THE FLYING SAUCER: CAPTAIN BICKNELL'S OWN STORY

ON A CLEAR MORNING this week the pilot, radio officer and passengers of an East African Airways Lodestar saw what they took to be a flying machine of unknown type high over Mount Kilimanjaro. What this machine was, where it had come from and where it was bound, no one knows.

Theories that it was a mirage, a meteorological balloon, or the reflection of a normal aircraft have been checked and cross-checked—and have fallen flat. Highly coloured reports of the incident have been discredited. But the plain facts related by the crew of the Lodestar are themselves enough to baffle the sceptics.

The Lodestar was on the normal Monday morning service from Nairobi to Mombasa. It left Nairobi West at 7 a.m. with nine passengers. What happened after that is best described in the words of the pilot, Captain Jack Bicknell, and his radio officer, Mr. D. W. Merrifield, as told to the *Sunday Post* on Wednesday.

"At 7.20 a.m.," said Captain Bicknell, "the radio officer drew my attention to a bright object like a white star hanging motionless about 10,000 feet above Kilimanjaro.

"My first reaction was to say nothing. We watched it for three minutes. Then we told the passengers about it. One of them had a very powerful pair of binoculars with him, and he began to study it. In the meantime we put a radio message through to Eastleigh describing it.

"Eastleigh asked us to check whether it was a 'Met' balloon. I then examined it for several minutes through the binoculars."

No "portholes"

"When we first saw it we were about 85 miles from the mountain. Our course took us nearer until we were about 50 miles away from the object.

"Through the glasses I saw a metallic, bullet-shaped object which must have been over 200 feet long. At one end was a square-cut vertical fin. Its colour was a dull silver, and at regular intervals along the fuselage were vertical dark bands.

"Its whole outline was clear and sharp, and there was no haziness about it at all.

"I watched closely for any signs of movement. It was absolutely stationary, and remained that way for 17 minutes.

"The passengers took turns with the glasses, and two of them were taking photographs. Then it began to move eastwards, rising as it did so. It disappeared at about 40,000 feet.

"We've calculated that in the three minutes of visible movement it covered about 60 miles. That gives you a speed of well over 1,000 m.p.h.

"Reports that it had windows or portholes are false, and so is the statement that we saw it rise to above 60,000 feet.

"There were no cloud formations about at all. The machine left no vapour trail, and had no visible means of propulsion."

500 years ahead of schedule

Asked if he had any theory about the nature of the machine, the radio officer, Mr. Merrifield, said: "If it was a flying machine, it was 500 years ahead of anything we have to-day."

"My impression," said Captain Bicknell, "was that it was definitely a flying machine of some kind."

"I would like to believe that it was some kind of mirage," added Mr. Merrifield, "but I have never heard of a mirage without cloud, and that wouldn't explain the movement."

If this report had come from a few isolated individuals it would soon be discounted. But it came from two responsible airline officials and nine ordinary travellers. Captain Bicknell took the precaution before landing of asking his passengers to sign a statement verifying his radio report to Eastleigh.

It is undoubtedly the best authenticated of all the flying saucer stories.

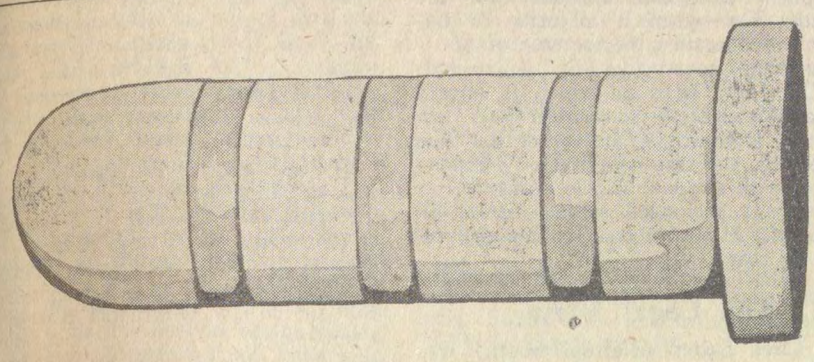
The theories break up

Now let us examine some of the more plausible theories put forward to explain the phenomenon:

1. The mirage theory is discounted owing to the absence of cloud and the movement of the mystery machine.
2. A Meteorological Department official said that the giant Skyhook balloons used in America—which are the cause of many "saucer" stories—could not reach East Africa, as they burst after 30 hours in the air. In any case there was not the remotest resemblance to a balloon in the machine seen over Kilimanjaro.
3. The Air France Constellation in the vicinity at the time was moving in a different direction to the "saucer," so the machine could not have been a distorted reflection of an ordinary aircraft.

So hopes of a "natural" explanation begin to fade. Other theories range from Martian visitors to radio-controlled secret weapons.

If our readers have other theories we shall be glad to hear them. One day we shall know the answer to the flying saucer riddle. Until then, any light on the subject would be welcome.



THIS IS WHAT THEY SAW: This diagram was prepared from a sketch by Captain Bicknell. Apart from the dark bands on the fuselage there is a lack of detail which makes the phenomenon even more puzzling. The "fin" at the rear of the machine might indicate some form of jet propulsion.

Air conference opening

Over forty delegates from East, West and Central Africa and the Union of South Africa attended the opening of the Southern Africa Air Transport Conference in Nairobi on Tuesday. Sir Reginald Robins, the Commissioner for Transport, suggested that an air advisory council for East Africa should be set up to co-ordinate all methods of transport in the three territories.

★ The Gremlin's Corner ★

Say that again

An earth resistivity potentiometer is the name of a complicated piece of machinery which left Eastleigh this week for Athens. Although its name might well be used instead of the "She sells sea shells" test of the Traffic Police for festive motorists, its purpose is simple—to find water.

