FLYING SAUCER REVIEW

TWENTY-FOUR PENCE

SUPPLEMENT 11 AUGUST 1972

CASE HISTORIES



Our artist's impression of the

HOT RECEPTION AT FORT BEAUFORT

see page 1

FLYING SAUCER REVIEW

CASE HISTORIES

Supplement No. 11
August, 1972

Companion journal to the
FLYING SAUCER REVIEW

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Case Histories

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A hot reception at Fort Beaufort

Salvo of shots marks the opening of a South African UFO flap

Charles Bowen

THROUGHOUT the last twenty-five years South Africa has been the scene of sporadic flurries of UFO reports. From time to time an interesting case has attracted universal attention. One recalls the time when the two policemen from Silverton, near Pretoria, saw (September 15, 1965) an unknown object ascend from a "sea of flame" in the centre of the main road between Silverton and Bronkhorstspruit.[1] Then there was the sensational and widely-publicised story of contactee Mrs. Elizabeth Klarer, who claims that on April 7, 1956, she came across a landed "scoutship" on a hilltop in the Mooi River area of Natal, close by the Drakensburg Range: she held that she met, and conversed with, the occupants who took her aboard for a trip.[2]

Never, however, a vigorous, sustained 'flap' until June and July 1972, and then, in the words of our own *Manchester Evening News* of July 26, 1972, which picked up the opening story a month after it happened: "Well what a welcome for a UFO."

Long before the story appeared in the Manchester newspaper, *Flying Saucer Review* had been flooded with a continuous—and very welcome—stream of newspaper accounts from representatives and readers in the Republic of South Africa. The very first of these to come to hand was inserted in the current issue of FSR (July/August 1972). It told how, on the morning of June 26, 1972, farmer Bennie Smith was alerted to the presence of a large glowing and colour-changing object low over his farmlands near the small town of Fort Beaufort in the Eastern Cape Province. He telephoned the local police, and the Warrant Officer-in-charge and a sergeant hastened to the spot: between them the three men loosed off a salvo of 15 shots at the UFO, which finally made off after a sojourn of more than four hours.

We are grateful to our many South African readers who have kept us fully and instantly informed with a great variety of news cuttings on developments in the Fort Beaufort affair and the subsequent 'flap'. We have been promised reports on the recent South African events, but amateur investigators in that vast country are faced with insuperable problems. So for the time being the best that can be offered is the following summary of events digested from the hundreds of news reports that have come in.[3]

Down on the farm

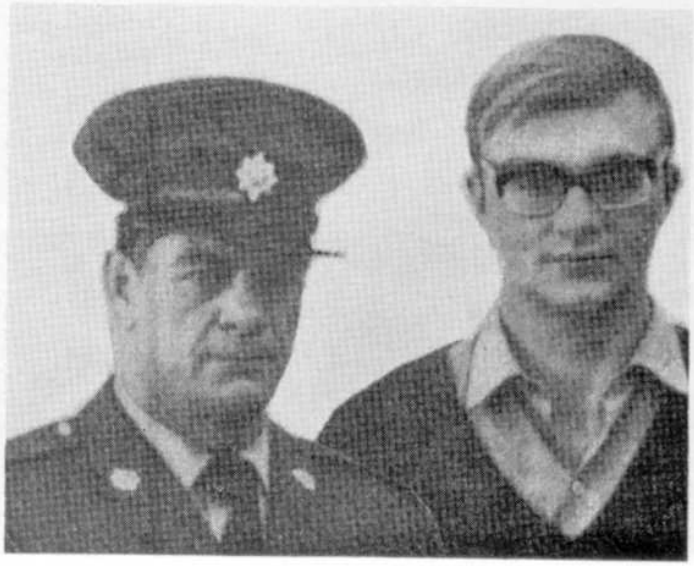
Mr. Bernardus ("Bennie") Smit—as reported in the Cape Town evening newspaper *The Argus* of July 1, 1972, the name of the gentleman referred to in earlier reports as Bennie Smith—is the 40-year-old owner of a plumbing business in East London, Cape Province, who last December purchased the Braeside Farm some 9 miles (14 km.) from Fort Beaufort.

Mr. Smit, who has the reputation of being a good shot, was spending a short holiday at his farm during the last days of June—the South African mid-winter, but no doubt a much warmer season than ours. The morning of June 26 dawned bright and sunny, and a Coloured labourer named Boer de Klerk (his first name is the Afrikaans word for "Farmer") was sent to inspect a dam. At about 8.00 a.m. Boer had the fright of his life when he saw "some ugly thing" in the bush. The labourer



Above: Bennie Smit and his son Rodney

Below: W/O P. van Rensburg *(left)* and Sgt. P. Kitching



returned to the homestead where he reported the incident to his employer.

The labourer told how he had been about to make a fire when he saw "smoke coming from a clump of trees." Thinking it was a trespasser, he called out, and a "shiny object" emerged from the trees and hovered overhead. In some reports this object was described as a "ball of fire."

Mr. Smit was taken by Boer de Klerk to the scene of this incident and saw the UFO still in the locality. It was in the bush,[4] glowing red, and as they watched it turned to bright green and then whitish yellow. It was oval-shaped, with what looked like a whitish star glowing above the right-hand top edge. The farmer didn't stand on ceremony, for he left his labourer to keep watch, and went back home to fetch his 0·303 rifle, and to telephone the police at Fort Beaufort. Returning to the site, Mr. Smit fired at the object which continued to move slowly, and to change colour.

Station commander W/O van Rensburg and Sgt. P. C. Kitching of the S.A. Police hurried to the scene. Early reports, which must have been from the same source, indicated that they arrived at Braeside at 9.00 a.m., but elsewhere Mr. Smit stated that that was the time when he first saw the UFO, after which he telephoned the police. The discrepancy was cleared up when, a few days later, we read that the two police officers arrived at the farm at about 10.00 a.m.

With Mr. Bennie Smit, the policemen kept the object under observation while Boer de Klerk, and three other labourers who had been summoned, were sent forward to attempt to drive it from the dense bush. When the men were out of the line of fire, more shots were fired at the UFO by Mr. Smit and Sgt. Kitching, who first engaged it at a range of 250 metres.[5] Mr. Smit (under cover of the police officers?) advanced to within 10 metres of the UFO, firing twice at it from that point blank range. In all 15 shots were fired, but none of them seemed to have had any disastrous effect on the object.

Here are some of the remarks attributed to members of this Braeside reception committee:

W/O van Rensburg: "After both Mr. Smit and Sgt. Kitching had fired a couple of shots, we saw a round black shiny object emerge from behind the trees . . . it could have been metal, although it changed from black to red and then to yellow."

Bennie Smit: "The eighth shot seemed to hit it, as a thud was heard."

W/O van Rensburg: "The UFO was not a kind of 'fireball'. It was clearly a dark, shiny object, in the centre of a surrounding glow."

Bennie Smit: "Boer, who saw it first, said it was about ¼m. in length, but others judged it to be anything from ¾m. to 2 metres. . . ."

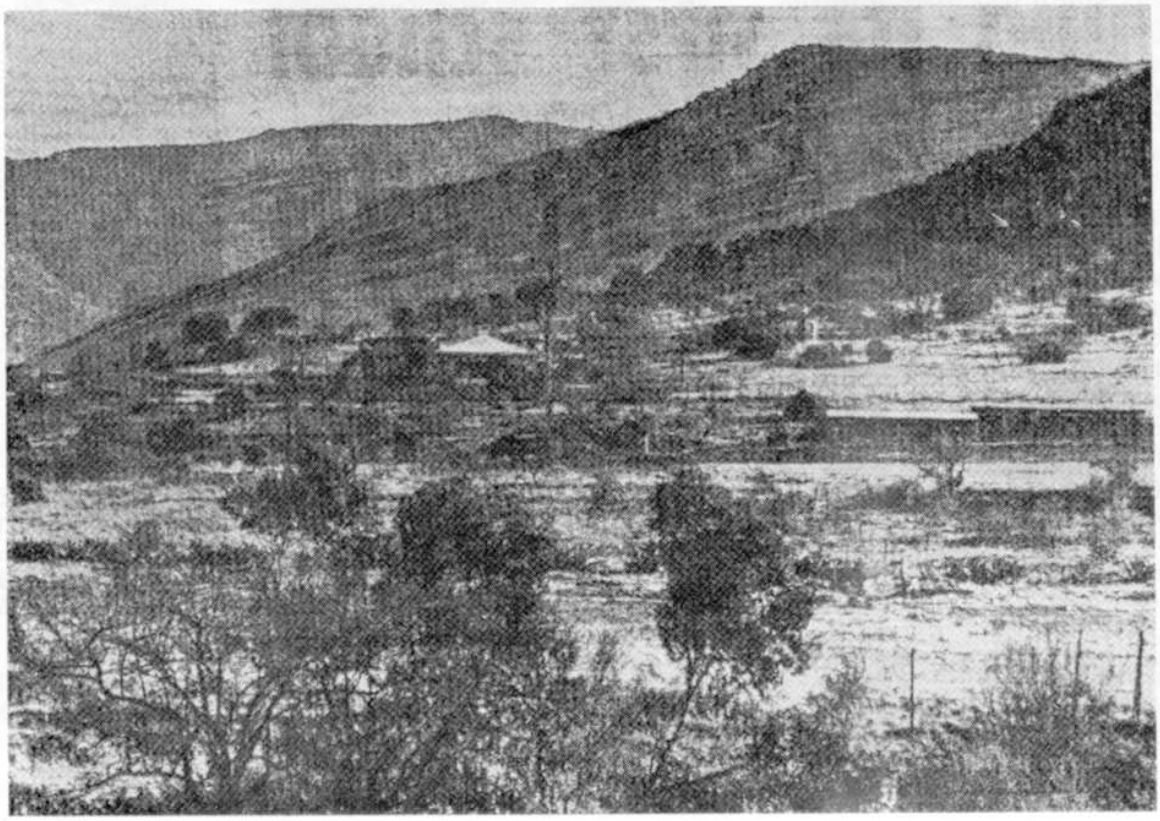
W/O van Rensburg: "Mr. Smit is a sensible and mature person."

Bennie Smit: ". . . as the object disappeared downwards I fired at the 'star'. I'm considered a pretty good shot, and the object no longer changed colours once the star had been hit. It remained a mere darkish gunmetal body."

According to one report, the star changed position relative to the rest of the object after the shot at it.

Humming noise, and marks on the ground

When Mr. Smit moved into the bush to fire his close range shots, the object made a humming, machine-like noise. W/O van Rensburg said that after that the UFO made off to the left and disappeared in the dense, well-nigh impenetrable, undeveloped area known as the Fordyce Bush. It was at about this time that Mr. Smit



Part of Mr. Bennie Smit's farm, from a picture published in *The Argus.* **The farmhouse can be seen in the centre. The UFO was fired on by the farmer and policemen in the thick thorn bush and aloe-covered hills above and to the right of the farmhouse.**

saw a circle of "fist-like imprints" in the soil near where the UFO had been seen to hover.

