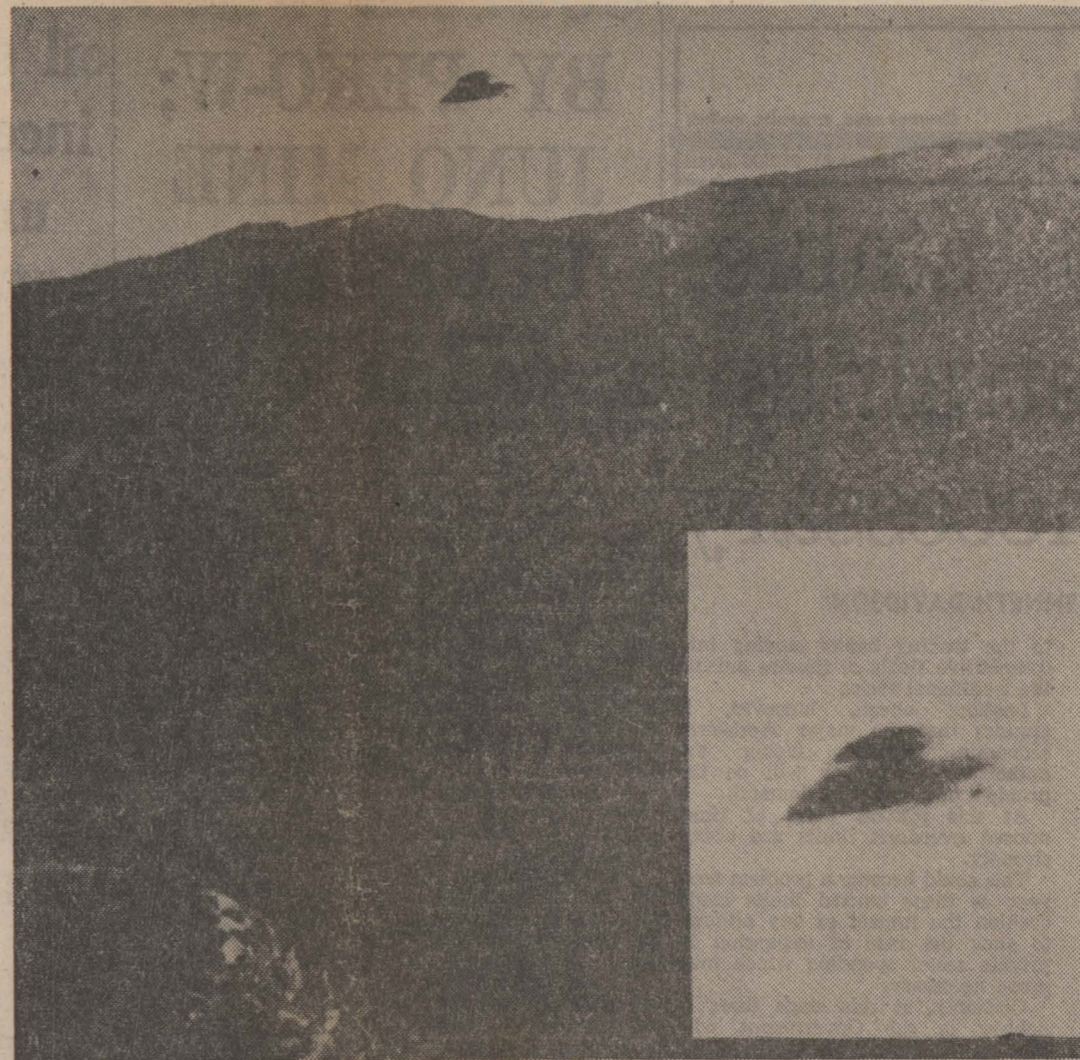


JOHN HALLOWS takes

A serious look at an old joke . . .

UFOs



The object above the skyline (enlarged in the insert) is supposed to be a flying saucer sighted in California in 1951. The man who took the picture says he and two friends saw the object fly by once and he took the picture on the second pass.

an hour. It did not appear to be large and it made no sound. It had two flashing, reddish lights which dimmed at intervals when a brighter white light appeared in the direction it was travelling."