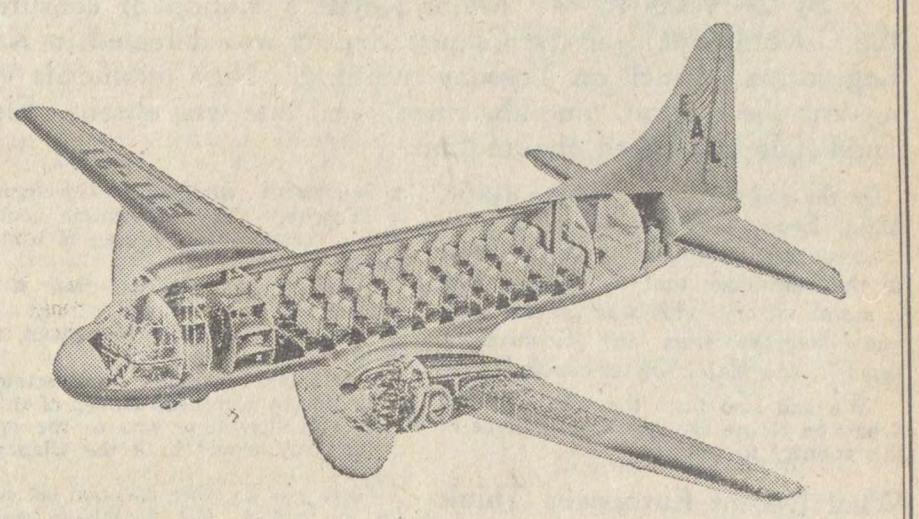
The instrument is the scientific substitute for a diviner's forked twig. It was consigned by the Geophysical Survey of Kenya and will be used in water survey operations in Greece. It was designed in East Africa, and is one of only two such instruments in existence.

Sight-seeing made easy

Ethiopian Airlines have authorised their Cairo agent to spend up to 150 piastres (Shs. 30/-) per head on passengers night-stopping at Cairo who wish to go sight-seeing. Passengers stopping at Addis Ababa on the Monday service are also taken on a tour of the city.

Tailpiece

Prospective pilots are wondering whether, in lieu of a Government air training scheme, the Colony might raise a Royal Flying Saucer Force for protection against visitors from outer space.



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EXCURSION

Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanganyika, Africa, Feb. 19, 1951

London Sunday Dispatch, 2/25/51
(As reprinted in FS and Common Sense, Waveney Girvan, p.77-9)

Nine men and two women who saw a mystery object flying near Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanganyika, last week have signed an affidavit giving the most authentic Flying Saucer report so far. They saw the mystery object clearly for seventeen minutes from their plane, and describe it as bullet-shaped and metallic.

They refuse to accept the explanation of Dr. U. Liddel, U.S. research chief, who says flying saucers are "Sky-hook" experimental balloons. Here is a detailed account of what they saw.

The object was first seen by Radio Operator Dennis W. Merrifield, 34, in the East African Airways plane Lodestar, en route to Mombasa from Nairobi.

"Have a look at a flying saucer," he said to Captain J. Bicknell, 30, an ex-B.O.A.C. pilot.

The object was absolutely motionless 10,000 feet above Kilimanjaro. Merrifield, ex-R.A.F., radioed Nairobi that the object was a "bright gleaming spot."

Nairobi reported that there were no other planes in a wide arc and said: "Take more water with it."

Captain Bicknell told me: "The morning was clear and cloudless, visibility was good and the weather perfect. I timed the saucer for seventeen minutes while the Lodestar kept to its course. Twice it rose vertically to a final height of 40,000 feet, then it moved east towards the coast at a terrific speed.

"There was a large fin-like object attached to the rear, although it wasn't clearly defined. There was no apparent propelling power when the saucer moved. There were definitely no vapor trails."

Captain Bicknell immediadetly after landing at Mombasa prepared an affidavit, which Merrifield and his seven men and two women passengers signed.

One passenger, Captain H.B. Fussell, a Newport, Monmouthshire, sports dealer, who had a pair of powerful binoculars said: "Through the glasses the object appeared bullet-shaped. Its colour was whitish-silver with three verticle black bands down the side. For ten minutes it remained stationary, then it suddenly rose vertically by 5,000 feet.

"Again it became stationary, and then a minute later it rose again and moved laterally away at great speed, probably 400 m.p.h."

Captain Fussell said that Dr. Urner Liddel's balloon theory did not fit what he saw. "Suppose it was a balloon--how could a balloon both hover motionless and move at 400 m.p.h. in the same weather conditions?" he asked.

"I emphatically reject the theory. The object was definitely metallic."

A radio officer named Overstreet from the American freighter Robin Mowbray, who was another passenger, said: "I wouldn't swear but through the binoculars I thought I could identify a row of circular windows."

Charles J. Vernon, also American and purser of the Robin Mowbray, said: "The object must have been immense, two or three times the size of the largest passenger plane."

Three seperate attempts to photograph the object were made from the plane. Captain Fussell snapped it with his miniture camera. Mr. Overstreet shot 30 feet of colour film with a telescopic lens on his cine camera, and Mr. Vernon also tried to snap it.

After landing, Captain Fussell developed his film in the presence of a newspaper reporter and a commercial photographer, who could certify that the film was not faked or retouched.

Three exposures were blank but the fourth showed a small black object.

Mr. Vernon's film showed nothing, and Mr. Overstreet's colour-film has not yet been developed.

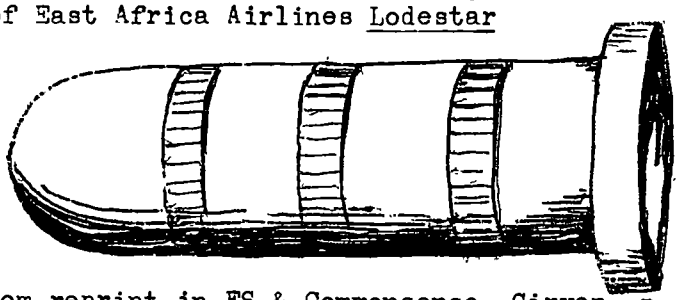
During the night after the saucer was reported, two unexplained flashed lit Mombasa.

Captain Bicknell was born in Exeter and lived in London before joining East Africa Airways in 1948.

Radio operator Merrifield's parents live at Ellison Gardens, Southall, Middlesex.

From the Sunday Dispatch, March 4, 1951, London

Sketch of object sighted over Mt. Kilimanjaro February 19, 1951, by crew and passengers of East Africa Airlines Lodestar



(excerpt from reprint in FS & Commonsense, Girvan, p. 79-80)

Flying in a cloudless sky over Mount Kilimanjaro, in Tanganyika, Captain Jack Bicknell, pilot of a passenger plane bound for Mombasa, saw through binoculars "a metallic, bullet-shaped object which must have been more than 200 feet long." The Sunday Dispatch last week gave a detailed report of this flying saucer sighting, the most authentic so far recorded.

