

UFO PHOTOGRAPHS FROM UMKOMAAS

. . . and a police report from Durban

Philipp J. Human

Here is another photograph of what is claimed to have been an unidentified flying object. Our contributor, a representative of *Flying Saucer Review* in South Africa for many years, puts the claim on record. We hope, however, that there will be a more detailed investigation to follow.

ON Sunday morning, July 23, 1972, Eridanio di Marco, a Shift Superintendent at Saiccor's Chemical Laboratory, came off duty at 4.00 a.m. After a wash and brush-up, he left the factory by car to go home. He was in no particular hurry, and after ten minutes' drive he approached the street in which Umkomanzi Mansions is situated. It is there that he occupies a flat which overlooks the town of Umkomaas, South Coast, Natal, South Africa.

He states that he suddenly noticed a very bright light travelling from north to south, but moving from left to right and up and down at a leisurely pace, and at an angle of about 30° with the horizon.

Arriving home he rushed into his bedroom, woke his wife, Marina, grabbed his camera and went out on to the balcony from where he could see the object very clearly. It was then that he realised he did not have a spool in his camera, so he rushed indoors again and loaded it. By then his wife was watching the object too. It was a somewhat cloudy morning and still very dark. In order to miss the lights of a nearby hotel it was necessary to tilt the camera at an upward angle before taking two shots at 3.5 fps and allowing each about a minute's exposure.

As the object was still clearly visible, he says he decided to have a good look through his binoculars. He was surprised to see that its shape resembled a neon light tube with the upper edges rounded, and about the width of his thumb at arm's length. It was difficult to judge its speed and the distance it had travelled from the time he had first seen it. There was no sound. It continued its journey in the same direction and both watched it until it was a mere pinprick of light in the distance when it vanished completely. It was then 5 o'clock and time for bed.

During the following week he developed the negatives in Saiccor's laboratory but says he did not mention the incident to anybody for fear of ridicule. The next week-end he made some more prints hoping they would be better than the first ones.

It was by the merest chance that I heard about the sighting through someone who had seen a discarded print in the darkroom. I persuaded di Marco to tell me about it, and with much shrugging of shoulders and waving of hands he described what had happened. When I told him that there were many people who would like to study this sighting, he gladly gave me the best prints for the benefit of *Flying Saucer Review*. He

suggested that the negatives would be sent for examination if it was at all necessary. [*This we welcome: the negatives will be examined and the results publicised in due course*—EDITOR.]

I asked about the blurred white marks in the foreground of the picture, but he did not know about them.