It was well past midday when the object finally disappeared, so it had stayed around, part of the time raked by a hail of lead, for the best part of four and a half hours, during which time it had been watched from very close range by seven people.

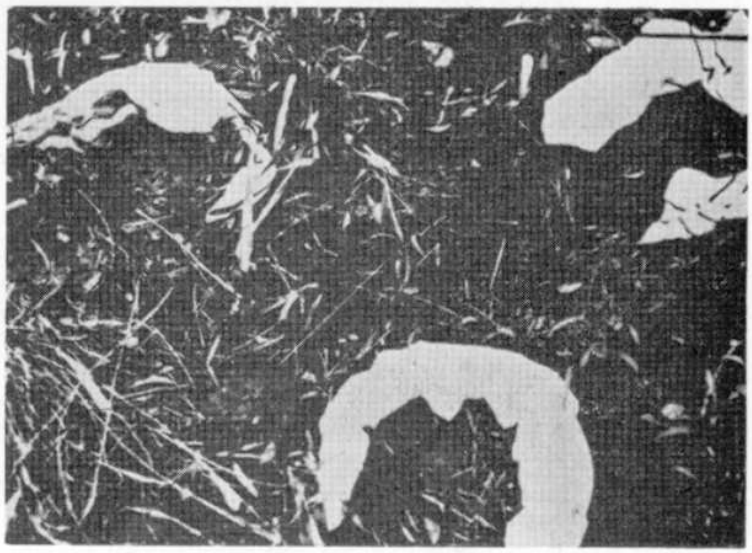
Aftermath

The news of these events was given to the South African public in a series of articles in major newspapers on June 27. Readers were greeted with headlines like: POLICE, FARMER, FIRE AT "FLYING SAUCER" (*The Cape Times*); POLICEMAN TELLS OF "FLYING SAUCER" (*The Argus*); BENNIE BLASTS BASHFUL FIRE-BALL (*Natal Mercury*); FLYING OBJECT SHOT AT (*Johannesburg Star*). The story caught the public imagination, and while further articles appeared giving news of official investigations in a crescendo of excitement, follow-up features on the UFO phenomenon in general were included—some being given a full page—while the cartoonists went to town . . . and the columnists too. For example, "The Idler's" column in the *Natal Mercury* (Durban) of June 28 carried the following item under the heading UFO=YOU FLY OFF!—

> "Incredible, isn't it, that policemen and a farmer could have tried to shoot out of the sky in broad daylight what might have been a spacecraft from a friendly planet?
>
> "But I suppose the good men of Fort Beaufort were only behaving in the traditional South African way of life—what we don't understand, we shoot dead.
>
> "If it was a vehicle from outer space, manned by intelligent beings, do you suppose they now regard the inhabitants of Earth as hostile? Belligerent? Aggressive? Or just plain stupid?"

Investigations

Brigadier A. Vosloo, Divisional Commander of Police for the Eastern Cape, was the leader of the fact-finding mission which descended on the Braeside farm early on June 28. The object of the exercise was to examine and photograph the marks allegedly left in the ground by the UFO, and to obtain plaster casts of them; to collect soil samples for examination and analysis, including tests for fuel or oil residues; to scour the surrounding area of bush for any further tell-tale signs of the UFO's visitations.



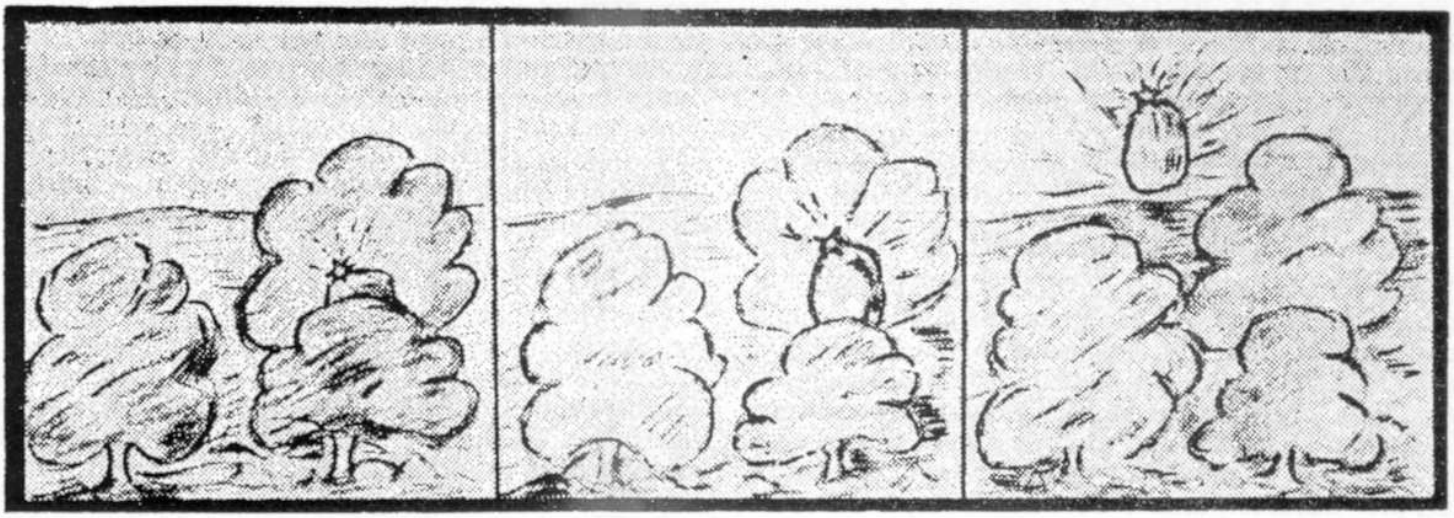
Police picture of the imprints in the soil at Braeside farm; white cloth circling the marks is for identification.

Next day the Brigadier was reported to have said that the marks were not spaced equally. "This," he said, "makes me have doubts about the whole matter."

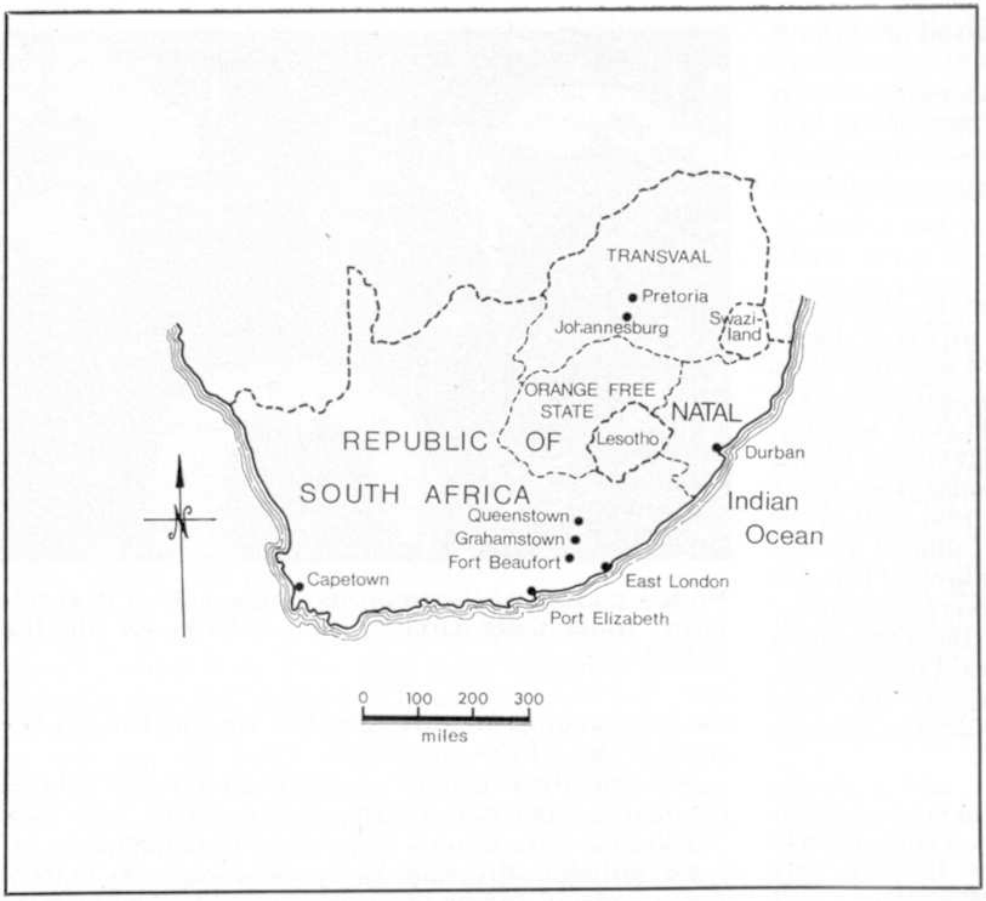
Nevertheless, Brigadier Vosloo went on to say that the *four* people, including two policemen, who had seen the object (obviously he overlooked the three additional labourers who had had to act as 'beaters' in the UFO-flushing operation) were adamant about it, and that their descriptions tallied except with regard to size. The Brigadier's information, so he told reporters, was that **the object was about 3 metres in diameter, looked as if it were made of metal, and changed colour while moving like a spinning top.**

W/O van Rensburg led 12 policemen in a 5 sq. km. search but found nothing.

Meanwhile photographs were taken of the marks, and, after delays, were released by the police for publication. According to the Warrant Officer, there were no other marks in the *damp clay* soil around the



Sketches showing how the UFO "bobbed" from the trees of the bush, attributed to Bennie Smit by the *Rand Daily Mail*, and to the investigator Mrs. E. Verschoor by the *Natal Mercury*.





Bennie Smit with his dog Wolfie: See note 8 (foot of page 8)

indentations, and the soil appeared to be quite untouched, while no tracks of any kind led to the small clearing where the imprints were found. A suggestion was made that the object had three legs arranged in a triangle, and that it had landed and taken off *several times*.

Mrs. E. Verschoor of Fort Beaufort studied the imprints and said: "Thin but clear streaks running from one imprint to another look like pads and seem to indicate a slight sideways sliding movement. At the top, two almost round marks resembling the 'toes' in an elephant's imprint suggest pressure was greatest at that point. Opposite the 'toe' marks there is a raised area."

Police dug out a sod carrying the clearest of the nine imprints, and this was to be sent to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) for analysis.

On June 29 the *Johannesburg Star* reported that Brigadier Vosloo thought that the flying object was an electronically-controlled device and not a supernatural phenomenon, but his reasons for thinking so were not given.

Tongue-in-cheek warning

Whatever the object was, Professor Arthur Bleksley, former director of the Johannesburg Planetarium, stated publicly that it is dangerous to shoot at UFOs. They might retaliate with something more dangerous than a gun. Then, just as he was becoming interesting, he switched to scepticism: why, he asked, should they travel millions of miles just to land at obscure places like Fort Beaufort, and to be shot at by policemen?[6]

The Chief Deputy Commissioner of the South African Police, Lieutenant-General Danie Bester, performed a tricky side-stepping-cum-double-shuffle manoeuvre on June 30 when he announced that there was probably a "very simple" explanation of the Fort Beaufort UFO. He did not suggest what the simple explanation might be, and declined to discuss the contents of Brigadier Vosloo's report. Then, when questioned about the marks in the ground, replied darkly: "The least said about the matter, the better." One wonders why he bothered to say anything, for he only contrived to make the mystery more mysterious.