When he brought the plane down, Captain Bicknell drew a sketch of what he had see.

The diagram above was prepared from Captain Bicknell's sketch and shows the "large object attached to the rear."

One passenger, Captain H. B. Fussell, of Newport, Monmouthshire, also told of the "three verticle black bands down the side."

Captain Bicknell, an ex-B.O.A.C. pilot, giving additional details, said the mystery object was stationary when first seen, and remained so for 17 minutes.

"Then it began moving eastwards, rising as it did so. It disappeared at about 40,000 feet," he said.

We've calculated(who's "we"--TRB) that in the three minutes of visible movement it covered about 60 miles. That gives it a speed of well over 1,000 mph.

No 1.

P.O.Box 4303,
Westlands,
Nairobi.
Kenya Colony.
AFRICA.

A. H. Baller, Esq.,
59, Munson Street,
Greenfield,
Mass.
U.S.A.

28th September, 1953.

Dear Mr. Baller,

Your air mail letter reached me this morning, and I was so pleased to hear of somebody who would be interested in my experience when I was on my way to South Africa from Mombasa in June-July 1947.

In our local newspaper "The Sunday Post" published in Nairobi, I saw a letter written by the Flying Saucer Bureau, Australia in January, asking for anybody to write about flying saucers or objects that had been seen in any part of the world and I felt that I ought to forward my experience to those people who were possibly spending much of their time and trouble in this type of research and my story may be of some use to them in compiling statistics on this matter.

I felt more than justified in writing the story especially when a few years later (about January, 1952, I think) the "Sunday Post" newspaper published an article and illustrated it with a cigar shaped object similar to the one I saw. On receiving your letter this morning I have rung up the East African Airways Company, Nairobi West Aerodrome, Nairobi, to find out the name of the pilot who was flying the plane over Mt Kilimanjaro (Tanganyika) at the time the passenger took a photograph of a cigar shaped object. For your information, the name of the pilot of the plane was Captain Bicknell and is still employed with the East African Airways, Nairobi. He also saw the object and I think also the photographs of the object when they were printed. I believe the plane was near the mountain and the object flying in the same direction as the plane - all very similar to my own experience. In my case the star (it was 11 p.m. night time) stopped and the object appeared along side of the ship and travelled with the ship for a few seconds and then silently disappeared, in spite of the fact that a huge furnace was burning in the rear, and red and blue flames with red and blue stars belching out for quite a distance from the object, no sound was heard either of fire or machinery. So in both cases the object illustrated in the "Sunday Post" and the one I saw were, in fact, the same shape, with part of the rear end cut off.

The length of the cigar object which I saw, was very much longer than the ship and very much higher, it was so large that it seemed quite impossible that it could move so silently. Why it did not drop into the sea when it was a matter of only a few yards from the water I don't know. It appeared to stop abruptly when coming in contact with anything like the ship or water. This object must, in the first place, have been the star coming down from the sky, as I distinctly saw the shaft of light from above and the light shortening until there was a bright patch on the water, so strong was this light, that every wave and movement of water was clearly seen. This light disappeared and as I have mentioned before, in its place appeared a large grey steel looking thing, I wondered how it had missed hitting the ship as we were very small beings against this mass of steel and there would have been no hope whatsoever if we had been struck by it, but it seemd to avoid the water and the ship and steer clear from both. It seemd to have a shock when it approached the water and stopped suddenly in fromt of us and turn in its own length, travel with us

in the same direction and gaining speed it disappeared. No light was visible as it travelled off, like one would see the red light at the rear of a motor car, I did see the rear end as it passed the ship, with red and blue flames (similar to sky rockets used by children for eelebrations) but it all disappeared immediately. It was a fantastic sight and as you can imagine few people believed my story, and you can understand how much better I felt when the pilot and passengers who were in the plane (East African Airways) flying over Mt. Kilimanjaro had the same experience and again very few people believed their story, but I had much comfort in not being alone in my experience, and I did have a feeling of satisfaction, but I had to wait from 1947 to 1952!

I was quite prepared to be disbelieved, so I did not trouble to raise arguments by relating my story and it was, as I have already said, only because of information asked by the Flying Saucer Bureau Australia, that I wrote to them, hoping that somebody else in the world would also give their accounts of saucers and be able to compare their experience with mine, to try and prove what I did see was genuine and not a made up story. That is why I have never written about my experience earlier.

I did not know there existed places and people who do research work until I read of this letter in the "Sunday Post". I have never seen a round object, circular, as you have done in Greenfield and to see them in a V-formation, must have been wonderful. I personally feel that they come from another planet, who are probably more advanced than this world, and I can readily understand how frightening it must be to see them flying and moving around without apparently any life inside of them, otherwise they would surely land, being so close to the ground?

We here in Kenya are going through a bad time just now. We have the Mau Mau trying to murder as many Europeans as possible. Before and since I arrived in this Colony in 1927, it was peaceful and it is still peaceful in parts, but the rising of the natives is to say the least, very disturbing.

We have to go to work with revolvers tied round our waist, sleep with them under our pillows, waiting to be attacked. I think the Government is getting it under control but it is a ghastly business nevertheless. A certain tribe called the Kikuyu, which surrounds Nairobi inside and outside, have risen up against the white people and they have arranged ceremonies in their living quarters whereby they drink blood, take an oath, and are out for murder, if their fellow beings don't agree, they force them into it, we now have many thousands of these thugs who are plundering stealing and murdering day and night. Troops have been flown out from England, and more are to follow, but I am afraid we are greatly outnumbered, as the natives number hundreds of thousands. We are hoping now it won't be long before they are subdued and we are back to normal. It is a pity we have this trouble just now as Kenya and Tangnyika are both beautiful countries with great possibilities and I have often wished how it would be possible for other people in the world to come and see this place. The animals in their thousands, lions, giraffe peacefully feeding off the thorn trees, all kinds, living peacefully around us. The wild birds that one can easily tame, they seem so trusting. Even the vicious animals like the elephant, rhino are beautiful in their way and we love them all.