The most obvious explanation, of course, would be an aircraft: the red lights would be its port wing and tail light, the white beam the plane's landing light, switched on and off as the pilot searched for a lost air strip.

But Sergeant Bell's estimate of the object's speed and height hardly makes this explanation fit, and the policemen, experienced observers, did not believe at the time that they were looking at a plane. Nevertheless, the possibility occurred to Sergeant Bell, who asked his base to contact the RAAF to inquire.

The air force authorities checked, and said quite definitely next day that there were no aircraft in the Windale area at the time.

Notwithstanding all this, the RAAF later wrote down the Windale incident down to aircraft activity, and the affair does not rate a mention in the Department of Air's list of official UFO investigations.

Tomorrow's article will detail some of the Australian UFO sightings which even the Department of Air finds inexplicable, and describe some of the odd events in other parts of the world for which no-one has produced a natural explanation.

The upshot of all the incidents is no more than a support for Professor Butler's plea for an open mind. The fact that arises most pointedly from any study of UFOs is that the evidence for the existence of traffic from outer space over this planet is about as unconvincing as the official attempts to explain all UFO sightings in natural terms.

**Tomorrow:
Sightings
in
Australia**

**Where it hurts
to look into the face**

AT LEAST two Australian scientists — well-known and respected in their different fields—are now working seriously on the problem nearly everyone else dismisses as a 20-year-old joke: unidentified flying objects.

They are working unofficially and in secrecy. In fact they would only agree to talk to me on condition their anonymity was respected.

George Adamski and the rest of the lunatic fringe who claim personal contact with the little green men removed respectability from flying saucers in the early fifties — no reputable scientist can now afford to suggest he takes the phenomena even semi-seriously.

Why, then, are these scientists risking their reputations with work on UFOs? Firstly, because they, in common with many other scientists all over the world, are not satisfied with lame official explanations for a large proportion of UFO sightings.

They believe official investigations are often more concerned with pooh-poohing UFOs than with credibility: they suspect that some sightings may be inexplicable in terms of what is so far known about the universe, and that valuable scientific discoveries might be gained from further investigation.

And secondly, there is a sound argument for at least retaining an open mind on the possibility of this planet being visited by intelligently-directed probes from outer space.

This is not a lunatic suggestion. It is backed by some sound scientific opinion.

We are not talking here about Adamski's little green men. It's comforting sometimes to toy with the notion that gentle beings from outer space might some day step out of their unearthly vehicles and set us all to rights: banish the nuclear bomb in accordance with Galactic League law, solve the race problem and drive delinquents off the streets.

I think about it quite a lot in bed, and so does Professor Fred Hoyle, whose daydreams have infinitely more claim on your attention. But the evidence of people who claim contact with spacemen is too open to the crackpot description to be considered in any serious, scientific approach to the UFO question.



If even 10 per cent of their claims were factual you would have to believe that so many different sizes, shapes, and races of aliens were visiting our planet that we must have

in our galaxy alone, has nine planets. Even allowing that the proportion of earth-like planets to non-inhabitable worlds may be far less than the solar system's eight to one, Hoyle and other astronomers calculate that there must be 100 million planets identical to earth in this cluster of galaxies alone. It is hardly reasonable to suppose that earth should have been the only one to develop intelligent life.

As Sydney University's Professor of Theoretical Physics Stuart T. Butler remarks: "I certainly believe there must be intelligence on some of the other inhabitable planets. It's the only logical interpretation from the evidence. I would go even further and say that there must be intelligent races far further advanced than us. Why should the earth be either at the start or the end of the scale? It is more likely that we are about average, in which case there would have to be older races out in space, ahead of us in development."



"That is not to say that there is any reason they should want to visit us, even if it were possible for them, considering the enormous distances and time it would take to travel them."

"I would emphatically disassociate myself from the people who claim to have contacted flying saucers. Their stories are so wildly improbable they seem to me to involve the suspicion of mental unbalance of some sort."