More reports

On July 4 South Africans read in their newspapers that a UFO (the return of *the* UFO, some suggested) had been seen over Fort Beaufort, that the police had been alerted, that W/O van Rensburg had got out of bed, looked out and thereafter announced that *in view of the official doubts cast on the first incident it wasn't worth the bother of investigating*. That object was seen by a crowd of people on Sunday, June 2, a saucer-shaped 'unstar-like' object which passed from the direction of Braeside towards Grahamstown in a flash of red, blue, green and yellow. It also gave forth a constant ray of light and "appeared to be landing."

While that *could* have been how an aircraft, with navigation and landing lights, might have appeared to distant onlookers, the same could not be said about another, and corroborating, Fort Beaufort report. This was made by the municipal commonage ranger, the reserved and cautious-minded Mr. R. L. Brown. He stated on the morning of Monday, July 3, that on the previous evening, at 7.15 p.m., he had seen the UFO, once again in the area of the Fordyce Bush on the farm

Braeside. At that time he was visiting the farm Argyle. With him were Mrs. Eileen Meiring of Cape Town, her 14-year-old son and his own stepson, Billy Tidbury. From a distance of 700 yards they watched the colour-changing object for some 20 minutes. When it changed from yellow and blue to white, the light became "blinding": it then turned red. It appeared to be a flat triangular shape, and seemed to have a tail. Mr. Brown thought it might have been about 7 feet long. It bobbed up and down, and hovered over the bush, lighting up the area. Suddenly it moved off towards Grahamstown, "going like mad."

Mrs. Alicia Smit, wife of Bennie, also reported seeing the coloured object at the same time.

When, on Monday, July 3, yet another object was reported in the direction of Braeside (no time was given in the reports I have seen—C.B.) and looking like a satellite, but with the familiar changing colours, the Fort Beaufort Town Council adjourned its meeting, and the Mayor, two councillors, photographers and curious sightseers drove out in a convoy to the farm to see for themselves: they saw nothing, it seems.

More quotes

The *Natal Mercury* of July 10, 1972, published a report by Lynne Cooper, who had been sent to stay in Fort Beaufort, to interview the characters involved, and to size up the situation. Miss Cooper writes that too many people had seen the UFO for the townsfolk to remain indifferent. Some took the view that it was unnatural, and controlled by some power; others that it was a craft, with visitors, from outer space; a few alarmists talked wildly of spies. She added "And when you hear practical, sane men and women indulging in talk of flying objects, you realise this is no joke, and begin to think twice about your own theories of a clever, electronically-minded practical joker." Other quotes:

Boer de Klerk (when asked by Miss Cooper what he called out on first seeing the UFO): "I shouted 'who is making fire on boss Bennie's farm?' " . . . (no answer, so he moved nearer: the thing was bobbing up and down) . . . "I saw the thing with my own two eyes. I swear I never saw anything like it."

W/O van Rensburg (discussing criticism in the Press of his action in ordering Sgt. Kitching to shoot at the UFO): "We did not take firearms to the farm Braeside. I did order Sgt. Kitching to shoot it though, with a 0·303 rifle belonging to Mr. Smit." (Later, when asked how he could shoot at something if he didn't know what it was): "The matter is closed."

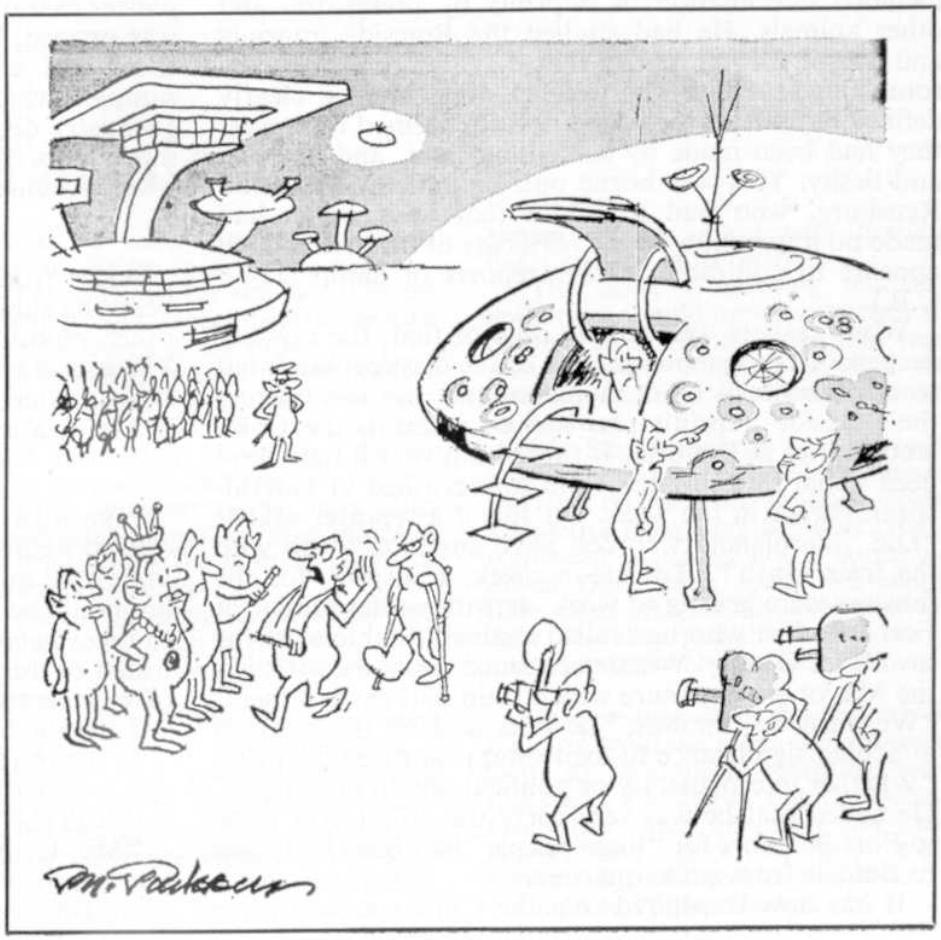
Mr. P. Labuschagne (Mayor of Fort Beaufort, and an ex-policeman who supported the police action): "They didn't use the right rifle, though. They should have used an FN rifle. I'm telling you, if those boys had brought that thing down, they'd be heroes. I saw the thing during the day, and I can tell you it is no joke."

From the descriptions of all the witnesses, which tally, it seems the object must have been barrel-shaped.

Whatever the shape, Bennie Smit's mother-in-law, Mrs. A. Engelbrecht, is convinced it was sent there from Russia, and as will be seen, her concluding thrust was unanswerable . . .

From *The Argus* of June 29. The caption reads:

'It's inhabited by a pastoral but warlike tribe, and you can forget about dialogue'.



IMPORTANT NOTICE

To avoid inflicting unnecessary pressure on our temporary distribution arrangements during the absence overseas for four months of our distribution secretary, Mrs. Enid Guinness, it has has been decided to delay the publication of **FSR Case Histories Supplement 12** until **after** *Flying Saucer Review* for November-December 1972. Hoping thus to side-step the problems brought about by Christmas mail, we apologise for any inconvenience this may cause our readers.



From the *Natal Mercury* of June 28, 1972. The caption reads:

"When it turned black, instead of shooting at it, why didn't you ask it for its pass book?"

Mrs. A. Engelbrecht: "They have probably got a picture of me, too."

The mystery becomes a "classic"

Early in July the papers carried a report by Mr. C. S. Kingsley, a lecturer in geology at Fort Hare University who had been Government geologist in the 1967 Antarctic Expedition. His field studies, he said, had included examination of imprints by prehistoric and other animals. He had studied the Braeside imprints and was of the impression that they had been made by something metallic. The parallel streak marks, clearly defined in parts of the deep imprints, seemed to suggest they had been made by something hard, and not soft and fleshy. This was borne out, he said, by W/O van Rensburg, who had told him that their boots had made no impression on the *hard clay* of the area (which appears to contradict earlier reports of damp clay—C.B.).

While readers were taking note of that, the mystery deepened. The symptoms were of the classical kind that so often be-devil UFO investigations: the sod bearing the Braeside imprints was lost en route to the CSIR laboratories at Pretoria. It turned out that it may have been aboard an ill-fated train that crashed at Norvalspruit earlier in the week. On July 7 a reporter asked: "Did 'interplanetary forces' have anything to do with the train crash?" Tongue-in-cheek, I suspect, for the funsters were getting to work, as witness the Mayor of Fort Beaufort who had railed against 'doubters' of the town's UFO story. When questioned about the samples, the Mayor was not sure which train had carried them: "We must be cautious," he said, and on the score of attaching significance to their disappearance he replied, "Whether interplanetary or political, we do not know." He added that he was very sorry the object ever came to Fort Beaufort for "these people" had been laid open to ridicule from some quarters.

It has now transpired that the CSIR received *some* samples. In the *Rand Daily Mail* of July 13 we read that two 'canned fruit bottles', one containing soil from the Braeside site, the other 'unpolluted' soil from elsewhere on the farm, were opened by physicist K. Kröger in the presence of a CSIR Public Relations Officer and Dr. Jan Burger, the Deputy Director of the National Physical Research Laboratory, and also a group of pressmen. The PRO explained that they had expected a plaster cast of some kind of imprint, but when the box was opened, lo and behold, two jars! Mr. Kröger said there was a distinct difference in smell in the two samples which were to be analysed in the spectrochemistry division of the CSIR. "We are not expecting much from it" he said, and to date we have not learned of the results.

The wave progresses

Apart from the Fort Beaufort sightings which have been the subject of this article, there have been several other reports from different places in South Africa. These, and any other developments in regard to the Fort Beaufort incidents, will be dealt with in the next issue of *Flying Saucer Review* (September/October 1972).

Long distance phone call

Like many other UFO witnesses who have become central figures in a big 'flap', the trigger-happy Bennie Smit tired quickly of the limelight. He felt insulted that he should be disbelieved, and gave one "final interview" to the *Sunday Times* (of South Africa) which was published on July 2nd. Earlier, and probably in a moment of exasperation, he had said that thereafter he would *sell* information to reliable people only.

In his interview Mr. Smit said that he knew what he had seen with his own eyes, and that he was glad he'd called in the police as witnesses.

"My telephone" he continued "has been ringing incessantly with calls from all over the country. The night before last I received a call from America. I was

asked four questions, and those questions convinced me there is something in this.[7] No, I won't reveal the nature of the questions. What is more, I am convinced that this thing is still about.[8] The other night I heard the same whirring sound, and it was terrific. But I didn't even go out and look. What's the use, nobody believes me."