To go out on safari is a great experience and I had thought of a scheme whereby school children from the States might be able to come over for a short vacation say about three weeks and I would be able to take them around, but I would not suggest this just at present until the troubles are settled out here. The few children I have had staying with me have so enjoyed their visits and we have been lucky enough to be able to show them lion within three miles of our house, in fact everything exists, one seems to know where they will be lying up and they are quite easy but one must always remember they are wild and no risks can be taken, even

if they lie in the sun blinking their eyes like huge cats, they are still very much alert!!

I had the pleasure of a visit from Miss Carol Bazeley from Boston and Miss Allison Peters who was living at Westlea Farm, Medfield, Mass, but has now moved over to Pugot Sound. ~~Both~~ these young ladies are now at university in America. Miss Allison Peters took some wonderful photographs of this country and I believe gave lectures to her other school friends. There must be many more such young people who would like the opportunity of coming and I have it in mind to reply to an article in the Readers Digest, which I happened to pick up recently(published in 1952) whereby a Mr. White (of Cuticura Manufacture)had died and a fortune was waiting for somebody to spend on something to benefit people of Boston. This indeed is a difficult problem as everybody would have so many opinions. But I would like to voice mine and give to those people interested a trip to Africa and see the things in their wild state, natives and animals. Many people would not like this idea but there is still a community of people who would long to come but because of financial reasons, unable to do so and for this reason, I think something should be done to make it possible for a visit. Children in orphanages, whose pleasures in life appear to be very limited, are those I have in mind, and it would give me great pleasure to help or guide them to a little pleasure and happiness.

Western America

I have not seen my article in any magazine, we seem to be very remote from others in this part of the world. Although the gentleman in Australia said he would be forwarding one when he had it printed none have yet come my way. I wonder if it would be at all possible for you to let me have a copy of "Civilian Saucer Investigation" July issue? I would so much like to see it in print. It would be my first attempt at having anything in print as yet. Or even a cutting?

My old box number 2162 is the business address, but either number will find me.

Thank you for writing to me, I should very much like to meet those people in Greenfield, America always sounds so nice, clean and beautiful to me, and I devour the "Saturday Evening Post" and enjoy all the pictures and advertisement that I read in them, the stories I do not always clearly understand, but they are very well illustrated and printed on such nice paper. It is all these things I miss so much.

Yours sincerely,

Alan King

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Yours sincerely,

Alec. King

P.O.Box 4303,
Westlands,
Nairobi. Kenya
14th October, 1953.

Dear Mr. Baller,

Your air mail letter together with the leaflet arrived yesterday. I was very pleased to have it and to be able to read of other experiences therein. I shall look forward to the "Look Magazine" which you are kindly forwarding to me under separate cover. Thank you for all the trouble you are taking to keep me informed. Although I know nothing about these saucers, I am interested naturally.

This morning I have been telephoning around the town to try and get the information you require and I shall add to this letter tomorrow after I have paid a visit to the "Sunday Post". I rang up this office and asked them if they had a spare copy of Captain Bicknell's sighting, and I am told that there is a copy if I would care to go there and read it, but I am after a printed copy if it is possible to get one, as I think this is more satisfactory. If I am unable to get a copy I shall take in shorthand and transcribe for you the article.

I have rung the Union Castle Line Agents, East African Estates, Ltd., P.O.Box 486, Nairobi, for the measurements of the "Llandovery Castle" and I am informed that the measurements approximately are as follows:- Length 488ft 3ins. Width 61ft 10 ins. Depth 42ft 6". Tonnage 10,640 tons. The "Llandovery Castle" has since been scrapped.

To answer your queries. (No.1) I have answered in the previous paragraph. (No.2) I enclose rough sketches as the picture appeared to me. The object would only have been about 50 to 100 yards away from the ship. I did not see the object approaching at all, I only saw a star falling until it became a huge searchlight, the light went out and in its place appeared the object exactly as I have sketched. (Not very good work, I am afraid!) The object nearly touched the water and the reflection of the blue and red flames and stars could clearly be seen in the sea.

As far as I remember a sketch of the object was printed in the "Sunday Post" and not the photograph which the passenger took. But a picture was certainly taken of the object in flight, perhaps for the first time? I shall try very hard to get a copy of the "Sunday Post" together with the illustration this evening. I am going to let you have the address of the "Sunday Post" so that it may be useful to you for record purposes, if they should be required.

"Sunday Post" Ltd.
Reata Buildings,
Reata Road,
P.O.Box 626,
NAIROBI. Kenya Colony.

It was not difficult for the "Sunday Post" to find this article, it was found immediately whilst I was telephoning, and the person concerned remembered the article clearly without much explaining. How to get into touch with the passenger who took the photograph I don't quite know, but there were more than a couple of passengers in the plane at the time, and all of them saw the object. I am wondering if a letter from you to Captain Bicknell, quoting the "Sunday Post" and mentioning the interest his article has made in the States, with mention of the "Civilian Saucer Investigation" would help you at all, I believe he must have written somewhere about it, and from him try to get the name of the passengers and addresses who were on that flight - they must be entered somewhere in the Airport Logs which they must surely keep of each flight. His address which should find him :-

Captain Bicknell,
Pilot
East African Airways, Ltd.
P.O.Box 1010,
Nairobi. Kenya.

I shall be leaving Nairobi in December and going to Mombasa which is the port of Kenya, but all mail will be forwarded to me there even if I am not on the spot, mail will take another week to reach me in Mombasa.

One more thing I should like to add is that I had an opportunity of seeing four passenger ships of the "Castle Line" berthed together in Mombasa Harbour and I feel perhaps I have underestimated

the length and depth of the cigar shaped object and it could have been nearly double this size both in depth and length. I had no background to which I could make comparisons but after seeing these four ships lined up, I know the object was much larger than I first thought. I expected to see a falling star go right into the water but when it turned into a huge searchlight, I did not know quite what to think, then the light disappeared and the object replaced the light and it was only visible for a few minutes, about 2 minutes I should think. It appeared just where the light had been shining and I cannot help thinking that this light must have been on the nose of the object, but no front light appeared as it went off, no beam showed as it departed. The huge furnace was a fantastic sight, and again no sound was heard either coming or going. Did not even see it go, it just disappeared and must have been travelling at a great rate. It was most fortunate that the object turned right in front of the ship and this seemed to make it pause a minute or so.

15th October, 1953.