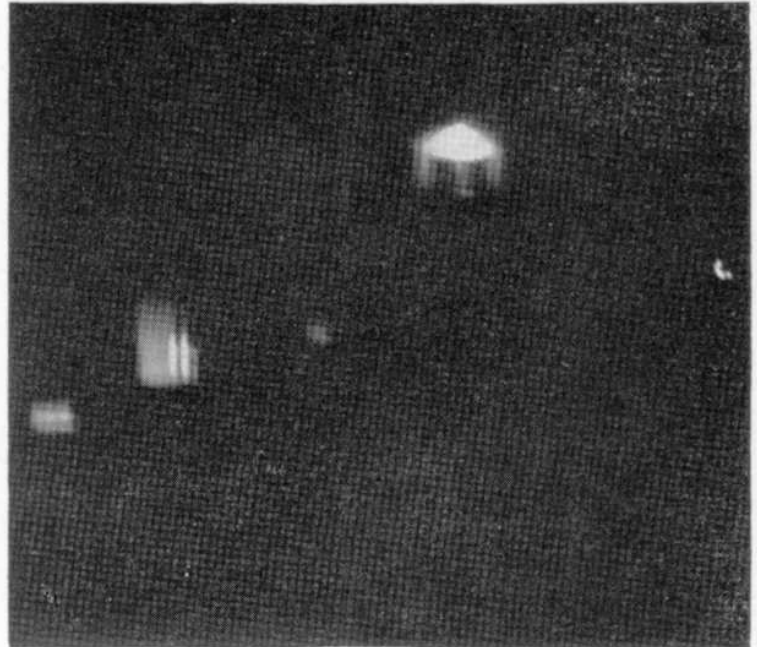


Photo 1

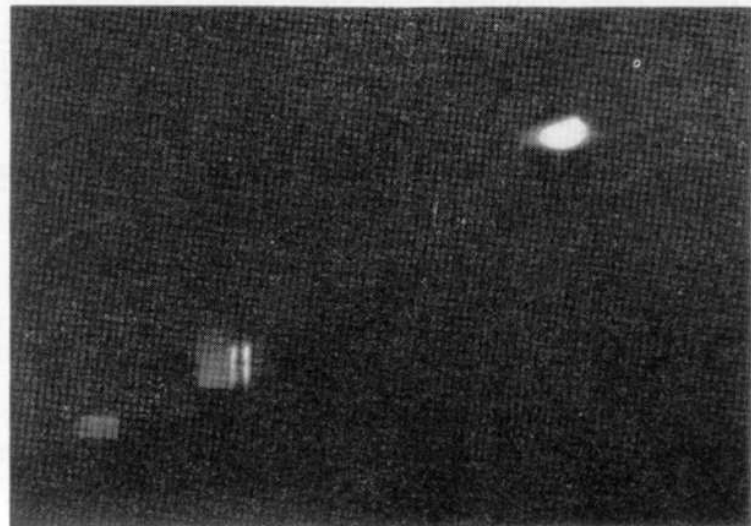
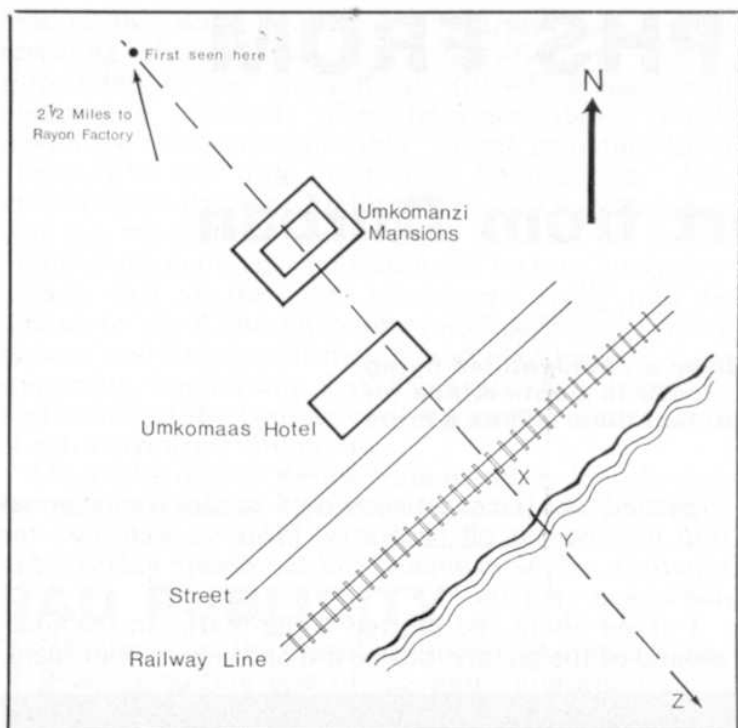


Photo 2



UFO at positions X and Y for photos 1 and 2 respectively (not to scale)

He said that when the pictures were taken he noticed several large stars in that sector of space as the clouds had parted for a while, and he was careful to tilt the camera so as to miss the buildings and street lights in his line of vision. I am enclosing two prints of his first photo. The second one is less distinct. What is surprising is that with the naked eye the object appeared to be a dazzling white light. The photo, however, resembles a disc, and yet through binoculars it was almost cigar-shaped but not quite. (Both photographs were sent later—EDITOR).

Durban Harbour UFO

The Umkomaas photograph was the culmination, for me, of a few weeks that were exciting by any standards for a South African interested in UFOs. The Fort Beaufort incidents, and the furore that followed, had taken us by storm at the end of June and into the first part of July. Then there were other reports up and down the country which, I understand, will be dealt with in FSR. There was, however, one incident, just three days before Eridanio di Marco says he took his UFO photograph, in the reporting of which I played a tiny part.

A UFO was sighted by policemen over Durban Harbour on the morning of July 20. The incident was reported on Radio Port Natal in an Afrikaans newscast at 6.30 a.m. I telephoned the announcer immediately and asked for a repeat in English in the next news broadcast which was due at 7.30 a.m. He asked if I were a "star gazer." I replied: "Yes!"