"At the same time, in view of the probable existence of some other intelligent race in the universe, I think we have to keep an open mind on the possibility of some UFOs being intelligently directed."

This is the position now adopted by Soviet scientists, who have recently set up an

as the RAAF, seek inevitably to explain every sighting away in terms of natural phenomena, even though the explanations often seem very thin on the evidence available.

"I am now concerned to analyse UFO sightings, using a computer, to attempt to see if there are any common circumstances or any statistical indications that unsuspected natural causes may be behind them — if, for example, there is a preponderance of sightings when Venus is at its brightest, and so on."

"So far, I can find no such indication. I am inclined to think that the official agencies very much underestimate the percentage of UFO sightings which are inexplicable in natural terms. Personally, I would put this percentage at considerably more than ten per cent."

In Australia UFO investigations are generally carried out by the RAAF and the Department of Air, who collate the findings. Their approach is certainly more open-minded than some of their counterparts abroad.

But official inquirers in all countries tend to approach UFOs with an understandable scepticism and an equally understandable desire to find a simple natural explanation before the lunatic fringe of flying saucer lovers starts blocking the phones day and night.

At least 80 per cent of the reported sightings are certainly attributable to natural causes — aircraft tail lights, weather balloons, and meteorological phenomena. Unfortunately, when the inquirers find natural "explanations" where the evidence does not really support them, the soothing syrup gets written into official records.

This sort of public soft-soaping has led to bitter recriminations in the States, where the USAF is accused of concealing information from

accelerated in pursuit and the lights, diving and swooping across the countryside, led them in a high-speed chase around the early-morning lanes for the best part of an hour.

The two officers reported the incident, and, after the story was reported in British papers, were firmly reprimanded for allowing their imagination to get the better of them. They stuck to their story, to the amazement of their chief constable — and saw the lights again on the next night's patrol.

Other policemen in the county now went on the lookout, and on the third night more witnesses reported the cross of lights. The Hampshire chief constable was forced to withdraw the reprimand and admit that the men had, in fact, seen something.

The British Defence Ministry, now approached for comment, retorted calmly that the police had mistaken the planet Venus for a UFO.

"It often happens at times like this when Venus is more than normally bright," said an Air Force spokesman.

But amateur astronomers in the areas who had in fact been trying to see Venus on the nights in question pointed out that total cloud cover had made it impossible over the whole of Hampshire. One amateur star gazer had himself seen the crosses.



The Royal Observatory now chipped into the argument

said the USAF spokesman. "If the policemen saw the crosses between midnight and 2 am as they say, it could not have been us."

The Royal Observatory comment, in fact, had gone as far as anyone reasonably could towards an explanation of the Hampshire crosses. "There is something up there" — these occurrences, attested to by policemen and amateur astronomers from four countries, were classic examples of the inexplicable UFO, which is not to say there was any evidence they were intelligently-controlled vehicles from outer space.

These were some of the UFO sightings about which Professor Butler would keep an open mind.

But the official explanations had been made and even though they had been shot down (the Defence Ministry had admitted on October 28 that in the face of the USAF denial it had no explanations left to offer) they were there on the record. When on November 8 the British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of Defence, Mr Mervyn Rees,

to believe that so many different sizes, shapes, and races of aliens were visiting our planet that we must have become the favorite tourist resort for the entire Milky Way. With so much flying saucer traffic around it's a wonder our own air transport can get off the ground.

This argument for an open mind on UFOs rests rather on two entirely demonstrable propositions: that it is logical to suppose there is intelligent life elsewhere in the universe, and that the official explanations for a proportion of UFO sightings are too thin to be believed.

Professor Hoyle, in common with the majority of the world's astronomers, believes it is inconceivable that intelligent life in some form does not exist somewhere else in creation besides earth.

There are 60 million suns in the galaxy IC 1613. IC 1613 is a "dwarf galaxy" in astronomical terminology because it is far smaller than the 16 others — one of them the galaxy of which our own solar system is a minute part — which make up what astronomers believe is merely a local cluster in the unimaginably huge universe.

