

THE KAIKOURA CONTROVERSY

Kevin R. Berry

While some cases in this round-up from news items are familiar to readers, it is considered that there are so many interesting and new glimpses of the events from different angles that our New Zealand contributor's article well merits inclusion.

KAIKOURA is a town in the South Island of New Zealand, about 100 miles north of Christchurch. During the months of December 1978 and January 1979, this town and the area round it were buzzing with UFO reports, some now known world-wide.

However, these were not the first reports that the area has had. The unidentified flying objects have been there for about three years, the residents say, and perhaps the Kaikoura and Clarence area (Clarence is about 40 miles north of Kaikoura) could be considered as a UFO "entry window."

Earlier sightings

During 1978, two people travelling by car through the Hundalee Hills to Kaikoura saw the now-famous object hovering over the hills. They were so busy watching it that their car almost ran off the road.

One of Clarence's 200 residents described an object he saw in December 1978. He first thought that it was a stationary satellite, but later realised that it wasn't. The UFO had three lights: red, orange, and green. Looking at it through binoculars only made the lights look bigger.

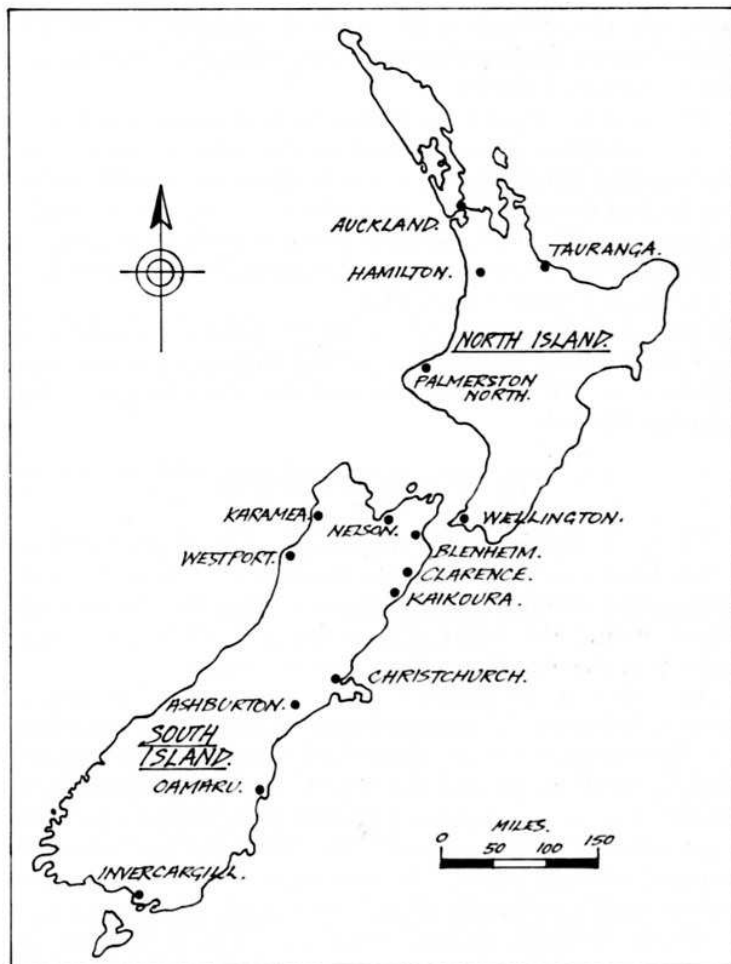
Another man in the same area described the object he saw during the same month as having a red light on one side and a green light on the other.

Farmer Bruce Appleby believes that the object may be responsible for the disappearance of scores of his sheep. (My personal opinion is that his belief is without foundation. The objects sighted there have always been at a distance, and apparently have never taken anyone else's animals.)