As I had to leave home to go to the office before 7.30 I rigged up my recorder and my wife taped the broadcast. The newsreader started off by announcing: "And now I have something for all star gazers . . ."

The report was given in even more detail in the *Natal Mercury* of July 21, 1972, under the headline "PUZZLED

POLICE WATCH UFO OVER BAY." The object was first seen at about 3.30 a.m. Here is the newspaper report—

"Policemen on duty at the Radio Police Station in the early hours of yesterday morning were baffled by an unidentified flying object which hovered over the Durban harbour area for more than an hour.

"Later a policeman at Tongaat reported sighting a similar object.

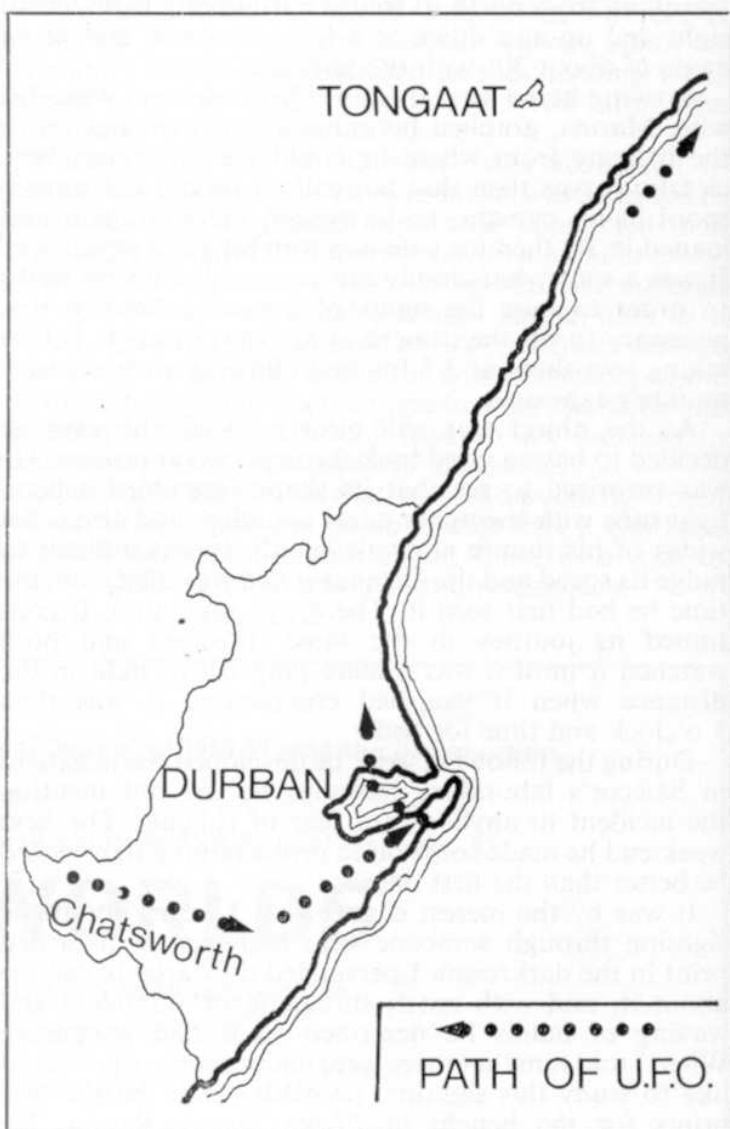
"The police switchboard was inundated with calls from people who sighted the UFO.

"An Indian constable from the Chatsworth station reported sighting the object soon after the first reports were received.

"The entire staff of the Radio Station—nine men—then watched the object, which was changing colour from red to green, move from the Chatsworth area to Wentworth and the Bluff before moving off at an 'incredible speed' in a northerly direction.

"The sighting of the object was noted in the station's events book.

"At 5 a.m. reserve constable Chris de Wet was at home asleep when he was telephoned by an Indian constable from the Tongaat station and told that a UFO had been sighted off Tongaat Beach.