* * * * *

Notes and comments

[1] See Philipp Human's report in FSR Vol. 11, No. 6 (November/December 1965). Also the report on an investigation, by Edgar Sievers and E. R. Pitlo in FSR Special Issue No. 1, *The Humanoids* (this item does not appear in the Spearman and Regnery hard cover editions).

[2] Elizabeth Klarer and her claims were re-introduced in some South African newspapers towards the tail-end of the publicity for the Fort Beaufort incidents and investigations. Reader K. C. Bayman deplored this because, as usual, it "clouded the issue." Indeed, there had been an undercurrent of banter in some of the later press articles, and, presented in the way it was, the Klarer intervention (e.g. "I've been in that flying saucer says Elizabeth" and "Pilot is scientist from planet in the Alpha Contauri [sic] system" were headlines that greeted readers of the Durban *Sunday Tribune* of July 9) gave everyone the chance of a good belly laugh.

[3] Newspapers consulted for the period June 27, 1972, to July 17, 1972; individual items too numerous to list as articles appeared almost every day:
The Rand Daily Mail, Johannesburg
The Star, Johannesburg
The Cape Times
The Argus, Cape Town
The Natal Mercury, Durban
The Pretoria News
The Daily Dispatch, East London
The Daily News
The Sunday Times (S. Afr.)
The Sunday Tribune
The Natal Witness
Our thanks are extended to the following readers for the wonderful way they kept us informed with up-to-date press clippings, all carefully marked and with explanations and notes wherever they thought necessary:
Philipp Human, Frank Morton, E. R. Pitlo, Mrs. Myra Fortes, Kenneth C. Bayman, Miss J. S. Dumville-Lees, Michael Imber, Ivan Clark, E. R. Turnbull, N. J. Ramsey, Lionel Friedberg, G. D. B. Williams.
Thanks too to South African friends in London for their help.

[4] Miss Dumville-Lees writes to remind us that the "Bush" is thick and continuous, and "anything from 4ft. to 20ft. high, with a good sprinkling of 'prickly pear' and other thorny growth."

[5] South Africa recently went 'metric', but it will be seen that some people are not yet out of the habit of yards, feet and inches.

[6] It is strange that almost everyone should jump to the conclusion, without a shred of real evidence, that these things are interplanetary. The Bleksleys of this world *assume* that this is what we think, but *know* we're wrong. If we were to ask them to consider the possibility that an incomprehensible influence, which could be extraterrestrial, was acting on, and inducing certain people, either singly or when grouped together, to see strange objects and stranger creatures, they would *know*, without further consideration, that we are mad. If we dared ask them whether or not the visitations could be from an ultraterrestrial source, they would probably mutter "black magic" and wish, secretly, that they could have us boiled in oil. And why? Because "something tells them" we are wrong?

[7] As the newspaper came out on Sunday, July 2, the inter-

(*Concluded at foot of page 8*)

Fort Beaufort Tailpiece

WHEN studying the following item from the *Natal Mercury* of July 10, 1972, our readers will grasp the significance of Brigadier Vosloo's "doubts about the whole matter," of General Bester's admonition to the effect that "the least said [*about something with a 'simple explanation'*] the better," and of W/O van Rensburg's refusal to investigate further reports at Fort Beaufort:

"The UFO which has been sighted dozens of times in the past two weeks has possibly had its revenge on Bennie Smit—the farmer who shot at it and vowed to capture it.

"Two explosions echoed through the valley near here early on Saturday morning, minutes after Mr. Smit sighted the UFO again. Later he found a water reservoir on his farm had been shattered.

"The reservoir, with a diameter of about eight metres and stoutly made of bricks and cement, held thousands of gallons of water. Large chunks of masonry lay up to 20 metres away.

"Police visited the site, but it is not known if they connect the damage with the eerie events in the valley.

"Yesterday, headed by an officer from Grahamstown, they instructed Mr. and Mrs. Smit not to give any more information about the UFO or allow anyone on the farm.

"Fort Beaufort police have also consistently refused to give information concerning the farm or UFOs to the Press or public.

"As a result of police investigations, Mr. and Mrs. Smit have delayed their return to their home in East London for a week.

"The couple and their children were on the farm for the school holidays.

"Some local people are getting jittery about the 'flying saucer' which started off as a joke but has become increasingly more difficult to explain.

"Africans in the valley are afraid to leave their huts at night as stories spread of the object with flashing lights and fire in its 'belly.'

"The belief is growing that the authorities should now act urgently to discover what the object is. It has been seen so many times now that the credibility of all the witnesses cannot be doubted.

"Mr. Smit is the man who has been nearest to it as it hovered just above the trees on his farm, Braeside, seven kilometres from Fort Beaufort. He is convinced that it is not a laughable object from outer space containing little green men, or any aberration of light. His theory is that it is a man-made remote-controlled vehicle."

When writing about the distance of the farm from the town, the newsmen seem to have been confusing their miles and kilometres, but the police, meanwhile, were obviously not confusing their priorities, and were taking a great interest in the affair.

Credit to **Philipp Human.**

Car levitation on the Blackfoot Reserve

W. K. Allan

THE following is a transcript of a taped interview with Wilton Raw Eater, and his wife, regarding an unusual levitation which is said to have taken place on the Blackfoot Indian Reserve near Gleichen, Alberta, Canada, on May 14, 1971. Mr. Raw is driver of the local school bus.

These people were very reluctant to speak until we played them the tape of the interview with Barbara Smyth about her Craigmyle experience. In passing I should add that it is apparently Mr. Raw's custom to visit the bar at the end of the working week.

Mr. Raw: "Well that's pretty hard to start with. Well . . . I went to the bar, had a few beers, and when I start coming home it was night like . . . then I saw these four houses just up the hill here, and as soon as we passed the houses, all of a sudden we seen this bright light like, just hit us like lightning."

Allan: "Was it ahead of you, or to one side?"

Mr. Raw: "It was sort of on the right side of the car, you know. It just happened for a few seconds, and the car . . . we didn't notice it till after, oh, about a few yards, and the wife told me: 'the car's off the ground.' I kept steering the car while we stayed on the side of the road and went for about a quarter of a mile . . . it didn't bother me none. Had my lights on. All of a sudden my car hit the ground . . . I could feel the wheels when they hit the ground, and we just drove home right away and went to my brother's place (where we) talked to his wife about it. I waited for my brother and I told him about it."

Allan: "You say you kept steering the car. How if you turned the wheel? Just kept to the centre of the road, did it?"

Mr. Raw: "Oh, yes."

Allan: "You didn't steer it to either side?"

Mr. Raw: "No, I had my steering steady like, you know. Like I said before, I didn't steer it actually; I was just holding my steering (wheel) when I stay in the centre of the road (from), just before going down the hill until we hit the gravel road again on this hill coming down there. Well it didn't actually scare me then, but the wife must have been scared."

Allan: "Could you tell by the headlights on the road ahead that the car wasn't in the normal position?"

Mr. Raw: "Well actually the car was running . . . was going about 40-45 (mph). I was looking at the speedometer sometimes, but it didn't bother me, like you know."

Allan: "But you still feel sure the car was up?"

Mr. Raw: "Oh yes, you could tell it."

Allan: "Because you looked out the window?"

Mr. Raw: "I was looking down the side you know."

Allan: "Did it feel any different? You didn't feel the little bumps?"

Mr. Raw: "I didn't feel nothing, just floated like."

That completed the interview with Wilton Raw Eater, and his wife now kindly allowed me to ask her a few questions.

Allan: "Now Rosalin, Mrs. Raw Eater, could you tell me what you saw, you noticed it first didn't you?"

Mrs. Raw: "Yes, I noticed it because we have rough roads here. At first I didn't really care, I thought first he was just speeding because he always speeds. But this time it was just like driving a new car, and our car isn't that new; could feel the bumps with it, but then I looked down and the car was off the ground."

Allan: "How high do you think it was off the ground?"

Mrs. Raw: "Oh, about two feet, or something like that.

Allan: "How long do you think it stayed that way; can you tell?

Mrs. Raw: "Well I was real scared, I couldn't very well remember."

Allan: "Did you notice the bump when it was back on the road? There was no mistake about that?"

Mrs. Raw: "Yes, we can tell when we're on our gravel roads, especially the roads we've got, they're real bad.

Allan: "Now this light, did it continue with you all the time you were off the ground?"

Mrs. Raw: Yes, it did until it . . . it just went off.

Allan: "The light went off and then your car went down."

Mrs. Raw: "Then I told him to drive a little faster so we could get home. I wanted to come home to my kids because I thought that was the last time I was going to see them."

Allan: "You must have been very frightened."

Mrs. Raw: "Yes, it really scared me, so we took the kids in the car and I told him: 'Let's go over to your brother's' and that's when he went over to his brother's place."

FORT BEAUFORT. (*continued from page 7*)

view probably took place, at the latest, on June 30, in which case "the night before last" would have been June 28. As E. R. Pitlo observes, that was pretty quick, even in this day and age, for someone in America to learn of the incident, to seek out Bennie Smit's telephone number, and to call him!

[8] So apparently was Mr. Smit's dog Wolfie, for we read in *The Argus* of July 8 that the dog disappeared for a week after the first sighting on June 26. Wolfie is a devoted animal which never leaves its master's side, and which has been on many hunting trips with him. But, as *The Argus* says, the 'Thing' has obviously upset him.

UFO and "Auto-stop" at Belchar's Bar

Geoffrey Coxon

THE incident described below took place at Belchar's Bar on the night of Tuesday, May 25, 1971. Belchar's Bar, near Ibstock, is a tiny village situated on the A447 road, about eight miles to the north of Hinckley in Leicestershire.

The witness was Mrs. Eunice Rose, of 26 Welwyn Road, Hinckley. Aged 36 at the time, she is a housewife who has three children of her own, and who is also a foster mother. She states that she has read no books or magazines on UFOs, and has no knowledge of other incidents similar to her own. During an interview at her home on Sunday, May 30, 1971, she was found to be puzzled, but eager to learn the true nature of the things she experienced.

Our contributor signs his report as "Investigations Officer—NICAP/GB" and we understand that the initials stand for *National Investigation Committee for Aerial Phenomena/GB*, and that the group, which is directed by Mr. D. C. Samson of 67 Wildmoor Road, Shirley, Solihull, Warwickshire, is not connected with the well-known, and very much older American organisation, NICAP, of Washington DC. The British group publish the quarterly *NICAP Journal*.—EDITOR.

The incident

On the evening of May 25, 1971, Mrs. Rose had been visiting friends at the village of Odstone, near Ibstock, and at 10.45 p.m. she drove away from their house in her 1956 Austin A30 car to return to Hinckley. The weather was not good, and she recalled that at that time it had just stopped raining.

She was travelling along the country road between Odstone and the junction with the A447 at Belchar's Bar when, about half a mile from the junction (point A on the map), she saw, through the windscreen, a large glowing light directly ahead of her, but still some distance away. At first she thought it was the headlights of a lorry coming towards her, but no vehicle passed, and she wondered if there was a car in a ditch with its lights shining upwards. However, she came across nothing like that, and thought no more about it. It was after she had turned right towards Hinckley at the Belchar's Bar junction that she realised something strange was happening.

