

loud "whooshing" noise the object streaked into the air and disappeared over the rooftops in a curving flight. A pulsating red light was visible at the rear of the contraption.

That was the end of the sighting, although several people in the neighbourhood claimed to have heard the noise, and one or two said that they saw the object while it was in the air. The witness felt no ill effects, and does not recall seeing any unusual marks on the grass, although, as he says, he never thought to look for any.

The witness has never seen a UFO, and does not even look upon this object in his memory as a UFO. It is just a "funny vehicle." He says that sometime after his sighting he saw an article in the press about the shapes of transport to come. This showed the conception of an airship, complete with propellor, but he says that it bore no relationship to what he saw in his encounter and indeed his encounter bears no resemblance to modern day UFOs, although there are some who might disagree with this!

Frank's encounter obviously does have several correlations with current events, especially the reported small stature of the occupants. We seem here to have a classic example of the UFO phenomenon manifesting itself in an individualised way in a fashion

related to the era in question. Frank says, "perhaps flying saucers are an improvement on the vehicle I saw." While this is possible, it is also feasible that the whole CE3 and CE4 experience is a human-based one, in a manner with which we are not yet familiar. This would also explain how witnesses seem to interpret UFOs in ways that would be personally acceptable to themselves.

Frank says that at the time he never considered the possibility that this might have been a craft from another world. It was only many years later that such possibilities were even talked about. He has, over the years, tried to make himself believe that what happened was no more than a boyish dream, but he has never succeeded in this. The experience remains very real and he is certain that it happened. In any event, he says: "How could I dream about something that I had no interest in, or had read nothing about but which is coming true many, many years later?" Well, there are ways we can invoke this argument, of course, if we take into account such things as the collective store of memories proposed by Carl Jung and the possibilities of precognition or telepathy. Even so the report remains a most intriguing one.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS REPORTED IN AUSTRALIA IN 1977

Keith Basterfield

A summary compiled for UFO Research (S.A.) inc. of Prospect, South Australia during April 1978

DURING the year 1977, there were reported occurrences of close encounters of types one, two and three in Australia. The year started off with an interesting event reported from near Lithgow, New South Wales, on January 4, at about 9.30 p.m. Noting an orange glow in the distance, two people travelling in a car put it down to a bushfire at first, until it approached their vehicle. When it was overhead they saw it was in fact a huge circular, diffuse glow confined within its own perimeter. At this point their car became enveloped in a fog bank which persisted until the glow had passed by.¹

Following this, on the 20th of the same month, at 1.45 a.m., at Port Kenny, South Australia, a farmer stepped outside to relieve himself and immediately was aware that there was a bright flashing in the sky, like lightning, which lit up the ground. Looking up he saw a bright ball of light travelling along at close range. This ball then took off as speed.²

What was to be the first of two

close encounter type three reports for the year happened on February 3, at Seven Mile Beach, Tasmania at 9.30 p.m. Some children at a youth camp heard a noise and saw a spinning "dome" with flashing lights and windows. In the centre window they said they saw a figure. The figure appeared to be thin with a large rounded head above what looked like a high collar. It had an arm visible to the right. It moved its head and changed positions in the window. After being observed for one or two minutes the object moved away.³

April 18 saw a driver standing by the side of his truck at Port Macquarie, New South Wales. It was at about 4.30 a.m. when he saw a bright light of an estimated 16 metres in diameter ascending over sand hills some 150 metres away from him. He stood there amazed until the light came towards him and, when it got to within 30 metres, he jumped into the truck cabin. Watching from there he saw the light back off and descend over the dunes, then speed away out to sea only

a few metres above the waterline. After a while it left the sea surface and climbed into the sky.⁴

South Australia was featured four days later when at about midnight a young lady driving home had car trouble of an unusual kind. She saw an oval-shaped light heading towards her car and, as it passed overhead, the headlights died, the engine stopped and the car radio cut off by itself. Four seconds later all returned to normal. Thoroughly frightened she continued on her way home.⁵

On May 2, 1977, a man out camping on the river Murray at Cal Lal was confronted by a very unusual sight. He and his son were sitting by a camp fire when he happened to look around and was surprised to see a blue "trapeziod" (*sic*), some 2 metres high by 75 cm wide at the top and tapering to 45 cm across the bottom. This object was stationary in front of a tree some 10 metres away. He looked away and upon looking back it had gone. No sound was heard.⁶

Eighteen days later, and only a

few kilometres away, a young nurse was on her way by car to work when she came across a red glowing ball sitting in a paddock a few metres away from a road. Seemingly 5-10 metres in diameter, it rose into the air and was lost to sight.⁷