The first Argosy sighting

On Thursday morning, December 21, 1978, an *Argosy* left Blenheim bound for Christchurch, piloted by Captain John Randle. At 1.20 a.m. he radioed Wellington to report "several white lights," unusually bright, over the sea off the Kaikoura coast. Wellington already had them on radar, and said they were travelling about 2000 km/h (1250 mph). Captain Randle had another sighting at 4.06 a.m. when flying back to Auckland.

While the Control Tower was watching Randle's UFOs on the radar, they received another radio call. Captain Vernon Powell, the pilot of another *Argosy*, also Christchurch-bound, radioed at 3.28 a.m. to say that "something is coming towards us at a tremendous speed on our radar." It was leaving a trail on the radar screen, and travelled 15 miles in 5 seconds before veering off. If Powell's estimate of the speed was accurate, the object would have been going over 10,000 mph.



The object vanished off the radar screen, but appeared again, about 23 miles east of the aircraft, as a flashing white light. It paced the plane for 12 miles, tracked by Wellington radar. During that time it changed colour.

The Crockett Film

In the early morning hours of December 31, 1978, an Australian TV film crew aboard another *Argosy* looking for UFOs filmed objects around their aircraft. These UFOs were also tracked on radar at Wellington and Christchurch. The film, taken with a telescopic lens by David Crockett, shows a "main" object, coloured bright orange on top and rich red on bottom, about 100 feet in diameter. This was filmed on the return journey.

When the film was analysed in Australia, it was discovered that this object had a translucent dome. It had also done a giant loop in 1/20 of a second, undetected by

the human observers.* A smaller, white, space-shuttle-shaped object was also filmed on the first journey, as well as four smaller dots beside the main object.

The Captain of the *Argosy*, Bill Startup, and the First Officer, Bob Guard, said the object on film appeared a little different from what they had observed with the naked eye. However, the differences are only minor. Bob Guard describes them as “. . . a slightly different shape and colour from what I saw. To my eyes it had a far more orange tint than. . . we saw on television.”

Unfortunately, Channel 0 in Melbourne, Australia, edited the film out of sequence, interjecting shots of the first object seen on the first flight with the larger object seen on the return trip. And a number of people (including the flight crew) were very critical of the editing, (quite rightly, I think).

The film prompted the Royal New Zealand Air Force to send an *Orion* patrol aircraft to the skies to search for unidentified flying objects in the Kaikoura/Clarence area. It searched the area from midnight to 5 a.m. on the night of January 2/3, 1979, without seeing anything unusual.

Dr. J. Allen Hynek said the Crockett film was probably the best ever taken of a UFO.

Guido Valentich, the father of the pilot who vanished over Bass Strait in October 1978,† believes his son was “picked up” by a UFO. He said that the film gave him hope for his son.

The Television One film

Three Television One reporters, Lloyd McFadden, Terry Olsen, and Frank Kazuakoukas (the filmer), were sent to the Clarence area to keep watch for the well-known object during the night of January 2/3, 1979, the same night that the Air Force *Orion* was overhead.

At 3.15 a.m. on January 3, the men saw a light rising over the treetops. It “hovered up to the left, then darted to the right again.” They filmed all this with a telescopic lens, and estimated that the object, which was yellowish-chalky, was at an altitude of 10,000 feet. It had a reddish tinge when it first appeared, but this vanished when it stopped moving about. “It seemed to rotate on its axis, and give off a pulsating glow,” they said. The object had a clearly defined central core “. . . which seemed to radiate out and form various patterns.” These had looked like a star at first, and then like a folded umbrella. They also said that the object was about twice the size of the morning star.

At 4.20 a.m. a second object, yellowish in colour, appeared in the sky. “There was a sudden intensity of light at first, then it scudded off across the sky,” they said.

When the sun rose both objects were still visible, and they continued filming. The second object eventually faded out, but the first seemed to rise, and was finally lost from sight.

Other sightings

There were many other sightings in the area, in other parts of the country, and all over the world. This was a “mini-wave.” But the question of whether there were more UFOs about, or more sightings reported, or whether

the increase was just an increase in the number of reports published, remains unanswered.