She had driven only about 100 yards in the new direction (point B on the map), when her transistor radio, which was operating independently of the car, began to fade. She turned up the volume, but this had no effect, and the sound died away completely.

She then noticed that the car's headlights, which were switched to full beam, had dimmed considerably and that the vehicle, which should still have been accelerating away from the Belchar's Bar junction, was gradually losing power. At the same time she became aware of the close proximity of a large light to her left out of the front off-side window. Although at this time she was depressing the accelerator pedal, the engine would not respond normally, but continually "coughed" and "sputtered" till the car came to a stop just past the junction with the road to Nailstone Grange (point C on map; see also photograph 1).

The engine did not cut out completely. "It was running very slowly and unevenly," said Mrs. Rose, "and when I pressed the accelerator pedal, the engine just coughed and sputtered again. I was confused. I could see this light to my left out of the front passenger window and my first reaction was to reach for my cigarettes—lying on the front passenger seat. It was then that I noticed the whole interior of the car was gradually becoming lit up."

She said the light was extremely close, about 30 yards away, and was moving quite slowly towards her. As the light moved closer to her the interior of the car became increasingly brighter; the light then moved directly above her car. At that point she could clearly see her cigarette packet, and on glancing about her she saw that the area round about the car was very strongly bathed in light, the colour of which she likened to moonlight.

Mrs. Rose estimated that by then the time was 10.50 p.m.

At no time during the incident did the witness notice any change in temperature in the car, nor did she smell any unusual odour.

As the light moved over her and away to her right, she noticed how the interior of the car, and other features such as the hedge by the side of the road, were gradually lost again to the darkness, but she could not see any sort of beam of light extending down from the light, nor did it appear to cast any glow on to the countryside as it moved away. "It just emitted a light which seemed to light up me and the immediate surrounding area as it went over me, but it didn't appear to light up everything else as it went over everything else. Whether this was just the fact that I was beneath it . . .?"

Mrs. Rose described the light (as she persistently termed it) as being like a flat circular disc and of moonlight colour over all. Describing it further, she said it was "saucer shaped" and like a "huge plate shape." It was of solid appearance and had a well-defined shape, but there were no markings or any noticeable projections. On drawing it she could only sketch the shape.

At first she had difficulty in assessing its size and compared it to a huge Moon. However, when comparing its height above the ground to something a little higher than that of a nearby tree (approx. 36 feet), she conceded that the disc, from that height, would have covered the entire width of the road from hedgerow to hedgerow (approx. 15 yards; see photo 2).

The "disc" moved slowly and smoothly, and at no time was any sound audible above that of the car's engine which was continually running. It was estimated to have moved 100 yards away over a field to her right before the headlights and the transistor radio began to



Photograph 1. Mrs. Rose's 1956 Austin A30 car at the spot where it came to a stop just past the junction with the road to Nailstone Grange.



Photograph 2. Looking south at the same spot; photograph shows the tree and the width of the road with which Mrs. Rose made comparisons of the "disc's" size, and its height above the ground.

pick up again. When she again depressed the accelerator pedal, the engine coughed and sputtered a few times, then responded normally. "Time seemed to stand still," said Mrs. Rose, "but I recall that when the radio started to fade, a record on the 'Night Ride' program was just beginning. When the radio came back on, the same record was just finishing. When the light moved away to my right I lit a cigarette, of which I had smoked about half by the time the radio, headlights, and the performance of the engine, returned to normal."

Once the car was operating again she resumed her driving, but although a little nervous she had no difficulty in operating the vehicle. As she drove away she occasionally glanced over her shoulder at the light which was soon lost to sight moving towards the south-west. She agreed that she was a little frightened, and at the point when the light moved directly above her car, she did experience the chilling sensation of the hair on the back of her neck bristling up, but said she was by no means terrified. She added that her nervousness and fear persisted, but that once the light had gone, all these manifestations, including the chilling sensation, disappeared.

All Mrs. Rose wanted then was to get home as quickly as possible, to have an explanation for what she saw, or to hear from anyone who might have witnessed anything similar that night. There were no other vehicles on the road at the time, in fact she could not recall seeing another vehicle along the same route until she had arrived at Hinckley. "I think the first vehicle I saw

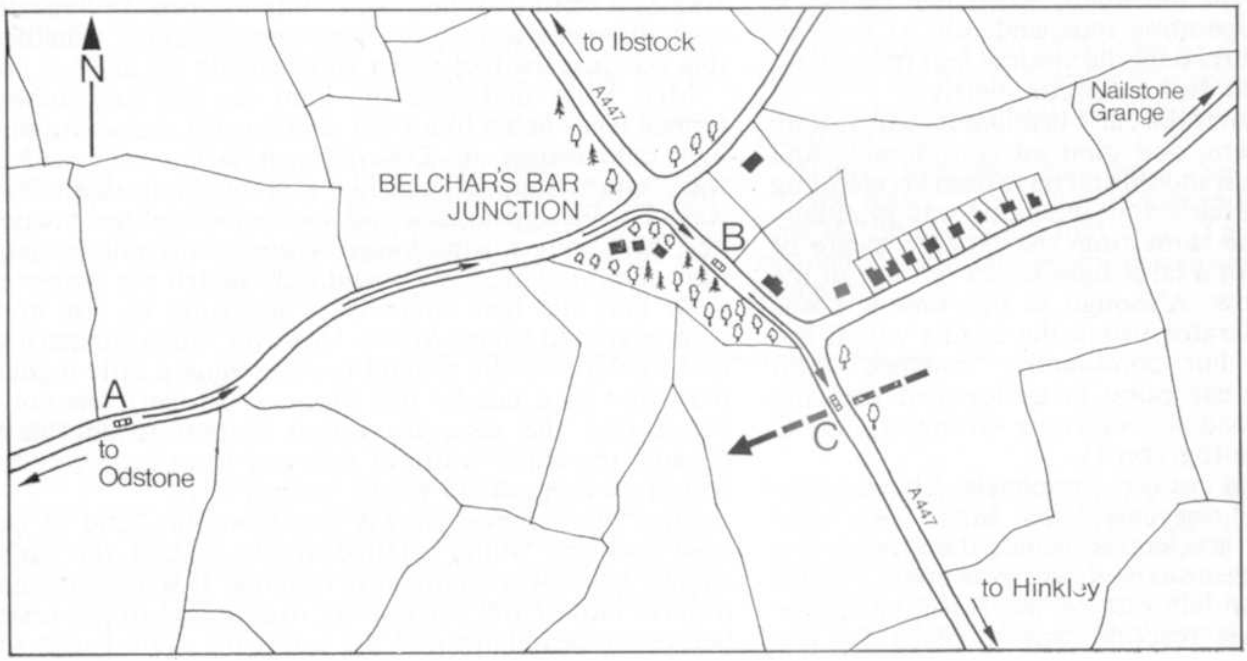


Figure 1. The village, based on O.S. maps SK4008 and SK4108 The dotted line shows the direction followed by the glowing object

was when I got to Lathams Garage in Hinckley, when I had to stop at a junction to let a lorry go by. I was in a hurry but I wouldn't risk nipping in front of him."

From Mrs. Rose's description of its flight path, the light should have moved close to, and almost parallel to a row of houses at Belchar's Bar which are aligned along the road to Nailstone Grange (see Fig. 1). Checks at these and other houses established that at the time of the incident, the occupants were either at work (on the night shift), watching TV, or had retired to bed. None of them however had seen anything unusual, or noticed any flickering or dimming of the house lights, nor had they noticed any interference with the TV.

Again, from the description of flight path, the light, if it kept to the same course, should also have passed over the neighbouring villages of Odstone, Congerstone, and Twycross. After a restless night, Mrs. Rose next day telephoned Mr. and Mrs. George Evans of the "Woodlands," Odstone, the friends whom she had visited that night, to find out whether they had seen anything unusual. She learned that a few minutes after she had left, Terry Evans, their 10-year-old son, had seen a light through his bedroom window which he assumed to be a car approaching up the drive. He told his mother, but no car arrived.

Other reports

Mrs. Rose also made an enquiry in the *Leicester Mercury*, which carried a report on the incident the following evening.* Following this, and another report in a local newspaper, Mrs. Rose received a letter from 13-year-old Steven Freary, of 1a Tudor Road, Hinckley. He wrote that on that same night of Tuesday, May 25, 1971, he was returning home by car with his father along Coventry Road, Hinckley, when he noticed what he called a "thing" high in the sky through the front passenger window. He asked: "What's that, Dad?" but his father was not interested for he replied: "I don't know; I'm driving." The car at this point was just passing the North Field Road junction, and the time was approximately 10.45 p.m.

Steven lost sight of the "thing," which he described as being orange in colour, round and with a halo around its edge, when the car turned left into Trinity Lane. However he saw it once more over in the direction of the Electricity Board building (East) when the car was approaching the junction with Bond Street (A47). "The Thing," he wrote, "then seemed to go North East then North towards Ibstock way."

Note

* See "World Round-up", p. 31 of FSR, Vol. 17 No. 4, July/August 1971.

Down on Yarnold's Farm

News from Kempsey, New South Wales

Eileen Buckle

SINCE the Kempsey flap of last April, Patricia Riggs, Associate Editor of the *Macleay Argus* has been faithfully keeping us informed of the latest UFO events in the area. There have been sporadic sightings these last few months, but to quote her own words, it would take a landing to cap last year's performance.

I was particularly interested to learn that there have been continuing phenomena at Yarnold's farm, near Collombatti, which was mentioned in my previous article on the Kempsey flap* as being a seeming focal point of UFO activity. The *Macleay Argus* of January 18, 1972, relates how a visitor to the farm was terrified on the morning of Saturday, January 16,, by a UFO which moved towards her as she walked out of the house.

Mrs. Shirley Yarnold of Port Moresby, New Guinea, her husband Lyle and family were staying with Mr. and Mrs. Peter Yarnold at the time. Her daughter, Debbie, told the *Argus* reporter that her mother had left the house at about 3.30 a.m. and had seen, apparently near a barn 40 feet away, a brilliant white light about 18 inches in diameter. The light, triangular in shape except where the sides curved around the base, was no more than 4 feet from the ground. Panic-stricken, Mrs Yarnold fled indoors.

Her husband, who was following her out of the house, was in time to see a bright glow behind the barn, but he did not investigate it. Shortly afterwards, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Yarnold woke and on going outside they saw a pulsating light disappearing towards the West.

The shaking barn

Further mystery was added to the story by Sue Yarnold and Debbie, who had been sleeping in the barn for the last fortnight. They said that on several occasions between 1.00 a.m. and 4.00 a.m. they had been awakened by a feeling that the barn was shaking violently. They thought cattle may have been rubbing against the walls, but at no time had they heard movement or sound outside.