Some six days after this, on May 26 a physical trace case came to light in Orange, New South Wales, which was quickly investigated by UFOR (NSW). Around midnight a boy observed an orange sphere with "windows" in it, at low altitude, possibly resting on the ground, near a farm. His mother was called and also saw it before it moved over a hill and was lost to sight. Physical traces were found in the paddock where it had been observed. These consisted of four small cleared patches arranged in a trapezoid. The grasses and thistles within the area were not affected in any obvious way. Upon analysis it was found that if any ionizing radiation was involved the ground would have received less than 100 rad and then any heating involved in forming the cleared patches would have been below 250°C.⁸

May seemed to be a popular month because on the 30th at 10.30 p.m. a person out shooting near Opossum Bay, Tasmania, reported seeing a "silver ball, edged with a red tail," 10 metres off the ground about 400 metres away. It passed silently over the river Derwent and rose into the sky.⁹

Tasmania featured two reports during June, the first on the 23rd. A rectangular shape with a pink flashing light 3 metres long by 1 metre high seemed to float close to a woman who watched for a while before deciding to drive to a better position for observation. While she was doing this, however, the object departed soundlessly into the NorthWestern sky.¹⁰

At Casino two days later, two friends were returning home at 3 a.m. when they noticed flashing lights above

their car. The lights seemed to "pace" them, then disappeared into the distance. There was no visible "object", merely a group of 6 to 8 lights flashing yellow and pink/red.¹¹

Just over a week later, on July 2, another Tasmanian car event occurred. A bright red light 3 metres off the road, and 200 metres behind a car was watched by the occupants. The car lost power for 15 to 20 seconds and then had to be clutch started. The light by then had disappeared. Some time later exactly the same thing happened to the car but this time there were no lights observed.¹²

A very large (200 metres long) pink coloured object looking not unlike a "jumbo jet," was reported to have touched down beneath some high power electricity lines near Birdwood, South Australia, on July 30, 1977, at 3.45 p.m. It was then said to have taken off vertically, though it made no noise whilst moving at what was stated to have been supersonic speed.¹³

At least twelve people were witness to our next encounter which occurred during daylight hours, near Meekatharra, West Australia. A disc-shaped object rose from behind a rocky outcrop which is only 50 metres

from the house. As it rose a sort of vapour rolled down the rocks. The disc with domes above and below, gave "birth" to a smaller red object which came out of its side, then shot out of sight at speed. The larger object then rose and disappeared from view.¹⁴

To round off the year's close encounter events — it seems to have gone "quiet" since then until the beginning of 1978 — we have a fairly interesting but in some ways nebulous type three event.

On October 17, at Mt. Magnet, which is near Meekatharra, two people were paced in their car by a light which stayed some 50 metres from them. They called in at a hotel and were informed that some employees of the hotel had also been pursued by something. Eight people then drove to the spot where the light had last been seen. They reported seeing three round pulsating red and green objects landed in paddocks some 3 km from the hotel. The objects took off and moved around, touching down several times before they left. There appeared to be "shapes" moving around these three objects. They were of human size, and weren't animals.¹⁵

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ROUND-UP ITEM: N.Z. PILOT REJECTS OFFICIAL EXPLANATION

From a Reuters item in *The Scotsman* of January 26, 1979, we learn that: "The pilot of a plane from which unidentified flying objects were filmed last month today rejected the official verdict that his "close encounters" were just atmospheric phenomena.

"There is something going on and I think they are covering up." Captain Bill Startup said after reading the report on a New Zealand Air Force investigation of a series of UFO sightings. The air force said they did 'not share the view of those who believe we are visited from outer space or

covertly by the aircraft or machines of potentially unfriendly nations.'

"After interviewing observers of the UFOs, air force investigators had concluded they were lights from surface or planetary sources affected by refraction and distortion — 'natural but unusual atmospheric phenomena.'

"Captain Startup said: 'They have no more come up to an answer as to what it was than anybody else.' Many of the phenomena mentioned in the report were things pilots were already well aware of, he went on. 'A lot of specialists have tried to make the

circumstances of that night fit in with previously known facts.'

"The report said radar sightings from Wellington Airport which had appeared to back up some UFO reports were 'spurious returns,' radar parlance for false signals. Radar sets are known to be subject to spurious returns and it was significant that on the occasions the large light was being filmed by a television team neither Christchurch nor Wellington radars reported any related visual sightings on their screens.'

[It's a wonder we rely on radar at all! — ED]