen. The quality of its light and its and its occurrence while a great magnetic storm and a bright aurora were in progress seem to establish its auroral origin.

"But it differed very widely in appearance from any other aurora that I have ever seen.

"It was unlike auroral shafts and rays with their glancing, flickering movements so generally radiating from the magnetic north since its motion was a steady uniform progress from (magnetic) East to West," his description ends.

Well now, there is perhaps the best description of a "flying

saucer" of all time, and it was made by Dr. Maunder in 1882.

So there is nothing new under the sun—and then, going fur-

the sun—and then, going further back we find many references in the middle ages, which are very obscure, and difficult to follow, because of the fact that people were unscientific in those days, and just couldn't describe things in the kind of terms that we can understand.

But if we go right back, right back to the Bible, we find

(CONTINUED PAGE 3)

## Science Survey (cont).

the prophet Ezekiel, in Chapter 1, gives a very good description of a "flying saucer".

Here is what he says: "Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of beryl, and they four had one likeness, and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides, and they turned not when they went. As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful:

high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them, and when living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up".

There is a description of something in the heavens which today, undoubtedly would be taken as a flying saucer and it is also a very good description of the natural phenomenon known as "mock suns" or "sun dogs", which I've already mentioned and it comes from the Bible Ezekiel the Prophet, Chapter 1.

Now there are other examples in intermediate times such as lights seen in the China Sea which were known quite frequently to ships crossing south of Japan.

They were called the lights of Japan and there are quite a number of very full descriptions of their occurrence.

They, I think, are due to some kind of mirage in conjunction with an Auroral display, and I don't think we need give them any particular special attention.

"I mentioned them to show you that in 1882 and in the 18th century and right back in the

century and right back in the Bible, there have been many examples of objects seen in the sky which we call today "flying saucers".

Next I hope to go on and describe what these flying saucers really are.

---