On the Saturday night, at the time Mrs. Shirley Yarnold was sighting her UFO, the girls had again been awakened by the rocking or shaking sensation, and as on former occasions, the ducks and geese became agitated.

On the following night, the family kept vigil, but sighted nothing Exactly a fortnight earlier, on January 2, the whole family had seen a UFO at about 7.30 p.m. It was a light, approximately 6 inches in diameter (apparent size, as seen by the observers), pulsating "all colours of the spectrum" before disappearing between two ranges in the Bellbrook region. It had descended slowly at first and then accelerated, leaving behind an orange glow above the trees.

The shaking of the barn concomitant with the light phenomenon makes this case a most interesting one in that it clearly confirms that *some* UFO phenomena at least are related to poltergeist activity.

* See *FSR Case Histories* Supplement 8.

South American Round-up, 1971—part 2

Gordon Creighton

HERE are the six UFO reports to complete my selection of items from South America for the year 1971. As I stated in the first part of this article, in *FSR Case Histories* Supplement 10, a complete survey of all the material is not at present feasible.

10. Itaperuna bus chased by UFO (*on or about October 20, 1971*)

In a report to *O Dia* of Rio de Janeiro (October 21, 1971) from their special representative in Itaperuna, Mario Dias, it was stated that a flying saucer had pursued, over a distance of 20 kilometres, a bus owned by the company Viação Brasil and running between Bom Jesus de Itabapoana and Itaperuna. (See map on p. 24 of FSR for November/December 1971). The driver of the vehicle was José Chagas de Oliveira, living at 400, rua Paulo César, Itaperuna, and there were 19 passengers, who were thrown into panic.

The UFO was travelling at a height of some 500 metres above the road and emitting an intense brightness (changing constantly from green through orange to red) which lit up the whole highway.

Some of the passengers became extremely unwell, with giddiness and vomiting.

At approximately 7.00 p.m. the bus had departed from the Roberto Silveira bus station, bound for Itaperuna. Everything was normal until, as they were approaching a place called Talanquim, Omar Arnon, himself a chauffeur by profession, who was sitting in one of the back rows, caught sight of the saucer right above the bus. He at once shouted: "Hi! Look! We've got a saucer up above us!"

The driver applied the brakes at once. A woman let out a stifled shriek, and a man was heard to say: "Oh, no! Not *that* . . . how wise I was to have not wanted to leave Niterói today!"

Another passenger shouted for calm and told them all to keep to their seats. Two of them were already wanting to jump out through the windows. Another asked why the driver had stopped, and shouted: "Step on it! Why play into the hands of the enemy!"

Meanwhile, everyone was trying to get a look at the saucer, which was indeed hanging there at about 500 metres right above them. Not a sound came from it. It was simply "hovering" there, rotating on its axis, as though mocking them. From the rim of it came coloured beams of light which kept changing and varying in intensity.

The driver asked the passengers what they all wanted to do: drive on, or stay there?

They decided that he should drive on. And, as he did so, the saucer started to move forward too, and came a little lower.

The bus was now moving at high speed, but the saucer never left it. With the exception of one old man who said that he simply did not believe in flying saucers, the rest of the passengers were all exceedingly nervous, particularly the only two women among them, one of whom was weeping.

The driver was trying to watch the road ahead of him and to peer out at the saucer at the same time. Meanwhile the other driver in the back row was delivering a running commentary on the movements, height, speed, etc., of the saucer.

When, however, the saucer started shooting down long vivid beams of light on to the bus, the driver commenced to slow down again. But then he remembered the tales he had heard about "paralysing rays", and so kept up his speed, while the terrified passengers peered up at the UFO in mortal fear of being seized by little creatures as had happened so recently to two men near Itaperuna.

When the bus reached the Ponte de Ferro, an iron bridge just before Itaperuna, the saucer halted, shot out a whole lot of flashes of light of different colours, spun round on its axis at dizzying speed and then suddenly shot away up into the sky and was out of sight in less than one minute, to the relief of all concerned, except perhaps the old man.

On arrival in Itaperuna the driver and all 19 passengers went off to the Police Station and related their experience to Commissioner Airton Mousas, who took down their statements. (Our thanks to Dr. W. Buhler for the foregoing report.)

11. Pernambuco saucer photographed (*on or about November 9, 1971*)

According to a report in *O Dia* (Rio de Janeiro) of November 10, 1971, from its representative in Recife, capital city of the State of Pernambuco (N.E. of Brazil) residents of the Coque district had again seen a flying saucer and a press photographer employed by a local paper had chanced to be present and had managed to photograph the object, which flew round and round many times in the sky before vanishing.

The saucer, spherical in shape, with shining top and bottom, was seen by the whole population of Coque and was overhead for a total period of about twenty minutes.

The photographer's pictures of the UFO appeared in the Recife paper of November 9, on its front page, and as a result great crowds of people flocked out from Recife to the Coque suburb to see if any more UFOs would appear.

According to the report in *O Globo*, this is the fifth time that a saucer has appeared over Coque, a very poor suburb of Recife, and the residents of that area are now quite used to the experience. But this time the saucer had been different from the others. It was of many colours, and remained in the sky overhead longer than any of the objects previously seen there. The professional photographer who took the pictures of the UFO (not reproduced in *O Globo*) had plenty of time in which to adjust and prepare his camera calmly.



(Trans.) Nélson, amateur photographer, took this photograph (surname not given).

The saucer was dark in its central part but shone with many colours at the extremities.

As it was overhead for so long, and flew around and was visible for so long, the number of people who saw it is great, and the photographs published in the Recife paper caused even bigger crowds to flock off to the Coque district.

12. Small beings emerge from landed saucer (*first week of November*, 1971)

According to a report in *O Dia* (Rio de Janeiro) of November 9, 1971, from their representative at Fortaleza, in the North-Eastern Brazilian State of Ceará, the people of the Fazenda Jerimum, an estate in the municipality of O Iguatu, saw a saucer-shaped flying object travelling rapidly and silently through the sky. Terrified, they fled to the house of the local priest to ask for his advice and help.

Meanwhile, the object was seen flying rapidly southwards, emitting an intense brightness. One eyewitness was a farmer named Raimundo Nonato Braga, who watched its evolutions in the sky. Said he: "The worst of all however was when the thing landed on a rocky hill and out of it jumped three little beings." Seized with a violent nervous crisis, this witness dashed into the town to tell of his experience.

At a place called Russas, some hours later, local people saw a similar craft, which landed and flew off again. (Credit to Dr. W. Buhler.)

13. UFO seen low over Campinas (*December* 4, 1971)

According to a report in the *Correo Popular* for December 7, 1971 (published in Campinas, State of São Paulo, Brazil), on the night of Saturday, December 4, 1971, at about 10.30 p.m., the photographer José de Oliveira heard shouting on the street and at the same moment some children came dashing into the house yelling to him to look out of the window. He did so and saw an object shaped like an extremely luminous saucer, which was spinning on its axis and apparently floating stationary. He picked up his camera, affixed the telescopic lens, set the camera at infinity and was able to take his time over releasing the shutter, but to his chagrin later found that he had no film in the camera.

Silently and, as he felt, menacingly low, the UFO flew across the whole Campinas suburb of O Castelo, and was seen by hundreds of people on the streets. It vanished in the direction of the Cadet School. (Credit to Mr. Nigel Rimes.)

14. UFO emerges from the sea (*December* 19, 1971)

According to a report in *O Globo* (Rio de Janeiro) for December 21, 1971, from their representative at Pôrto Alegre, a Sr. Victor Soares has given details of a strange flying object which alarmed many people in various towns in the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul during the night of Sunday, December 19, 1971.

Measured against a ruler held at arm's length, he said it was 5 centimetres wide and enveloped in a sort of mist. It was flying towards the N.E. Many other people also said they had seen it.

One witness, a young man named Lino Osvaldo Saul, said he was at the beach resort known as Praia da Asunção with his girl friend when they both actually saw the object emerge from the sea and come flying towards them. They both fled. They were able to observe however that it was still climbing as it passed over them and that it emitted no sound.

Other people living at São Leopoldo, Viamão, Carazinha, and also people on the beach at Guaiba also saw the object and said that it was orange-coloured and flying very low. (Credit to Dr. W. Buhler.)

15. Another landed UFO (*December* 21, 1971)

According to a report in the *Correo Popular* (São Paulo) of December 23, 1971, from Fortaleza in the State of Ceará, UFOs are back again in that area, this report and No. 12 being among the very few from that region for about two years past. On December 21, a strange flying object was observed for over ten minutes near the town of Mossoró, on the Rio Grande do Norte (river). The witnesses were a family who were travelling by car from Recife to Fortaleza.

Sr. Francisco Múrcio de Vasconcellos, manager of an insurance company in Fortaleza, stated that at about 11.00 p.m. on that day, as they were travelling up the BR-116 highway, they saw a strange object standing on the ground near the road. The object projected a powerful beam of light at them, whereupon he at once stopped the car. They all sat there for about ten minutes inside the car, watching the object. Their party consisted of not only Vasconcellos and his wife and two sons but also three other people. All were still intensely nervous when questioned later about the affair, and all obviously unwilling to discuss it.

The area where the saucer was standing is a particularly deserted one. Their first thought was that the object might be an aircraft. No windows or port-holes were visible on the craft, which was emitting sparks from a tube resembling the exhaust-pipe of a car.

When the UFO finally took off, it disappeared towards the beach at Timbau, some miles from Mossoró. (Credit to Mr. Nigel Rimes.)

Readers' Reports

A flying log

Dear Sir,—The following account was given to me by a friend, John Munn. At 6.30 in the evening, one day during the summer of 1970, Mr. Munn was travelling back to Portsmouth on the Southampton-Portsmouth train, when looking out of the (open) train window he saw a cylindrical object at an approximate height of 60ft. from the ground and 160ft. from the train and travelling parallel with it and in the same direction. Mr. Munn's description of the object is as follows:

The estimated length was about 30ft., grey-brown in colour similar to that of burnt metal and slightly reflecting sunlight; no apertures or protuberances were in evidence. The sky was a clear blue without a trace of cloud, and the sun was very bright. Any sound would have been obliterated by the noise of the train which had just left Cosham station when Mr. Munn made his observation.

The speed of the object was estimated at about 70 m.p.h. and appeared to increase before the witness finally lost sight of it. When the train reached a junction and turned off the object apparently continued on an unchanged course. There were other people in Mr. Munn's compartment but he didn't know whether or not to alert them to his sighting.

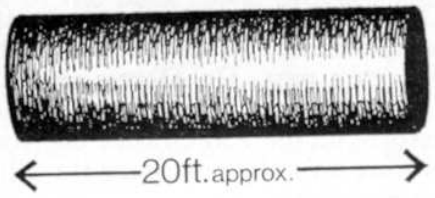


FIG.1

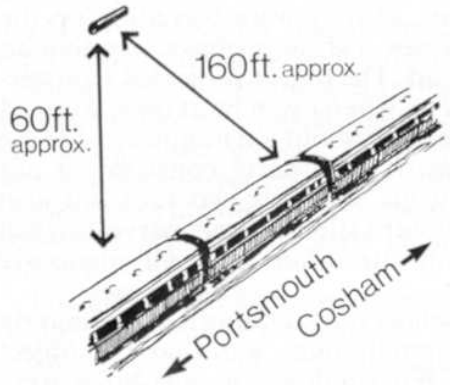


FIG.2

Fig. 1 Appearance of the object.
Fig. 2 Position of object relative to the train.