I went to the offices of the "Sunday Post" last evening and I found the article written by Captain Bicknell. I asked if it was possible to buy a newspaper containing the article, but there was not one available. However, I did the next best thing, and copied out the article roughly and I traced the picture of the object which Captain Bicknell drew for the paper. This is the story:-

"THE FLYING SAUCER"
Captain Bicknell's own Story.

Published in the "Sunday Post" February 25th, 1951. NAIROBI (KENYA)

On a clear morning this week, pilot, radio officer, and passengers of an East African Airways Lodestar saw what they took to be a flying machine of unknown type high over Mount Kilimanjaro. What this machine was, where it had come from and where it was bound, no one knows.

Theories that it was a mirage, a meterological balloon or the reflection of a normal aircraft have been checked and cross checked - and fallen flat. Highly coloured reports of the incident have been discredited. But the plain facts related by the crew of the Lodestar are themselves enough to baffle the sceptics.

The Lodestar was on the normal Monday morning service from Nairobi to Mombasa. It left Nairobi West at 7.a.m. with nine passengers. What happened after that is best described in the words of the pilot, Captain Jack Bicknell and his radio officer, Mr. D. W. Merrifield, as told to the Sunday Post on Wednesday.

"At 7.20 a.m.", said Captain Bicknell, "the radio officer drew my attention to a bright object like a white star hanging motionless about 10,000 ft. above Kilimanjaro. My first reaction was to say nothing. We watched it for three minutes. Then we told the passengers about it. One of them had a very powerful pair of binoculars with him and he began to study it. In the meantime we put a radio message through to Eastleigh describing it. Eastleigh asked us to check whether it was a "Met" balloon. I then examined it for several minutes through the binoculars.

NO "PORTHOLES"

"When we first saw it we were about 85 miles from the mountain. Our course took us nearer until we were about 50 miles away from the object.

"Through the glasses I saw a metallic, bullet shaped object which must have been over 200 ft long.

"At one end was a square cut vertical fin. Its colour was a dull silver, and at regular intervals along the fuselage were vertical dark bands.

"Its whole outline was clear and sharp and there was no haziness about it at all.

"I watched closely for any signs of movement. It was absolutely stationary, and remained that way for 17 minutes.

"The passengers took turns with the glasses and two of them were

taking photographs. Then it began to move eastwards, rising as it did so. It disappeared at about 40,000ft.

"We've calculated that in the three minutes of visible movement it covered about 60 miles. That gives you a speed of well over 1000 m.p.h.

"Reports that it had windows or porthols are false, and so is the statement that we saw it rising to about 60,000ft.

"There were no cloud formations about at all. The machine left no vapour trail, and it had no visible means of propulsion.

500 YEARS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

Asked if he had any theory about the nature of the machine, the radio officer, Mr. Merrifield said "If it was a flying machine it was 500 years ahead of anything we have today".

"My impression" said Captain Bicknell "was that it was definitely a flying machine of some kind." "I would like to believe that it was some kind of mirage," added Mr. Merrifield, "but I have never heard of a mirage without cloud, and that wouldn't explain the movement".

If this report had come from a few isolated individuals it would soon be discounted. But it came from two responsible airline officials and nine ordinary travellers. Captain Bicknell took the precaution before landing of asking his passengers to sign a statement verifying his radio report to Eastleigh.

It is undoubtedly the best authenticated of all the flying saucer stories.

THE THEORIES BREAK UP.

Now let us examine some of the more plausible theories put forward to explain the phenomenon.

1. The mirage theory is discounted owing to the absence of cloud and the movement of the mystery machine.

2. A meterorological Department official said that the giant Skyhook balloon used in America - which are the cause of many "saucer" stories - could not reach East Africa, as they burst after 30 hours in the air. In any case there was not even a remote resemblance to a balloon in the machine seen over Kilimanjaro.

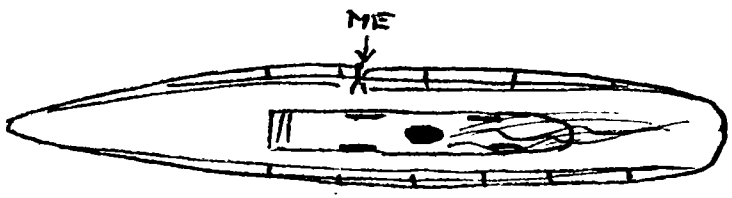
3. The Air France Constellation in the vicinity at the time was moving in a different direction to the "saucer" so the machine could not have been a distorted reflection of an ordinary aircraft.

So, hopes of a "natural" explanation begin to fade. Other theories range from Martian visitors to radio controlled secret weapons.