Three UFOs flew over Clarence on the morning of December 23, 1978.

The day before, several people in Wellington reported seeing UFOs.

A bright, spherical light was seen by people in Holland at 5 a.m. on the morning of December 27.

Back in New Zealand, a reporter for the “Press” in Christchurch photographed a green light over his back yard in early January.

Just two minutes after the TV1 reporters began filming a UFO at Clarence, 320 miles south, in Oamaru, police saw a light, which appeared five times during the night.

Westport residents saw an egg-shaped light at midnight on the night of January 4/5.

On January 11, eelers in Hamilton saw a UFO which frightened some nearby cattle and produced interference on their radio.

In late January, New Zealand’s Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition saw an object pacing the plane they were in, as they passed over Kaikoura at 9 p.m. one night. It was tracked on the plane’s radar and Wellington radar.

Again in Kaikoura, on January 6, three witnesses saw a vertical cigar-shaped object.

Nelson, New Plymouth, Invercargill, Auckland, Ashburton, Christchurch, Tauranga, and Karamea were among the other towns and cities in New Zealand which had reports of UFOs in the first three days of the new year.

Australia also had its share of flying saucers. On January 3, for example, a woman and her son in Queensland were chased by a banana-shaped light.

Other countries reported UFOs and even encounters of the third kind that week. Some were England, Italy, Israel, USA, and South Africa. Reports could be found in the newspapers almost every day.

The Explanations

As is usual after important UFO sightings, the “experts” move in and “explain” the sighting away ten or twenty times.

The MOD, among many others, said the films were of Venus. However, in the case of the Crockett film, Venus was not even in the sky when the observers started filming. The TV1 reporters said they could see Venus as well as the object they were filming.

Other Planets blamed were Mercury, Mars, and Jupiter, but I doubt that they were the culprits, as they do not look like the objects on film when seen with a telescope.

Balloons, Japanese squid boat lights, car lights reflecting off clouds were also blamed, but I for one have never seen a car, balloon, or squid boat chasing a plane at 10,000 mph as was reported by Captain Powell, or doing a giant loop in 1/20 of a second, as filmed by David Crockett.

Saucer-shaped clouds, warm dry air, light-reflecting sea foam rising upwards, and ball-lightning were other

*[See cover photograph, also W. C. Chalkier’s article “A Re-viewing of the Great Nocturnal Light” in *FSR* Vol. 26, No. 1 — EDITOR]

†[See “The Missing Cessna and the UFO” by W. C. Chalkier, in *FSR* Vol. 24, No. 5 — EDITOR]

explanations, but as these phenomena could not last the duration of the sightings, I believe that they could not have been the cause of the UFOs.

Owls covered by luminous fungi, and mutton birds reflecting the squid boat lights. Well, well, well. So now owls and mutton birds travel at 10,000 mph! I think not.

Secret Russian or US missile? Why would Russia or the United States send their missiles to New Zealand to test-fly them, when they could use empty oceans or barren deserts in their own areas, where no-one would see them?

Were the films hoaxes? Again I think not, for the reliability of the witnesses is unquestionable. Pilots and TV crews would have a lot to lose (i.e., their jobs, probably) if they went about faking UFO films.

Meteors! This time too fast! Meteors move a lot faster than any of the UFOs did (including the one that moved

at 10,000 mph, which lasted 5 seconds), and meteors only last a fraction of a second. The UFOs were about for hours, in some cases.

And lastly, one of the humorous explanations, an illuminated cabbage patch reflecting lights on to the clouds. Apparently the cabbages were moving at the speed of the plane, or is this explanation also invalid?

Sources

All the information recorded in this article, except my personal opinions of the explanations, has been taken from newspapers of the period: *The Press*; *the Christchurch Star*; *the Greymouth Evening Star*; the TV1 news and documentary on UFOs; radio reports; and a lecture at the Christchurch University.

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THE N.Z. FILM: A REPLY TO THE DEBUNKERS

Quentin Fogarty

Our contributor was a member of the TV crew which filmed the UFO on December 31, 1978.