The witness used the term "flying log" as his first impression of the UFO. The enclosed drawing of the object is by myself under the supervision of Mr. Munn.

Yours sincerely,
Nicholas Maloret,
Locksway Road, Milton,
Portsmouth, Hants.

1969 Exeter incident explained

[*Puzzled by the sighting of an object, brighter than a star, with a tail streaming behind as it sped across the night sky, Mr. A. E. Thomson wrote to* THE OBSERVER *asking for an explanation of the phenomenon. The Science Correspondent for that newspaper duly passed the letter on to us and it was published under the "Readers' Reports" section in* FSR CASE HISTORIES *Supplement* 9. *We are grateful to* **Mr. Anthony Pace** *for drawing our attention to an article by Howard Miles in the Journal of the British Astronomical Association* (1972, 82, 2) *which provides the answer to Mr. Thomson's query.*—ASSISTANT EDITOR.]

Briefly, a very bright fireball crossed southern England on April 3, 1969, at 19.38 hours. As readers might be interested to know what appearances this meteor displayed in its journey across the sky, an extract from the article is given here together with the diagrams.

"The object was first seen when it was about 40 km. south of Beachy Head, travelling in a direction slightly north of west. It was bluish white in colour and rapidly grew in size and at the same time developed a long tail. The head was reported by several observers to be slightly smaller than full Moon. The tail tapered to a point and changed in brightness as it crossed the sky. Sparks were reported as separating from the main mass, these sparks being recorded as white by some observers and red by others. The main visual features of the fireball during its passage down the English Channel are summarised in figure 1.

"During the latter half of the visible track, there is evidence to suggest that the diameter of the head diminished to about 50% of the value quoted above, although the brightness seemed to have remained roughly the same. Most observers were content to describe the object as exceptionally bright, or very bright, but magnitudes of —8/—9 were quoted. Towards the end of the flight, the head split into several components but they were very close together and each component had a long tail. From points well away from the track, however, this resolution was not observed and hence the detailed structure was not reported. Several observers from Cornwall described the tail as orange coloured whereas others still reported the bluish coloration but commented on red sparks. Just before extinction, the tail went red, shortened rapidly and then the object suddenly 'went out'. Two observers, well away from the extinction area, referred to a reddish glow for a short time after extinction but it is thought that this was due to the changed appearance of the object and not to any residual effects."

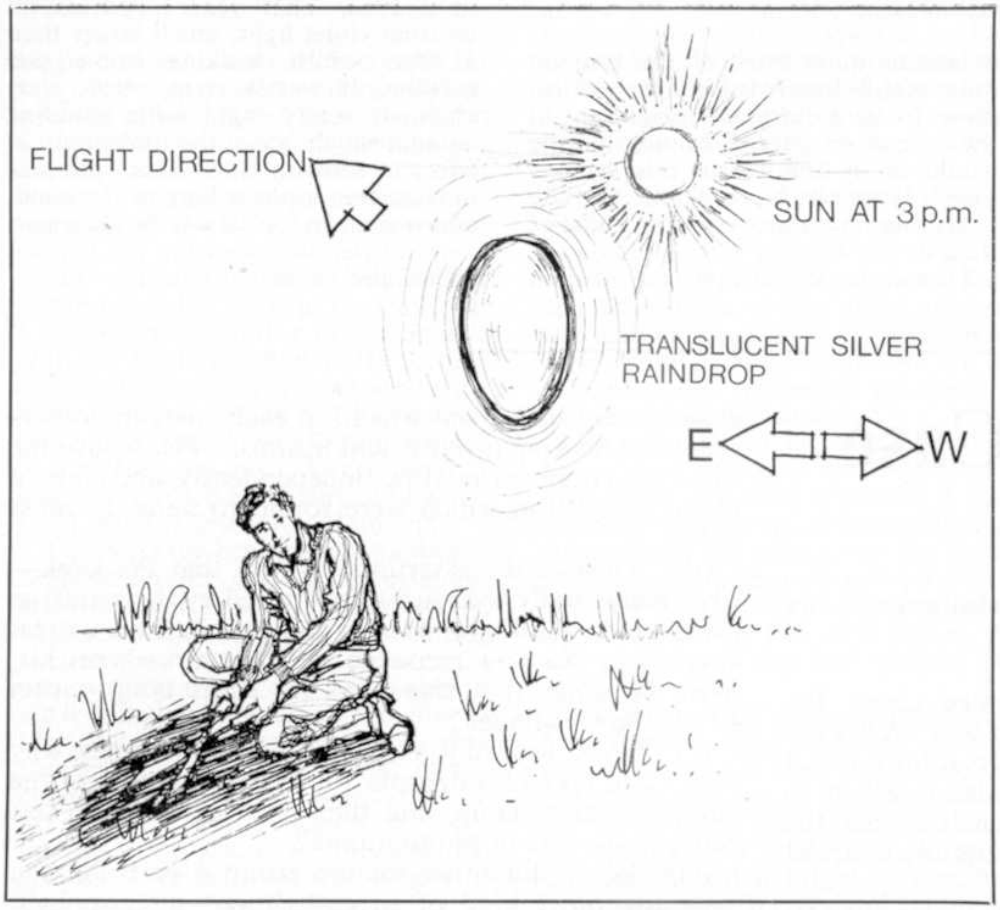
The "raindrop"

The following report was submitted to us by the South West Aerial Phenomenon Society. It was related to **Mr. J. C. Drawbridge** of 33 Hart Mead Road, Thatcham, Berkshire, by Mr. Fritz Ruffler of 25 Three Firs Way, Burghfield Common, Berkshire, on September 20, 1971.

"It was a warm and sunny day in mid-September, 1956. The time was approximately 3.00 p.m. and there was no wind; the sky was virtually cloudless. Mr. Ruffler was cutting grass in a field near a church at Trash Green (off Bennett's Lane, between Burghfield Common and Theale, Berkshire). Bent over while busily snipping with his shears, Mr. Ruffler suddenly felt the fine hair on the back of his neck bristle and an unusual sensation ran down his spine. He felt as if someone were watching him. Turning round slowly, still in the crouched position, he saw an object which rooted him to the spot. He described it as a 'raindrop,' and as having a translucent, silver colour. Trembling, he watched the object which hovered for about 5 seconds as though looking at him. Then, without warning, it climbed at an angle from its hovering position and disappeared into the sky and was out of sight within seconds. Mr. Ruffler could not estimate the speed of the object. All he could say was that it was 'a fantastic rate of climb,' and not a sound was made. While working, his back was more or less to the sun. The object was directly behind him and took off in an easterly direction.

"After this happening, Mr. Ruffler made off for home as fast as he could. His wife described him as being 'all of a tremble' and absolutely white. She thought he was ill. When he told her all about it she reckoned he had seen a ghost.

"Apart from his wife, I am the only person to whom the witness related this story. Even telling it to me after so many years made him tremble! He



is a hard-working family man who served with the German navy during the war, and he knew what he saw was not conventional. The size of the object was *like* a small weather balloon. It hovered about 20-30 feet away from him. However, he is quite certain that the object was *not* a balloon; there was no wind to make the object disappear so fast. He did not say anything in 1956 because people might think him mad.

"A drawing made by myself under the supervision of Mr. Ruffler is attached along with a map of the locality."

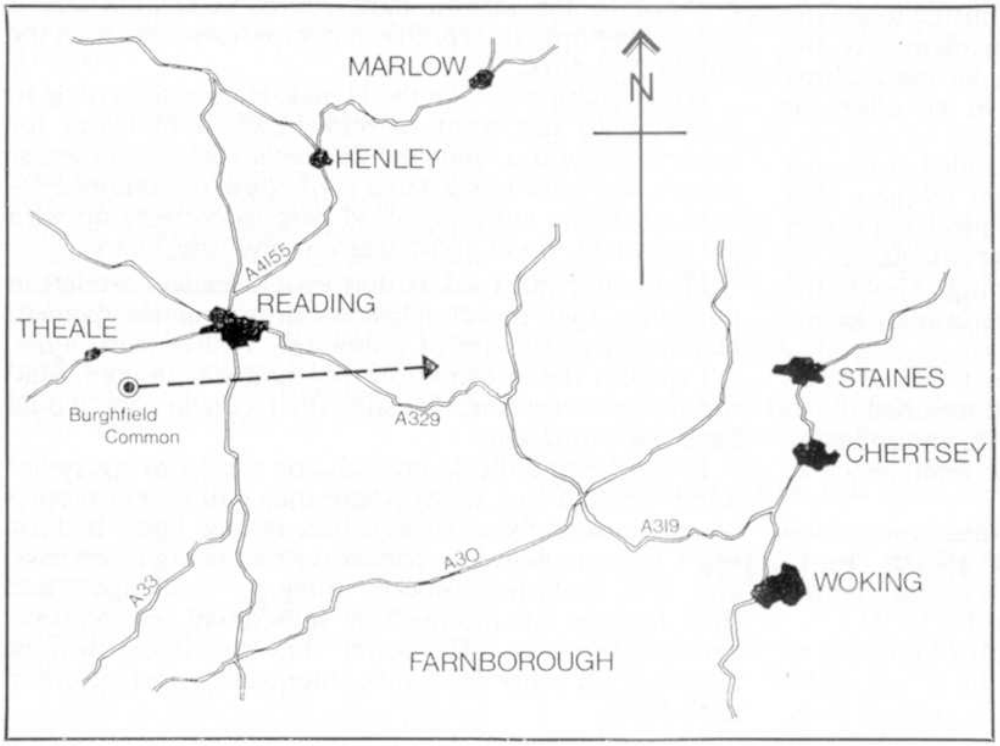
A flying "sewage pipe"

Dear Sir,—I experienced a most unusual UFO in the late summer of 1958. It was a clear, warm late afternoon somewhere between 5.30 and 7.00 p.m. My nearest neighbours had retired indoors for tea. I, on the other hand, continued to dig in my back garden, preparing a sand pit for my young son. On straightening up, I looked south-east over a line of roof-tops into a pale blue sky, and there heading north-west on a regular aircraft lane, at a height of some 1,000-2,000 feet, was a huge, milky-white cylinder hanging in the sky at 60°, the more distant end pointing downwards, i.e. its shape and position was like a fat cigarette held at arm's length at 1 o'clock.

The appearance of the object quite excited me as I believed it to be a rocket case that had escaped burning up on its flight through the atmosphere. I observed the object for perhaps half a minute, and then went indoors to alert my wife. She came outside, saw the cylinder and seemed a bit puzzled by it, although she accepted my explanation that it was a rocket case. By now the object was level with, and slightly to the front of our house, clearly visible the whole time. However, during my brief excursion into the house, the object had started a slow and ponderous tumbling movement. This was not a uniform movement, but was similar to the way clothes can be seen tumbling about through the door of a washing machine.