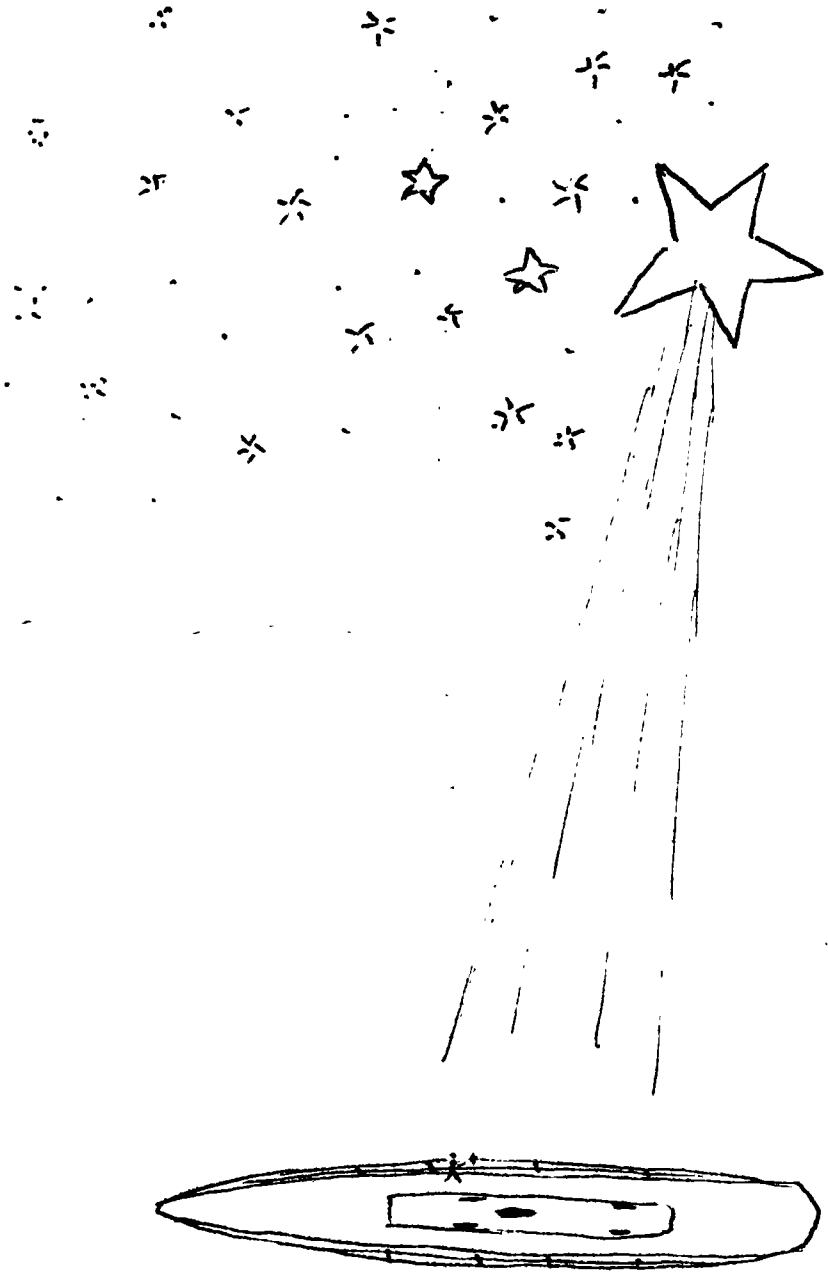
One day we shall know the answer to the flying saucer riddle. Until then any light on the subject would be welcome.

I do hope you will find this article interesting
With kind regards Yours sincerely