SOUTH AFRICAN MINI-WAVE, 1972—PART 1

Charles Bowen

THE Braeside broadsides fired by farmer Bennie Smit, and his policemen "allies" from Fort Beaufort, when confronted by a landed UFO on June 26, 1972, triggered off a counterblast of indignation and protest. The persistent "visitor", whether or not it were spacecraft, probe, induced image, collective hallucination, fireball, "thinking globe" or what-have-you, acted in a way suggestive of a measure of intelligent control, and that despite the savage mauling meted out to it.¹

Letters of protest poured into the newspaper offices. The newspapers in turn scurried hither and thither consulting experts who were usually experts in something else, and hadn't a clue about the UFO phenomenon. When they got down to the bare bones of investigation and reporting the papers frequently did a good job—as will be seen later. On one rare occasion they unearthed someone who knew something about the subject and a general article was the result.

The article was published in the *Rand Daily Mail* of July 8, 1972. Entitled "UFOs—fact or fancy?" it was under the signature of Frank Morton, one of our readers, to whom, in *FSR Case Histories*, we have already acknowledged our indebtedness for furnishing us with useful information during the early days of the Fort Beaufort flap. Mr. Morton, who was introduced as a representative of APRO, presented a reasonable summary of the UFO phenomenon from farmer

Martin's 1878 "saucer" and the LeRoy, Kansas flap of 1897, via the classic New Guinea wave and the Kelly-Hopkinsville goblins, to Fort Beaufort; he threw in a slashing attack on the late George Adamski for good measure. Unhappily, apart from quotations from the late Dr. James E. McDonald's papers to the AAAS,² the author gave no source references, although many of his sources will be recognised by anyone well versed in the literature of the subject. The article was accompanied by a reproduction of the Lars Thörn photograph taken near Skillingaryd, Sweden, on May 6, 1971, investigated by GICOFF and reported by Sven-Olof Fredrickson for *Flying Saucer Review*.³ This also appeared without any form of acknowledgment.

A week before, on July 1, the same newspaper had published an excellent report by Lin Menge, who had interviewed a number of people whose names were bobbing in the wake of the Fort Beaufort affair.⁴ "I know of no law which forbids you to shoot at an invader from outer space," was the reply of General D. A. Bester, Chief Deputy Commissioner of the South African Police when reporter Menge broached the matter with him. The General fenced cagily before admitting that a senior officer was conducting an investigation, then terminated the interview with a remarkable statement:

"One cannot prescribe rules for such a thing. There

A UFO PHOTOGRAPH FROM UMKOMAAS *Continued from page 4*

"I got dressed and drove to a hill overlooking the beach. I could see the object quite clearly. It was about the same size and shape as a robot light. It changed colour from red to green at regular intervals of about one second. It appeared to be hovering about 200m above the sea, close inshore. I watched it through binoculars for over 30 minutes," he said yesterday.

"And last night Radio Police headquarters were again

inundated with calls from people claiming they had spotted an unidentified 'Catherine wheel-shaped' object over the Bluff.

"Mrs. R. Jooste and her family, visitors from Johannesburg, said they watched the object through binoculars from a sixteenth floor hotel room on the Durban beach-front."

Comments on the Umkomaas photographs by Percy Hennell

Editor's note: The negatives of the two photographs, in a single strip, were obtained promptly by Mr. Human. They were sent to Mr. Percy Hennell for examination, and it is his enlargements that have been used with Mr. Human's article.

Here we have genuine photographs of a luminous object: there are no obvious signs of trickery. However, they are typical of the unfortunate photographs we usually get

of what is claimed to be the "real thing." I do not pretend to know what that "real thing" is, but it must be of some satisfaction to those in the "hardware" school of

thought to see once again, in Photo 1, the typical "mushroom top" type of object. It interests me to note—and this is an important point—that in his excitement the photographer "shook" his camera up and down, and this movement is visible in the image of the object.

Photo 2 is poor, and tells us little. Again, a degree of camera shake is present.

have been many reports of these objects over the years, but I have never come across one that was authentic. There has never been such a thing in the history of the world."

Lin Menge foresaw a rocket for the police at Fort Beaufort: "Stick to catching stock thieves—or else . . .!"