IN JANUARY, 1979, the New Zealand Government dismissed the UFO sightings off the north-east coast of the country's South Island a few weeks earlier as "natural but unusual atmospheric phenomena."

The government investigation into the sightings was carried out by the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) and the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR).

According to the press release at the time, the investigating officer reached his conclusions after interviewing all of the principal witnesses. In fact, he spoke to only three of the seven people directly involved in the December 31 sightings and he did not see, or study, the entire UFO footage obtained that morning from the flight deck of the *Argosy* aircraft.

I decided that the "findings" were rather nebulous, and I sought a more definite answer from the government. I was told by an official spokesman that I could safely assume that the light source we had filmed on the climb out of Christchurch (this accounts for most of the footage) was Venus and that, according to the spokesman, was the end of the matter. The government would be making no further comment.

The government sums up

However, contrary to that stated intention the government continued to make pronouncements throughout 1979 culminating in a new report which was released in December of that year. Entitled, "Unfamiliar Observations of Lights in the Night Sky," it covers not only the sightings of December 21 and 31, 1978, but also many other reports of strange lights in the New Zealand sky from December 20, 1978 to January 10, 1979. The report was prepared by Bill Ireland of the Physics and Engineering Laboratory of the DSIR and suggests that the lights seen during the three-week period were "generally unusual views of either terrestrial sources, such as lighthouses, navigation beacons and city lights, or of the planets Venus and Jupiter, seen through an unusually clear atmosphere." The sighting from the *Argosy* as we climbed out of Christchurch was, according to Ireland, "most likely a squid boat seen under quite normal viewing conditions." The reader should bear in mind that Ireland's "fishing boat" hypothesis differs markedly from the original theory that we had filmed Venus. Maybe someone in the RNZAF or the DSIR checked and discovered that Venus did not rise until after we had completed filming.

I should point out that Dr. Bruce Maccabee, the optical physicist and NICAP consultant who investigated our case, examined the possibility that we had filmed a brightly-lit fishing boat, but he found that the facts of the case did not support that hypothesis. Also, as Maccabee

notes, one wonders whether Captain Bill Startup (the *Argosy* pilot) could fly over a fishing boat without realising what it was. After all, he was a pilot of more than 20 years' experience, and he had previously joined other pilots in tracking foreign boats suspected of fishing within New Zealand's fishing zone. But, more on that later.

Radar/visual case on December 21, 1978

Ireland's report is one of supposition, suggestion and guess-work. It also contains some glaring errors and I can only hope that these were not made deliberately. For example, when Ireland is dealing with the radar-visual sighting involving Captain Vern Powell on the morning of December 21, he makes this comment: "About the time of this sighting of a light from the aircraft, the Wellington Radar was also picking up a return which apparently tracked and kept pace with the aircraft for about 19 km. The aircrew did *not** identify the light to be coming from the position of the 'object' showing on the Wellington Radar." That statement is at complete variance with the facts. When I interviewed Captain Powell nine days after his sighting he told me that Wellington Radar had directed him to the position of the target showing on their scope. The following is a verbatim transcript of part of that interview:—

"We were in contact with Wellington radar. . . they asked us to identify certain returns that they had on their screens, and so they asked us when we were free, and had time to spare, to identify what they had on their screens. . . and to the right of us they had about five returns at about 12 miles, so we looked out that way and there was nothing there at all. It was clear* sky but we couldn't see anything. We put our radar on and we picked up a boat return a little bit to the front of us, to the right, and on the water we could see a light and so we confirmed that as a boat. . . and the same again, another one slightly more to the left of that, virtually straight ahead of us, which we also had on our radar (which is weather radar, but we were using it for tracking purposes), and that was confirmed as a boat. And then he said he had a strong return to our port about nine o'clock, directly on our left-hand side and both the first officer, Ian Pirie, and myself looked out and Ian first of all saw it and he said 'goodness, look at that,' or words to that effect, and there was a massive bright light slightly ahead of our port wing out to the left of us. . . we couldn't really see how far away it was from us, but it was out to the left of us."