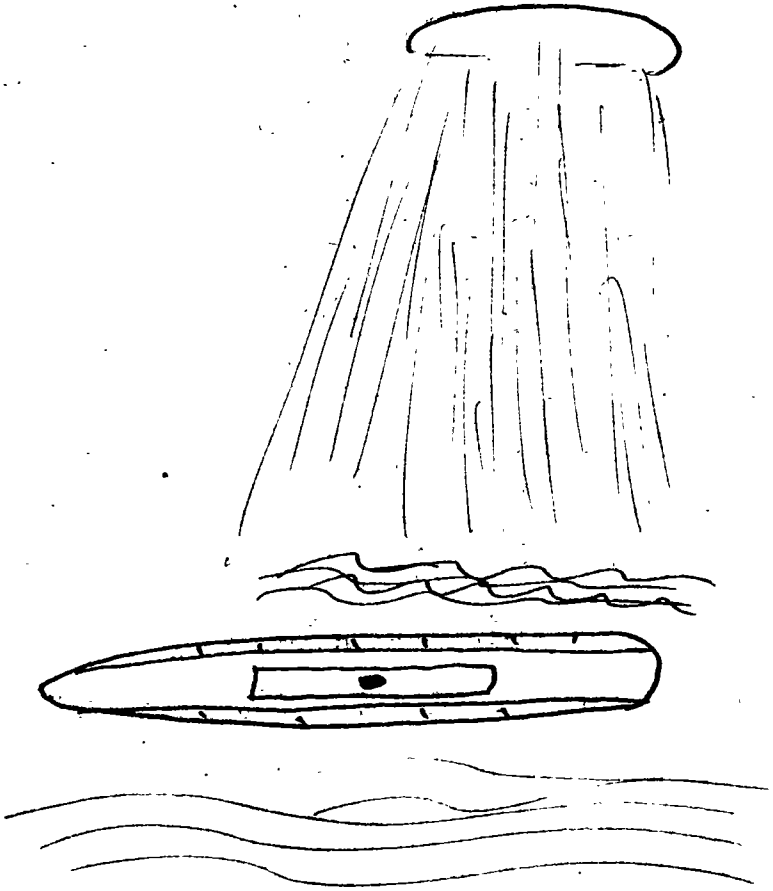
Sketch I



Sketch II



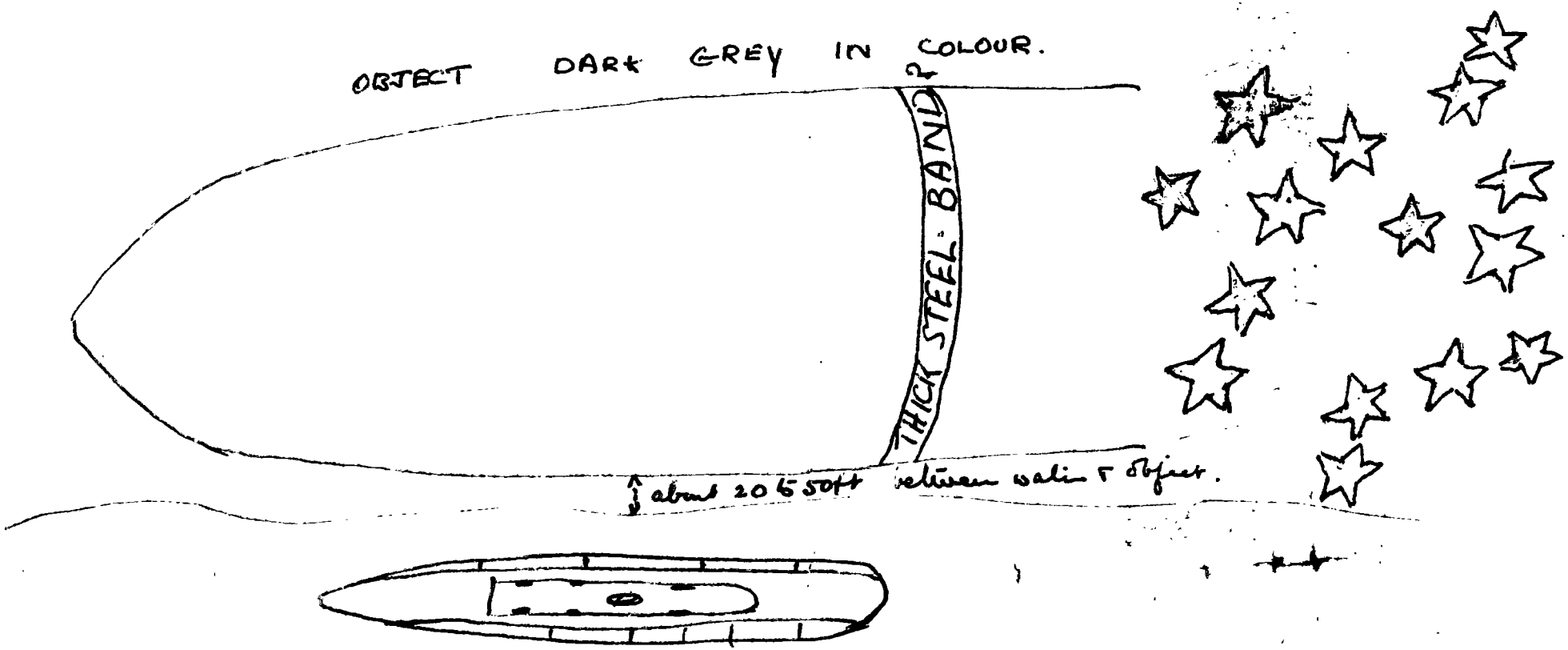
Sketch #1



Sketch 1

BLUE FLAMES.
WERE BRIGHT
ELECTRIC BLUE
COLOUR.

RED FLAMES WERE
BRILLIANT RED.



I traced this from the newspaper. Jill's String cutting

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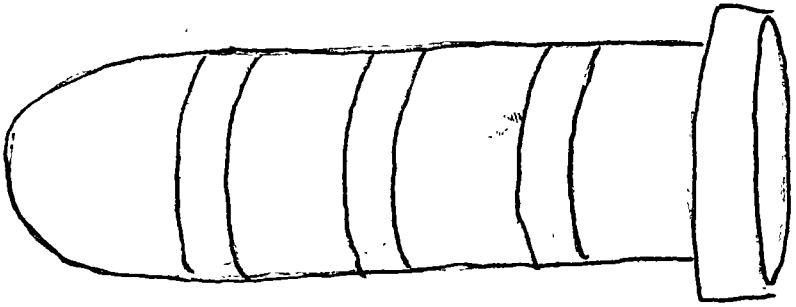

This diagram was prepared from a sketch by Captain Bicknell. Apart from the dark bands on the fuselage there is a lack of detail which makes the phenomenon even more puzzling. The fin at the rear of the machine might indicate some form of jet propulsion.

1951 FEB. 19 KENYA

FLYING SAUCERS SNAPPED

1951

MOMBASA, February 19.

Seven passengers and two members of the crew of an East African Airways aircraft flying from Nairobi to Mombasa signed sworn affidavits today that they saw a flying saucer hovering over Mount Kilimanjaro.

Two American passengers took cine camera pictures with telephoto lenses and another photographed it with a miniature camera. V-a-3-c

One of the passengers, Captain H. B. Fussell, who studied it through powerful marine binoculars, said it was shaped like a sausage and had a series of vertical markings along the side.

When it was first seen its height was estimated to be about 25,000 feet. It then moved vertically to 30,000 feet, hovered a short while and then rose again to 40,000 feet. Later it moved off laterally at "terrific speed."

Cine Film May Show "Saucer"

V-a-3-c

From Our Own Correspondent

MOMBASA, Sunday.

The 11 people in the East African Airways Lodestar who saw a strange object in the sky near Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanganyika, recently, refuse to accept it as one of the cosmic ray balloons which an American scientist has said are the explanation of "flying saucers."

They have signed an affidavit that what they saw was in sight for 17 minutes, hovered motionless for a while and was twice seen to shoot up vertically at great speed. It was twice the size of an airliner and had a fin-like object attached to the rear.

ANOTHER 'PLANE?

Aviation circles here suggest that it may have been a mirage or a reflection of another aeroplane from the snows on the mountain. An official of Air France in Nairobi said a Constellation aircraft of his company left Nairobi early that morning and would have been in the Kilimanjaro area about the time the object was sighted.

Photographs taken from the Lodestar show only the minutest speck. Cine films taken by American passengers have still to be developed.

1951 FEB. 19 KENYA

FEB 19 1951 7;20 -7:37 AM. Mount Kilimanjaro, Kenya Border. S. Lat 3°, Long 37°.
#8 Dazzling object seen hovering in sky 10000 feet above this 19,000 foot peak. Watched from airliner by 11 passengers by binoculars,- it was tube-shaped, with giant hind fin, approximate length 200 feet, with 3 bands or rings around it, but no windows. It hovered 17 minutes, then sped off at approximately 1200 mph leaving no trail.
SOURCE: - SEE MMZ July 1951

1957 FEB 19 KENYA

KILIMANJARO INCIDENT (EDITOR'S NOTE)

SOMETHING HERE SOUNDS FISHY—to say the least. We have heard that East African Airways have, in their possession, affidavits from all passengers aboard the aircraft who viewed the object. To quote from the story under the published picture of the mystery ship appearing in the March 14th, 1951 edition of the "Natal Mercury" (published in Durban, East Africa):

"This picture was taken yesterday by a 'Natal Mercury' photographer while Mr. Ray Overstreet was showing the film of what is claimed to be a flying saucer over Mount Kilimanjaro. On the screen, the object appears about the size of half a crown, but on this newspaper reproduction is seen as only a white pin-prick inside the ring."

A print of this photograph in the "Natal Mercury" is in our possession, but of much too poor a quality to publish. The object (if that is what it is) is a nebulous, dull-grey mass, about the size of a pin-head; perhaps slightly larger.

It seems to be a generally known fact that Ray Overstreet, photographer who took the motion pictures of the object, saw newsreel distribution possibilities in his film and sailed for America. He never arrived, nor was heard of since, it is said.

* * *

THE MOUNT KILIMANJARO INCIDENT* #24

FEBRUARY 19, 1951, DAWNED BRIGHT AND CLEAR at Nairobi, Kenya Colony, East Africa.

At Nairobi West airport, the regular Monday morning Lodestar was readied as usual for its morning flight to Mombasa, and soon passengers filed aboard, little dreaming, any of them, of what was to meet their astounded eyes barely 20 minutes later.