Interest in UFOs soared for a few weeks, and during this time there were a number of reports. I do not suggest that the Fort Beaufort furore generated *all* the subsequent sightings, but it must have been responsible for encouraging people to look up at the skies, and it is possible that a good share of the reports were of customary misinterpretations. Few of the other incidents approached in interest farm Braeside's persistent low-level UFO. I think it reasonable to describe the collection of events in South Africa in June, July and August 1972 as a *mini-wave*. Here is a summary of those incidents that have not already found a place in our pages—including *FSR Case Histories* Supplement 11:

1. Wellington (Cape Province), July 1, 1972. Just before 7.30 a.m. Mr. J. Fourie of Basson Road, Wellington, was wakened by his wife who pointed out a bright orange "thing" hovering over the Wellington Orphanage. Said Mr. Fourie: "I ran outside and saw this thing. It looked like the belly light of an aircraft flicking on and off. It was about 260 metres above ground and was about the size of a coffee table. It just hovered there." The witness watched it for a while, then it rose and moved towards Paarl, before moving over the mountain towards Worcester. As it went, the colour changed to white. Throughout the incident the object was soundless. There was one other witness, the local milkman, a Mr. Basson. (*The Argus* of July 1, 1972—evening newspaper.)

2. Constantia (Cape Province), July 1, 1972. Mrs. B. Merand, of Meadowridge, saw a round white light with two tails underneath like "sparklers" hovering behind a row of trees in Constantia Road opposite the new sports complex. After about five minutes the light rose, said Mrs. Merand, and moved in the direction of the Constantiaberg beacon. The time was 10.30 p.m., and the object looked like a golden star. Mr. R. Hurly, president of the Cape Town Astronomical Society suggested the object could have been the bright star *Canopus* which was setting at that time. (*Cape Times* of July 3, 1972.)

3. Durban (Natal), July 3 and 4, 1972. Mr. A. G. Hill of Marine Parade reported that he saw an unusual, shimmering bright object, over the sea on successive mornings. The first occasion, at about 6 a.m. on July 3, was seen when he woke up. Looking through the window he saw a thing shaped like a bone, with a "wedge-shaped thing about a third of the way down." It pulsed, and looked like a fancy ring with a lot of diamonds. It dazzled, like a cluster of 100 bright stars. Mr. Hill thought what he saw might have been a comet. On July 4, at 5.40 a.m. he again saw "the" object, square in shape, and without the dazzling welding-torch effect of the previous day. It seemed as if pieces chipped off and fell away from the bottom: the object did not change colour. (*Daily News* of July 4, 1972.)

4. Kraankuil and Witput stations, Orange River, July 5, 1972. A UFO was seen by three station foremen at stations along the main trans-Karoo railway line,

about 100 miles from Kimberley, in the vicinity of the Orange River. Mr. Lourens Rautenbach saw it first from Kraankuil Station at about 9.00 p.m., coming from the direction of Petrusville. He said it looked like a ball of fire which changed colour from blue to green. To him it appeared to be about 25 cms. in diameter (at arm's length?—C.B.). Mr. Rautenbach said it flickered along the outer edge, and looked as though it had life in it. It changed in size as it swung away in a semi-circle towards Orange River Station, and the witness phoned Orange River Station to alert them.

At Orange River Station Mr. Francois van Rensburg saw the object as it came over a ridge from the direction of Hopetown. It was whitish-yellow, and moved silently at a steady height, flickering as it faded in a northerly direction towards Witput.

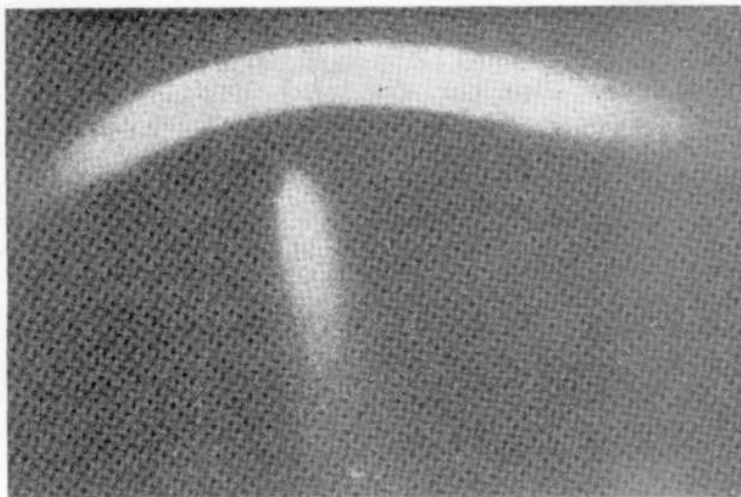
Mr. Nick Basson, at Witput Station was quite shaken to see the "unearthly" object hovering above trucks in the station yard. He said it was about the size of a saucer (as he saw it?—C.B.) and was yellow and amber. It then shot off over Hopetown. Half-an-hour later the object (or another one?—C.B.) "shot back past the station" in the direction of the Orange River. It seemed even bigger this time. It later returned over the line after seemingly travelling towards Luckhoff, and finally disappeared, moving down the Orange River. (*The Pretoria News* of July 6, 1972.)