A little later into the interview I asked Powell to tell me about the incident when the object followed the plane down the coast. His reply "Yes, radar told us this. We

*Q. Fogarty's emphasis

levelled out at 10,000 feet and looked out and it was still there and I said it was in the same place to radar, which it shouldn't have been, I thought, if it was something stationary because they said they had had something that was hovering in that area and then they told us that it had been following us for a period of time; it was tracking us."

Selecting the information which suits the purpose

I think you will agree that the above transcript gives complete lie to "facts" as presented by Mr. Ireland. As further evidence of the authenticity of this remarkable radar-visual incident let me refer to the log kept by the radar operators at the Wellington Air Traffic Control Centre. Mr. Ireland refers to this log throughout his report, however he fails to mention the following relevant entry for the morning of December 21, 1978: "Time, 0328 . Subject, More UFOs!: SAF BM-CH (*Argosy* flight, Blenheim to Christchurch)¹ saw a bright red light definitely airborne 2-3000 ft higher than the A/C (aircraft)¹. SRE (Wellington Radar)¹ also shows an echo to the east of the *Argosy* by 23. This target was seen *both*² visually by the A/C and on SRE to keep pace with the aircraft southbound for 12 miles."³

Ireland also fails to mention that the target showing on the Wellington scope, and also observed visually by the aircrew, was the same target that had earlier been tracked for 30 nautical miles, at a speed of 120 knots, by the Wellington operators, before coming to a halt and remaining in a stationary position for about three-quarters of an hour. This verbatim transcript of part of the actual radio messages between Wellington Radar and the *Argosy* that morning does, I believe, further establish the credibility of those involved in the December 21 sightings while at the same time showing how officialdom is careful to select only that information which suits its purpose:—

Radar: "Ten o'clock to you, range 30 miles, is a large target. This one tracked down from Wellington. . .we saw it first of all 30 miles out from Wellington. . .it tracked down to 60 miles and has remained stationary

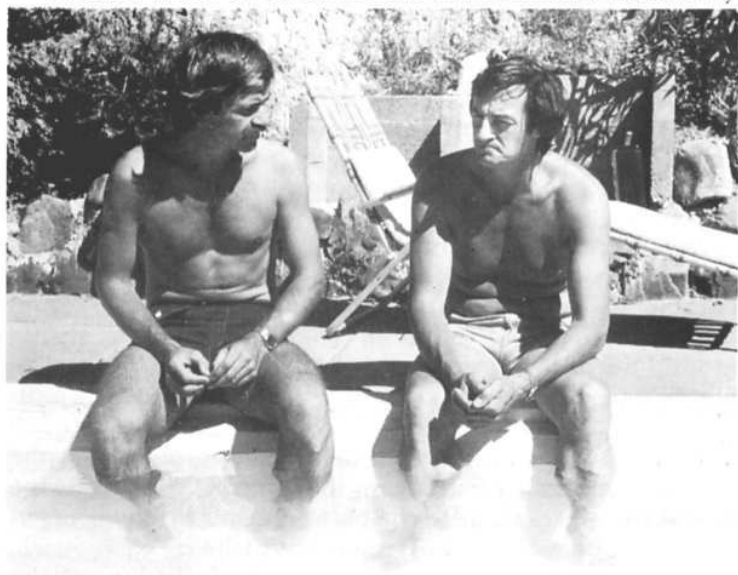


Photo courtesy Dominion & Sunday Times, N.Z.

Cooling off. Quentin Fogarty (left) and Dave Crockett.

for about three-quarters of an hour and has now moved about 20 miles to the west."

Argosy: "We have a bright red glowing light out to our 10 o'clock position. . .hard to say what range it is, but it's definitely airborne."

