

When using the auditory senses it is not possible to maintain a straight line over any appreciable distance. I have checked this fact by trying to walk along the centre of a straight country road in complete darkness. It is impossible to do this for more than about 50 yards without hitting the edge of the road when conditions are such that the sky cannot be distinguished from the hedgerow. I am assuming that I am a normal subject in this respect.

The auditory directional sense would not appear to depend on acceleration related mentally to the vertical since there is no independent horizon reference. I suggest that it is purely angularly sensitive, e.g. a liquid swirl system working in a horizontal plane, analagous to a compass bowl in which the magnetic element is replaced by a fine antennae system detecting the apparent liquid-rotation in a turn. The sensitivity of such a system is limited by viscosity and surface friction and is of a low order (compare the ease with which giddiness can develop).

These remarks are not essentially scientific since I cannot speak with authority on a matter which is primarily physiological.

From Wilfred Thesiger:

I have travelled on a camel for days in Arabia and the Sudan across flat featureless ground plains. I have found that all camels, when checked, will always bear slowly but persistently off the course in the direction of their homeland—a fact well known to the Arabs. But I have also found that I myself can develop an all but irresistible mental bias in certain directions (on one occasion in the Sudan travelling south I recollect it was towards the east) which is strong enough for me to interfere deliberately with the guide by pulling off in that direction. Had I been by myself, I am convinced I should have deviated very seriously. As I was riding a camel it is unlikely that the cause was a physical one such as coriolis force. I am left wondering whether even a civilized human being retains unconsciously a certain homing instinct which comes into play under such conditions.

A RADAR INSTRUCTION VESSEL

SIR,

Due to my badly worded letter your note in the *Record*, on 'A Radar Instruction Vessel' on page 268, Vol. 2 of the *Journal* is a little incorrect.

My letter to you was to state our agreement with Captain Daragan and to show that the School of Navigation had been thinking on parallel lines. It was not in response to his letter that we bought and started to fit out our Radar Instruction Vessel. We had had the idea for some years and in May 1946 I obtained permission to acquire. The craft was bought in May 1948, twelve months before Captain Daragan's letter appeared.

Yours faithfully,
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Director.

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