5. Pietermaritzburg (Natal), midnight, June 22, 1972 (reported July 6, 1972). Mr. Colin Vary, businessman and qualified pilot, was with a friend, Miss Carole Mitchell. They were returning home, and were at the corner of Boshoff and Prince Alfred Streets when Mr. Vary saw an object the apparent size of a cricket ball appear over the Alcan factory. The UFO was moving in the direction from Impendhle towards Oribi at what Mr. Vary estimated to be 4,000 feet, with a speed of 400 m.p.h., and descending at a rate of about 3,000 feet a minute. It was a bright, greenish blue. Before trees obscured it from view it covered an estimated distance of between 10 to 15 miles in a few seconds. Mr. Vary said the UFO's actual size must have been about that of a bus: it was definitely a solid object, and it was not a jet aircraft. On July 5 Mr. Vary flew over the area looking down from the position where the UFO had been when first sighted, and that was when he formed his opinion about its actual size. (*The Natal Witness* of July 6, 1972.)

6. Johannesburg, July 6, 1972. Seen by dozens of people, and reported by Mr. G. Duveen of Gresswold who, with his wife and four friends, watched a glowing, orange-coloured object, for ten minutes as it travelled across the sky "at tremendous speed." All we know about the time was that it was "at night." (*The Star*, July 7, 1972.)

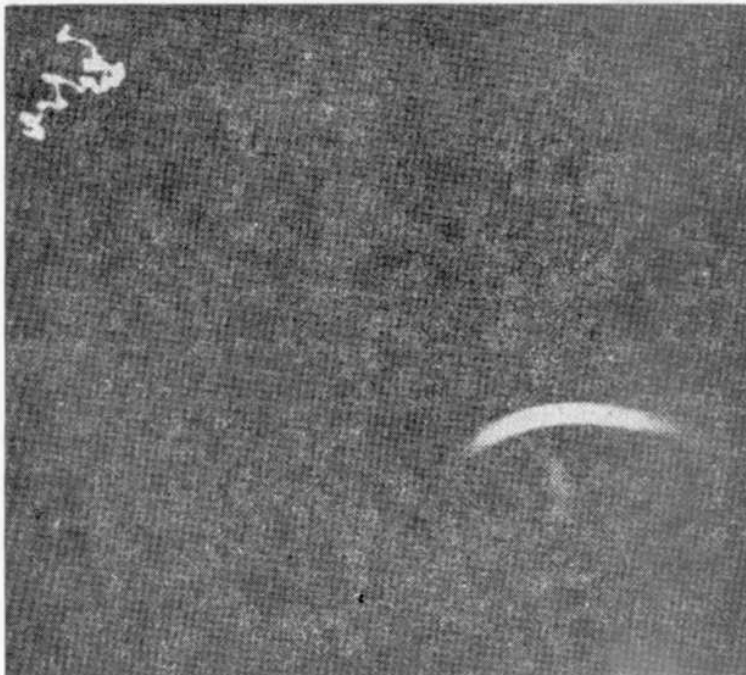
It was probably this same object that was reported as having put on a half-hour show over Johannesburg around about 9.00 p.m., by people in Inanda, Illovo, Linksfield and Kew. Mr. John Hotine of Third Street, Kew, said that in the bright light he could see, through his binoculars, a reflection on its side. It was balloon shaped. Mr. G. Kraft of Linksfield, said it looked like a flaming feather duster.