Which brings us to Ireland's theory for the object seen by Vern Powell and Ian Pirie outside their port window. . .VENUS. Maybe that explains why Ireland took care not to mention the information I have provided here. After all, he would have a devil of a job trying to make his Venus theory stick if he took into account the object's extraordinary manoeuvres on the radar scope. Ireland also fails to mention the other highlight of the December 21 sightings, namely the incident as Powell's *Argosy* approached Christchurch Airport. The crew picked up a fast-moving object on their own radar which Powell later estimated was travelling about 10,000 miles per hour. The target came straight towards the aircraft before suddenly veering off the radar screen. At the same time, the crew saw a bright flashing light. As I have said, Ireland failed to refer to this incident, and I can only assume he did so fail because he was unable to explain it away in a conventional manner.

The radar/visual case, with film, of December 31, 1978

Mr. Ireland's "most likely explanations" for the events of December 31 are also suspect from both a scientific and a factual point of view. Perhaps this stems from the fact that he used newspaper reports for much of his information, and I can vouch that many of these contained inaccuracies. Also, he spoke to only some of the witnesses and, as Dr. Bruce Maccabee points out, one would expect that for this type of investigation he would have spent more time talking to the main participants.

City lights. . .?

Ireland claims the lights of Christchurch cannot be ruled out as a source of the lights reported on the downward leg. However, Maccabee says the available information indicates otherwise. For instance the sighting line of the first set of lights continually pointed in the direction of Kaikoura as the plane travelled down the coast. Also, the lights appeared to light up the foreshore and were much brighter than the lights of Kaikoura. As Maccabee says, the inverse square law and atmospheric extinction effects on light intensity make the Christchurch lights hypothesis unreasonable, and he points out that when the lights were first seen, Kaikoura was about 85 kilometres away and Christchurch about 240 kilometres from the plane. The inverse square law, he says, would make the lights of Christchurch appear about eight times dimmer than comparable Kaikoura lights. Also, Ireland's explanation fails to account for the three blue-white objects filmed by Crockett soon after the pulsating lights were first seen. Maccabee points out that the first of these lights is definitely at the right side of the aircraft because the image on the film is seen to slide rapidly to the right of

¹ Explanations by author (Q. Fogarty).

² Q. Fogarty's emphasis.

³ All 'miles' are nautical miles.

the screen and several seconds later the cockpit is seen to slide onto the screen from the left. The other two lights were filmed with no apparent reference to the inside of the plane. Maccabee has analysed two frames from that first section of film and he says the focused image is quite bright, indicating good exposure of the film. He says that the required intensity of a light at Christchurch which could produce such an exposure would be about 8,000 million candelas, a value perhaps comparable to the whole of Christchurch taken as one source. Maccabee concludes: "Thus it appears that both the visual descriptions and photographic evidence are inconsistent with the hypothesis that the 'UFO' lights were actually lights from Christchurch."

Lighthouse lights. . .?

Another significant event on the downward leg was the flashing light observed off the right wing tip. On my taped commentary I referred to the light as follows: "It's been following us for quite a while. It's about four miles away and it looks like a very faint star but then it emits a very bright white and green light." Ireland argues that this light may have been the Point Keen lighthouse at the easternmost tip of the Kaikoura Peninsula. He says that if this series of sightings is to be ascribed to a UFO, then ". . .the absence of the light from Point Keen and Kaikoura for over six minutes must be agreed to by the witnesses." According to Maccabee, the co-pilot, Bob Guard, has already stated that he could not see the Kaikoura town lights during this particular sighting. Since Ireland's report was released Captain Bill Startup and First Officer Guard have tested his lighthouse hypothesis during a similar flight. They say that in spite of careful observation, only about two flashes were seen that could be attributed to the Point Keen light. These observations were made during trips north and south along the same flight path. Bob Guard has also stated that the Point Keen light was not what he saw on December 31, 1978. Finally, the light we saw that morning was both green and white and was observed for between two to four minutes. By Ireland's own admission, the Point Keen light flashes only white, not white and green, and comes on only twice every 15 seconds, the duration of each flash being two seconds.