By now, I was less certain of the origin of the cylinder, mainly owing to the lack of external detail; the object was quite smooth. I remember thinking at first that it looked like a giant runaway windsock, but I soon abandoned this thought as I watched its passage through the sky—the effect was quite weird. I reckoned its length was 40-50 feet, whilst its diameter was about 4-6 feet. The mass and clumsy movement suggested a huge section of concrete sewage pipe, although I'm unable to remember whether the end was closed or open.

The impression it made was one of unreality, and in some way it seemed detached from the surrounding atmosphere. I mean that it was unreal in the way one sees a television commercial in which perhaps one catches a glimpse of a woman floating along in slow motion over the top of a field at dawn, with mist drifting around and with robes and hair billowing out behind—in fact unreal. I cannot say to what extent this impression was heightened or suggested by wisps of vapour round the bottom half of the cylinder as I may subsequently have been influenced by seeing an illustration of an object like this at a later date. However, I think some cloudiness was present during the motion of the cylinder. It certainly ignored the laws of gravity



READERS' REPORTS (*continued from page 15*).

in so far as it showed none of the floating motion of an airship or a balloon (I have observed both in flight). Instead, it continued its tumbling motion in a dead straight line on an apparently level path into a moderately reddish North-West sky from a pale blue one.

After several minutes of observation, it became quite small on the horizon but was still clearly visible in the reddish glow. I called out to my neighbour at the foot of my garden, hoping that he would be in time to see this "rocket case". However, he came out too late to see the object as there was a line of trees in the way.

I more or less forgot the incident until 1964. That year I spotted an unusual violet light, much larger than a star, whilst walking home one evening. It was a crisp, clear, star-studded, windy night with scudding clouds which gave the not unusual effect of moving stars. This light was moving the opposite way to the wind, and was much too slow to be fixed on a

(*Continued on page iii*)

The Aldridge Case

Michael Davies

Our contributor is a Police Sergeant stationed in the Midlands.

ON reading the article "The Aldridge Case: Pc. Leek's Photographs" in Supplement 9 of *FSR Case Histories*, I was very disturbed to see the solutions put forward by the joint authors. The reader is asked to accept a 'piece of detective work' which rebuts the assumption that the object was an unknown aerial object.

The only thing that the article reveals under analysis is that it is gross speculation around a fanciful theory. Had not Dr. Hynek's name been associated with it, so giving it the mark of respectability, I would have relegated it to the category of 'debunking statements' by official bodies.

I decided to check out the authors' deductions myself, and as the editor knows of my position, and the facilities available to me to do this, I ask readers to accept the sincerity of my comments.

It seems that the authors were not permitted to see the complete police file concerning the incident. As the report is not for public dissemination, let me address myself to the authors (and readers) in an effort to persuade them to think again.

Had they been able to see the complete file I am sure it would have become immediately evident to them that what the witnesses were describing was a moving object capable of hovering at a height that was calculable.

Applying logic (and without dashing about the country dramatically to 'reconstruct the crime') let me ask a few questions:

(i) Had the object been the planet Mars, then would not the observers have stood and watched it . . . and watched it . . . right through to the dawn, unless by that time someone would have had the intelligence to have recognised it for what it was?

(ii) Since when has the planet Mars taken on sudden movement? How does a planet 'take off' or 'move across the sky' in manoeuvres that ridicule any attempted association with atmospheric conditions?

(iii) Why do you think two patrol cars were sent in different directions? They were sent in a *successful* attempt to encircle the object, providing at least three designated points from which, in each case, the observers were looking inwards and upwards. Please give the witnesses credit for relating, independently, accounts of visual perception which were found to agree in most points.

(iv) Despite the assertions by you that Pc. Leek—who, incidentally, was just as disturbed by the article as I was—took photographs of nothing more than a street lamp, how do you reconcile your remarks with his, when he states that there was no street lamp within 40° of the viewfinder?

(v) If you wished to emulate Sherlock Holmes, why didn't you take photographs on meter reading 9 of the offending street lamp, and then do a comparison test between the sets of photographs?

(vi) When did either sodium group A or B lighting —or any other kind of street lighting—alter in light density or shape with the frequency displayed in the Pc's photographs? Look at the photographs—those you were allowed to see—once again.

(vii) Having done that—and just to persuade you further that all you got out of this outing was a wooden spoon—would you not expect that somewhere on the reel of negatives there would be (out of sequence, as they were) shots of a known light source, using the same camera setting, at infinity, as it should be? Once the distance to the known light source is established, it assists the photo interpreter in comparison tests with the unknown source.

Whilst itching to take the Hynek/Hennessey article to pieces, I do not want to make FSR a platform for argument [*but it is! Both our magazines are platforms for debate, and what's that, but a polite form of argument?*—EDITOR]. If the authors would care to correspond with me privately, I will assist them in any way I can.

Meanwhile, all I ask is that FSR's readers are left in no doubt that the conclusions drawn in the Hynek/Hennessey article are of a fanciful, Walter Mitty type.

I suspect the information they had was limited. Had they seen everything I'm sure their conclusions would have been different.

It has been difficult enough for me to bring police minds around to a point where they will accept reports of unidentified flying objects in a serious light. If those few I have managed to convert are allowing interviews, and then find their officers' integrity challenged, and their feelings left incensed by subsequent irresponsible articles, there is little doubt that the doors will be slammed on other *bona fide*, interested investigators in the future.

single-engined trainer. I observed it for several minutes whilst walking, and on arriving home I stood and observed it for several minutes at my front door without being able to figure out what it was. I eventually told a new acquaintance about the light and he revealed during our conversation that he was a UFO enthusiast. I was only mildly interested in his views at the time, but I remember recounting my experience with the floating cylinder. He seemed quite impressed and later showed me a book by Aimé Michel with an illustration of the "cigar" over Dôle in France —and there was my "sewage pipe". I was quite excited at the time, and wrote to M. Michel, but received no reply.

I cannot even begin to find a rational explanation for this flying cylinder, least of all can I see how a damned big object like this could float overhead on a clear day, in sight for minutes on end, without others also being able to see it in flight and raising the matter in the local press. I can only think that the neutral milky-white colour of the cylinder and its lack of sound must be the answer, but I would be very interested to know whether anyone else has ever seen such an object in British skies.—**New Reader.**

[*The name and address of our contributor has been supplied, but he requests that these be kept private. We will say, however, that he lives in Chessington, Surrey. He also mentioned that as a professional draughtsman he considers his ability to observe and measure accurately to be slightly better than average. During the War he served for a time with the anti-aircraft and is not unfamiliar with things that float or fly in the sky.*—ASSISTANT EDITOR.]

Northamptonshire landings

Dear Sir,—I was very surprised that you did not publish an article on the Weldon UFO. (Weldon is a village just outside Corby, which is about eight miles from where I live.) In case you have not received any information on the happening, which occurred on the night of October 20, 1971, I am enclosing a cutting from our local newspaper, the *Northampton Evening Telegraph* of October 21, 1971:

"Four Weldon women claimed today that an unidentified flying object landed in the village last night. The women said in separate interviews this morning how they watched or listened as the object landed just behind some caravans on the Woodlands caravan site.

"Mrs. Eileen Muir of caravan number 72 saw a bright white light at about 7.00 p.m. as she was walking through the centre of Weldon on her way home. When Mrs. Muir arrived at her caravan she watched in terror as an object resembling an upturned mushroom landed at the back of her home.

" 'It made a shrill high-pitched whistle and there was a white mist surrounding the object,' she said. 'It seemed to stand on three pointed legs and the middle of the object glowed red and green. I went to my neighbour's caravan and together we ran to call the police. When we got back it had completely disappeared.'

"But this is not the first time that Mrs. Muir has seen the mysterious form. 'The first time I spotted it was about three weeks ago. It was a different colour but I am sure it was the same object. I saw it again about two weeks ago and for the third time last night. It's like nothing I've seen before. It was so eerie. It was like nothing on earth,' she said.

"At her home at caravan number 57, Mrs. Carmen Gray told how she too saw the UFO last night. Her account of the incident was almost identical to the one given by Mrs. Muir. 'It landed just behind the trees near Eileen's caravan. It had a bright glimmering light on top but the body of the thing had an orangey-red glow and a green glow. I was terrified. I know other women on the site have seen the object but it was the first time for me—and I was terrified. After we returned from calling the police, it had disappeared. When the police arrived I felt such a fool, but I'm sure what I saw was an UFO.'

"Mrs. Shiela Mason, of caravan number 39, said she heard a noise and thought it was a farmer using a tractor late at night. But as she listened the noise increased. 'It was definitely not a tractor, it was too high pitched. It was so loud at the end you had to block your ears.' "

This was not the only UFO sighting in the area. I am also sending you a cutting from the *Evening Telegraph* dated October 30, 1971, giving a report of a sighting in Irthlingborough, which is about 9 miles from Kettering:

"Mr. and Mrs. David Alabaster, of 16 Lilley Terrace, Irthlingborough, were walking out with their baby at the bottom of Crow Hill when they looked up and saw a disc-shaped object in the sky. Said Mrs. Alabaster yesterday: 'It was silvery, very high in the sky and at the time looked as if it was turning. It was travelling in the direction of Addington.' She was sure it wasn't a plane. 'In the last five years, we have seen 13 objects and one of them actually stopped over Irthlingborough.' "

There was also a landing at Irthlingborough, which took place on July 15, 1969:

"Several young children on the Crow Hill estate at Irthlingborough claimed yesterday they saw a flashing red object land in a field behind their homes last night. Sharon, aged 12 and ten-year-old Denise Cuddihy saw the mystery object from the bedroom window of their home at 44 Fettledine Road.

" 'When it landed in the field it turned into a number of flashing lights. The whole sky seemed to turn a pale blue colour at the same time,' said Denise. 'We told our father about it. He came up to have a look but did not know what it could have been.' Denise said that two other children in the street had also seen the object. They are Amanda Fox, aged 8 of No. 26 and Susan Boddington, who lives at No. 52.

Five young boys, who were camping in a tent also saw this mysterious red object flash across the sky. The boys were in the back garden of No. 48 Fettledine Road when they saw a red flash in the sky at about 10.30 p.m. 'It came hurtling through the air and kept flashing red on and off for a few minutes before it came down in the barley field at the back of our house,' said 11-year-old Kevin Spence, 28 Fettledine Road. His companions in the tent, all of the same road, were Nigel Flawn aged ten, who lives at No. 76, Mervyn, aged eight, and Neil, ten, of No. 49 and 12-year-old Christopher Fox of No. 26. Their natural boyish curiosity to investigate the mysterious object has been restrained by wise parents who will not allow the children to play in the field. The field leads to the River Nene and the parents fear for the safety of their children after Monday's tragic drowning."

Michael Carr,
Laburnham Crescent, Kettering,
Northants.

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