And our sun, one of millions

intelligently directed. This is the position now adopted by Soviet scientists, who have recently set up an organisation to investigate UFO sightings (after years of dismissing them as a capitalist fantasy).

The decision was sparked by a rash of sightings over Kazan, verified by two observatories who traced sickle-shaped objects in the sky which they affirmed were "neither planes nor man-made satellites." Soviet astronomer Makarov, one of the first Russians to speak officially on the subject, told a scientific congress in August last year that the sightings were "hard to explain."

Official bodies in the West are much more confident of their ability to produce explanations, but in the opinion of the two Australian scientists working in the field these do not always fit the facts.

One of the scientists, working in New South Wales on a UFO survey, said: "I am by no means convinced that UFOs are intelligently directed, but there is no logical reason why they should not be. There is just no evidence for or against it."

"What bothers me is the way in which official agencies, such

soaping has led to bitter recriminations in the States, where the USAF is accused of concealing information from the public and is currently paying \$500,000 for an independent inquiry into UFOs to appease its critics.

A recent case-history in Britain is probably the clearest example of the way an unlikely official story becomes accepted as fact by the sheer weight of its repetition.



It is a better example than any in Australia because the "sightings" took place over a heavily populated area and there was therefore multiple evidence from highly reliable witnesses: it was also one of the few UFO sightings in which the complete evidence was available to independent scientific inquirers.

The story started simply enough one mid-October night last year when two policemen patrolling the countryside in Hampshire by car spotted a cross-shaped light moving in the sky.

As the policemen approached to investigate, the lights receded. The police car

"The Royal Observatory now chipped into the argument — engrossing the whole of Britain by this time. "A spokesman at Hurstmonceux, Sussex, said forthrightly: "There is something flying around up there that is neither a star nor a planet."

More police in South-West England, some of them accompanied by newspapermen on their night car patrols, reported seeing the crosses.

On Thursday, October 26, the Defence Ministry, quite unmoved, announced that it had discovered a perfectly normal explanation. USAF fighter planes had been carrying out mid-air refuelling practice over England, and the policemen had seen nothing more than lights on the pipelines connecting fighters to tanker planes.

Interest died for two days. Then, on Saturday October 28, a reporter for the Sunday Express in London thought of asking the USAF exactly when the refuelling manoeuvres had been carried out — a step everyone assumed the Defence Ministry had already taken.

The answer was revealing. "All our planes were on the ground by 9 pm each night,"

to look into the face of a child . . .

by GRAHAM WILLIAMS

AS you drive into Saigon's main square, jostled on all sides by cars, bicycles, pedicabs and scooters, the great statue looms up.

Two mud-brown soldiers, each 20ft tall, are charging forward, one of them levelling a giant bazooka at the National Assembly at the far end of the square.

Statues like this, built two years ago, are in every square of the city. They are a perpetual reminder that Vietnam has lived so long by the sword it has almost forgotten peace.

And if you drive on, through the stinking slums of this sprawling city, which has nearly quadrupled its population to more than two-million in the past few years, you see the human relics of a war—in 50-odd orphanages and in the few centres for the limbless. Most of the patients in these centres lost their arms or legs violently — because of a bomb, a mine, or a mortar.

You see the huge site for a technical college covered with tents and rows of long barrack-type wooden huts. This is Petrus Ky, the refugee camp established when the Tet offensive created 400,000 new refugees.

Hundreds of families are living in tents. Students are helping to build more huts.

Petrus Ky will house 20,000 refugees now camping in pagodas, schools, orphanages, and other "temporary shelters."

But only registered refugees will be allowed to go there; refugees whose names are on the roll and who are entitled to a daily rice ration and if they're lucky, to ten bags of cement and ten sheets of roofing iron to help them to rebuild their homes.

And they will go there — supposedly — for only six months. By that time they are expected to be "resettled," which is a euphemistic way of saying their refugee entitlements stop. No more rice. No more shelter.