Wellington harbour lights. . .?

Ireland suggests that the white, orange and red light (or lights) filmed towards the end of the journey could have been the lights at the entrance to Wellington Harbour and he makes special reference to the front harbour light because it is a ". . .quick flashing white light with an intensity of more than 2400 candelas in the direction of the aircraft." Incidentally, Maccabee points out that the front harbour light has a section radiating white light to the north with an intensity of 2400 cd., and a section radiating light to the south with an intensity of 7000 cd. Naturally, because the aircraft was south-west of the harbour, the radiation in that direction is of interest.

Ireland's suggested explanation for this particular incident fails on a number of counts. To start with, if the light was radiating according to the published specifications then the illuminated area never intercepted the

path of the aircraft. Also, the light flashes only white and not red and orange as it appears on film. Maccabee says that in order to determine whether or not the light suggested by Ireland, or any light around Wellington, could have made the photographic images, it is necessary to make another brightness comparison. He says that at the time the film was taken, the aircraft was about 122 kilometres from Wellington. If the front harbour light was responsible for the images on the film then it would need to have been radiating an intensity 175,000 times greater than it is capable of doing. He says that even if the harbour light had been photographed from the closest approach of the aircraft before it turned on its final approach into Blenheim, it would have been necessary for the light to have been radiating about nine million candelas.

Squid boat lights. . .?

Finally, I would like to touch briefly on Ireland's claim that the light source we filmed on the first part of the journey north was "most likely a squid boat seen under quite normal viewing conditions." In a letter to me on January 4, 1980, Maccabee states: "New and re-evaluated information tends to blow Ireland's squid boat out of the water. Of course, the fact that he was not able to find such a boat did not help him at all. . .but at least he was scientifically honest enough to state that fact even though it contradicts his hypothesis."

In his report, Ireland makes the following statement: "The squid boat records did not reveal that a boat was fishing near the position of this UFO sighting on the morning of 31 December. However this does not mean that no such boat could have been there, considering that if it had been fishing it could well have been doing so illegally. In such circumstances, it does not appear surprising that there is no record of any known boat fishing there at that time."

The reader should bear in mind that foreign fishing boats can fish quite legally so long as they stay outside the 12-mile limit and their owners report their positions at specified times. Ireland argues that his imaginary squid boat did not report its position because it was within the 12-mile limit. However, all the evidence, even that advanced by Ireland, puts the light source outside the legal limit. Therefore, there would be no reason for the boat not to report its position which leads to the inescapable conclusion that there was no boat there in the first place.

Ireland refers to the intensity of the light source as estimated by Maccabee, i.e. 260,000 candelas, which is comparable to the luminous intensity of a Japanese squid fishing boat, provided that all the 5000-watt bulbs strung around the deck are viewed as one big bulb. As Maccabee points out, the image on the film does not resolve individual bulbs. Another point is the fact that the 260,000 candelas calculation is based on the assumption that the light source was 10 miles from the aircraft, which was the closest the object came to the plane on radar. However, as Maccabee points out, that brightness estimate was conservative because the image used for the calculation, the "lazy eight" configuration, was filmed during the early part of the flight out of Christchurch when the object was closer to 20 miles from the aircraft on radar. If that was

the case, then the object had a far greater luminosity than the previously calculated value of 260,000 candelas, in fact something in the order of more than *two million candelas*.* Maccabee estimates that even at its closest distance, Ireland's hypothetical fishing boat would have had to have been radiating five times the brightness it was capable of. All of this information, as Maccabee so rightly states, tends to blow Ireland's fishing boat theory out of the water.

Conclusion

I believe there are two main reasons for the New Zealand Government preparing a second report on the sightings. To start with, it was obvious to most thinking people that the DSIR and the RNZAF rushed their first superficial report into print. Then Maccabee and his American colleagues presented their findings and made

the results public. That left the New Zealand Government, and its DSIR scientists in particular, with even more egg over their faces. It was too late to admit they were wrong, so they set about plugging up their original leaky report. Finally, after working on it for nearly a year, they came up with "Unfamiliar Observations of Lights in the Night Sky."