At 7 a.m. exactly with 9 passengers and a crew of 2 aboard, the Lodestar took off.

All went well until 7:20 a.m., when suddenly the radio officer drew the attention of his superior, Captain J. Bicknell, to a bright object like a white star, apparently hanging motionless easily 10,000 feet above Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Captain Bicknell's first reaction, he said later, was to say nothing. The two watched the strange object for 3 minutes, then, as it showed no signs of vanishing, informed the passengers. One began promptly studying the oddity, amazedly through a powerful pair of fieldglasses, whilst the radio officer flashed an excited call to Eastleigh nearby, giving an account and description of the thing.

Eastleigh's suggestion flashed in return was that the object might be a drifting Meteorological balloon, but checking on that possibility, after inspecting the enigmatic object for several minutes, Captain Bicknell found that the more he examined it, the less it could possibly be mistaken for a balloon. It was a dull silver color and marked at regular intervals along the fuselage with vertical dark bands. The entire outline, he found, was unmistakeably distinct; nor, though it appeared to be incredibly distant, was its sharp outline obscured in the least detail by intervening haze.

Captain Bicknell estimated the thing was over 200 feet long, bullet-shaped, and apparently constructed of metal which shone brightly. On first sighting it, the Lodestar was heading roughly towards it, and watched it closely as they approached. Captain Bicknell perceived another detail. The thing possessed a square-cut vertical fin at one end. There were no signs of movement, it was absolutely stationary.

SO IT REMAINED FOR 17 MINUTES.

Passengers of the Lodestar were now taking turns with the fieldglasses, and two of them had commenced taking photographs, when suddenly the enormous thing began to move eastwards, slowly at first, and rising as it did so. Before it reached 40,000ft., at which point it was ultimately lost sight of, the sides of the awesome, whale-like object were seen clearly to be without a break in their smoothness, no windows or portholes relieved the harsh purity of line, no engine mounts or jet pods marred the perfectly streamlined hull.

The day being exceptionally clear, there were no cloud formations in evidence anywhere, and Captain Bicknell calculated that in the three minutes of visable movement, the bullet-shaped object covered 60 miles; that in other words, its speed could have been nothing short of 1,000 m.p.h. during the period of observed flight. It left behind no vapor trail, and to all who saw it, had no visable means of propulsion.

(Cont.)

* * *

(* Reprinted from the May, 1953 issue of THE AUSTRALIAN FLYING SAUCER MAGAZINE (---25¢ each, $1.00 per year---) published by the Australian Flying Saucer Bureau, 3 Ferguson Avenue, Fairfield, N.S.W., Australia.)

DURING AN INTERVIEW SOME DAYS LATER, Captain Bicknell said that his impression was that the unidentified thing was some kind of flying machine, and with this his radio officer, a Mr. D. W. Merrifield, unhesitatingly agreed. A "mirage" was suggested as the possible cause, but the radio officer discounted it. "Mirages are rarely seen without cloud," he stated, "nor would that explain the object's movement." He commented that if the object was a flying machine, it was 500 years ahead of anything we have today.

Nairobi "Sunday Post" the following Sunday said: "If this report had come from a few isolated individuals it would soon be discounted. But it came from responsible airline officials and nine ordinary travellers." It too dismissed both the balloon and mirage theories, and concluded that hopes of a "natural" explanation had begun to fade. Other theories ranged from Martian visitors to radio-controlled weapons.

Fragmentary evidence accrued since then increase the sum total of knowledge but little. U.S. "Life" Magazine early in 1952 published a sketch of the object, which showed it to closely resemble an ordinary lipstick tube lying on its side. More recently, in connection with learning the whereabouts of the photographs taken from Captain Bicknell's plane, the Australian Flying Saucer Bureau learnt that "the only known public photograph of the object shows a blurred spot on the film." A motion picture film taken by another passenger was "quite clear" we learn, but the same reliable source stated, either laconically or ominously, it is hard to tell which, that "the man with the film is supposed to have disappeared."

So the case stands, at present, one of the most puzzling and enigmatic unexplained Saucer Sightings recorded in A.F.S.B. files.

EDITOR'S NOTE

IN REGARD TO THE ABOVE INCIDENT, we received the following reply, to our inquiry, dated 25th October, 1952 from the East African Airways Corporation:

"I have received your letter of 16th October, 1952, but regret that the photographs required by you are not available within the East African Airways Corporation. They were, I believe, taken by a passenger travelling in the aircraft, whose name cannot now be traced.

"I should point out that there has always been considerable doubt as to the truth of the report. The photographs were never published, and after developing, there was no traces of any phenomena on the print. Rumour has it that when they were developed, the chemist obliterated the spots, thinking they were a fault in the negative.

"I am sorry that I cannot be more helpful, but as I have said, the photographs are non existent.

"Yours faithfully, (Cont.)

H. C. E. DOWNES
PUBLICITY OFFICER"

FSR May-June 1963

TWO CLASSIC SIGHTINGS

The *Review* publishes for the first time in its columns two sightings from the past. They will probably be new to many of our readers, but our purpose in reprinting these accounts from the *Australian Flying Saucer Magazine* of May, 1953, is to correct an impression gained by the general public that sightings today are caused by misinterpretations of sputniks, satellites and what are now regarded as conventional spacecraft manufactured by one or other of the powers on earth. The first Russian sputnik, it must be borne in mind, was launched in 1957. Neither Russia nor America had penetrated outer space before that year.

The Mount Kilimanjaro Enigma

FEBRUARY 19, 1951, dawned bright and clear at Nairobi, Kenya Colony, East Africa. At Nairobi West Airport, the regular Monday morning Lodestar was readied as usual for its morning flight to Mombasa, and soon passengers filed aboard, little dreaming, any of them, of what was to meet their astounded eyes barely 20 minutes later. At 7 a.m. exactly, with nine passengers and a crew of two aboard, the Lodestar took off.

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During an interview some days later, Captain Bicknell said that his impression was that the unidentified thing was some kind of flying machine, and with this his radio officer, a Mr. D. W. Merrifield, unhesitatingly agreed. A "mirage" was suggested as the possible cause, but the radio officer discounted it. "Mirages are rarely seen without cloud," he stated, "nor would that explain the object's movement." He com-

Tell your friends about

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