It's tough, even on the registered refugee, because most of them suffer from malnutrition, rarely see a doctor, and have no possessions.

There are about 1.2 million registered refugees in South Vietnam, though the number has risen sharply during the past two weeks.

But refugees have been streaming into Saigon since 1954. The stream has become a flood in the past two years. So what about unregistered refugees?

Aid officials define a refugee as "anyone who has been

permanently dislocated from his home. "By this definition they say, probably half of the people in Saigon would be refugees.

And the total number of registered and unregistered refugees throughout Vietnam is believed to equal the population of Sydney or Melbourne.

Indeed, South Vietnam's refugee chief, Dr Nguyen Phuc Que, was quoted last October as saying that the estimate of two million displaced persons was probably too low.

Many refugees were simply not registered or counted, he said. If Dr Que is right, the refugee population could be about three million.

Staffing problems of both the U.S. refugee division — CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support)—and of the South Vietnamese Government are too severe to allow much to be done for these people.

Late last year, Mr O. V. Stovall, director of the U.S. General Accounting Office, told a U.S. Senate subcommittee that less than 25 per cent of refugees had received resettlement grants, rice and other materials. Fewer than half had received their daily allowances.

In other areas, he said, this was caused by a scarcity of trained personnel and "the incompetence or dilatoriness of provincial refugee officials."

Charges of corruption against Vietnamese refugee officials have been strong. Twelve of the 44 province chiefs have been replaced recently, and most of the district officials in the northern division have been sacked, including the mayor of Hue.

One problem is that the U.S. acts only in an advisory capacity. Great quantities of materials are sent to Vietnam but as soon as they arrive in Saigon they become Vietnamese property.

Only a Vietnamese can sign their release. The same thing happens to money for refugees, which the U.S. hands over to the GVN (South Vietnamese Government) for distribution.

Many hamlet and province officials, one senior American U.S. refugee aid chief told me, are inefficient; many are afraid to act without specific orders.

Mr John F. Thomas, U.S. Refugee Chief in Vietnam, says: "In a war situation, there must be a slippage of supplies when people are hungry."

Mr Thomas says CORDS is trying to get the GVN to widen the eligibility for refugee relief so that those who need aid can get it.

"We must get to the people," Mr Thomas said, "because the Viet Cong could infiltrate the refugee camps."

The Viet Cong are already doing this in some northern areas, where dissatisfaction over lack of aid, anger at being bombed or cleared out of their farms by the allies and the barren sites of camps engender bitterness against the GVN.

A key factor in the problem, says Mr Thomas, is providing housing and making land reforms.

The GVN has been generally slow to make land reforms, even in relatively secure areas, to enable refugees to return to their farming life.

What can be done? Mr Thomas sees the refugee problem in two phases: the first is to take care of the people, clothe, feed, house them, and provide for their health and welfare. The second, more important in the long-term, is to make them self-supporting again.

Who can do all this? Mr Thomas and other officials say the voluntary and international agencies in Vietnam are by far the most efficient and low-cost operations.

They do their own distribution and make sure that those who need the aid receive it.

Catholic Relief Services, the largest voluntary agency in Vietnam, has a singularly low overhead and high efficiency in distributing food, clothing and medicine to 1.5 million Vietnamese.

The Quaker workers, Asian Christian Service, the Baptist organisation, World Vision, and several other agencies are doing a vast amount of work with small staffs and paltry funds.

All these agencies will benefit from the Austcare appeal for \$1 million in Australia.

Austcare represents 15 church organisations, from Catholic Relief to the Society of Friends, the Lutheran World Federation, the Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies, the Baptist Union and the Australian Council of Churches, which comprises 11 member churches.

UN agencies, including Unicef, are also helping, this is not an appeal only for Vietnam's refugees. The money will go to refugee projects in other countries as well.

Refugees are hideously anonymous people. The word itself makes one turn away. You can't bear to look into the face of a child whose face is covered with scabs because of malnutrition. Not if you have a conscience. Not if you want to do something about it.

petty's comment



"On the subject of free enterprise: I trust you have been observing the British recently."