To my knowledge, the New Zealand scientists still have not studied the entire UFO footage from the December 31 sightings, nor have they spoken to all the witnesses. Maybe when they finally get around to studying *all** the information, interviewing *all* the witnesses and analysing *all* the movie footage, their findings might be worthy of consideration. Until then, I don't believe they have any right to expect their guesswork to be taken seriously.

*Fogarty's emphasis.

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New UFO books reviewed by . . .

Janet & Colin Bord

IF you have ever wanted to hear the voices of famous names in ufology, you can now own an album of two 12-inch records on which some of them tell of their experiences. Introduced by Dr. J. Allen Hynek of the Center for UFO Studies who were involved in the production of the album, **UFO Encounters** tells the story of UFOs from the foo fighters of World War 2 to the abductions of the 1970s. Witnesses such as Kenneth Arnold, Father Gill and Bill Pecha are heard, and the abductees include Betty Hill, Travis Walton, Louise Smith and Herbert Schirmer. Among the investigators can be heard Dr. Jacques Vallée, Dr. David Saunders, Dr. Leo Sprinkle and Ted Phillips. For those who feel that authority adds authenticity, there are astronaut Gordon Cooper, Kurt Waldheim of the United Nations, and an (early?) recording of President Jimmy Carter saying that he sees no reason why government UFO information could not be released if in doing so it presented no security threat. There is a linking narration by Walt Peters, and the whole recording is polished and professional. Good use is made of the record sleeves, with a clear listing of contents and pictures of the speakers and their experiences, and there is a 4-page insert of photographs of UFOs and landing traces.

Our only criticism is of the background music which underlies every track containing witnesses' voices. It is obtrusive and distracting, and occasionally even obliterates a word from a witness. But perhaps this has been added to prevent 'pirates' infringing the copyright in the material.

These records would be a good way to introduce the scope of the subject to the enquiring and to the sceptical. There is nothing like a spoken first-hand account to bring home the impact and immediacy of a close encounter.

The album has been produced by Investigative Research Associates, Inc., 430 W. Diversey Pkwy., Suite

W, Chicago, IL 60614, U.S.A., and can be obtained direct from them. The price of the album is \$9.95, and it is also available as 8-track tapes and as cassette tapes, both priced at \$11.95. Overseas purchasers should add postage: \$1.26 for sea mail, or \$3.34 for airmail.

Following the success of his early book *Our Mysterious Spaceship Moon* (1975), **Don Wilson** has written **Secrets of our Spaceship Moon** (Sphere paperback, £1.10) as a sequel. Here he covers much the same ground as in the first book, but in greater detail. His approach is designed to appear to the popular market and all the lunar anomalies he writes of are considered only insofar as they support the theory that the moon is an artificially constructed body. Other explanations which have been put forward for the anomalous facts are rarely, if ever, mentioned. Interesting at its own level, but should be read with caution. There is a bibliography and chapter source list, but no index or contents list, and no illustrations.

In **The Manna Machine** (Panther paperback, £1.25) two technologists, **George Sassoon** and **Rodney Dale**, say that they have made an ingenious new translation of some ancient Aramaic writings from the book the *Zohar* and have produced a closely argued thesis that the mystical Kabbalistic text was originally a description of a machine given to the Hebrews of the Exodus. This was known as 'The Ancient of Days' or 'The Ark of the Covenant' and was, say Sassoon and Dale, a portable photosynthesiser powered by a small nuclear reactor. It was designed to produce, for the Hebrews wandering in the desert, a steady supply of a nutritious substance which in the Bible is called Manna. *The Manna Machine* takes its place alongside Blumrich's *The Spaceships of Ezekiel* in suggesting that an advanced technology influenced the development of biblical peoples. A fascinating theme, most easily under-