7. Port Elizabeth (Cape Province), July 7, 1972. At around 7.50 p.m. the *Eastern Province Herald* received



The unidentified flying object over Port Elizabeth, taken by photographer Geoffrey Allen, using a 35 mm camera with a 640 mm lens.

“bright, swiftly moving object” in close attendance. Captain Chester Chandler said that the UFO paced the a telephone call from a reader, Mr. J. Erasmus, who reported that he had been watching an object, the apparent size of a tennis ball, changing colour from yellow to white. It was roughly above the post office, and had been there for at least 15 minutes. A reporter and photographer scanned the sky from the roof of the *Herald* building, and located a flashing object in almost the opposite direction, high above Newton Park. It passed behind cloud, and when it reappeared, photographer Geoffrey Allen took several pictures through a



This group of unidentified objects was photographed over Port Elizabeth. The picture above shows the moon-shaped “mother ship” and its proximity to the “scout ship” taken with a time exposure and illustrating its jerky movement. The egg-shaped image was how it appeared to those who saw it.

[The above is a newspaper caption, not mine—C.B.]

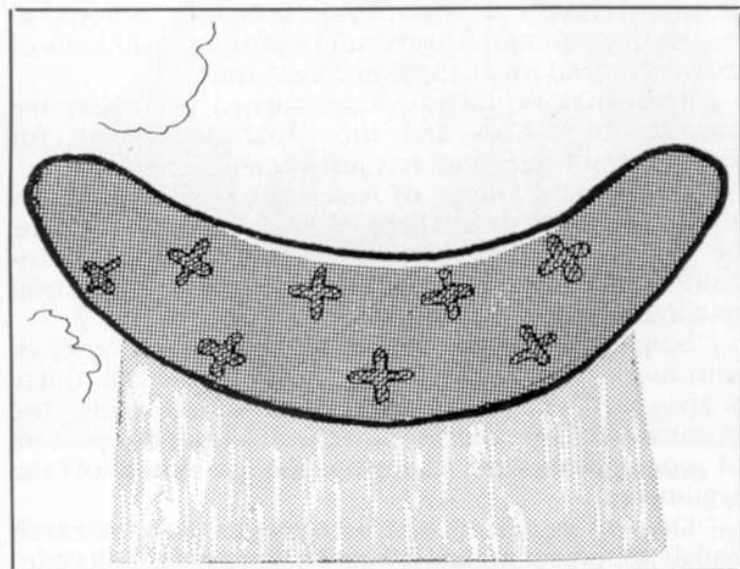
long telephoto lens. (35 mm. camera with a 640 mm. lens, exposures of one-fifteenth of a second.)

The object emitted red, white and green light, and appeared to break into two at infrequent intervals. By 8.45 p.m. it had disappeared. The umbrella-shaped image was from one of the telephoto lens shots. The film used was 800 ASA, and it was developed for 15 minutes. (*The Cape Times* of July 7, 1972.)

The South African Air Force spokesman was puzzled by the Port Elizabeth UFO. There had been no night-flying exercises at the time the UFO was in view. National Airways Corporation and the Algoa Flying Club said their last flights were at 6.00 p.m., and there were no other light aircraft in the area. The South African Airways Boeing from Johannesburg arrived on schedule at 8.30 p.m. The Met. Office said no weather balloons had been released during the time of the sighting. (*The Argus*, July 7, 1972.)

8. **Queenstown** (Eastern Cape Province), July 3, 1972. Mr. R. P. Golding of Sandringham said he and his wife had seen, at about 8.00 p.m., an object that “looked like two stars joined together, with a red light below and a green light on top. This object appeared to be over the aerodrome. Mr. Golding said his radio, tuned to Springbok Radio on FM at the time, “went funny.” The object went up and down about ten times, then appeared to drop right out of the sky and disappear behind the house at the back of the Goldings’ house. Despite enquiries by the local newsmen, nobody else in the area reported radio malfunctions. (*The Daily Representative*, Queenstown, July 4, 1972.)

9. **Fish River Bridge** (Eastern Cape Province), July 5, 1972. Railway truck driver Mr. Mitchell Struwig of Port Elizabeth, and his assistant, Mr. Thys Breed, were driving down the Fish River Pass on the Port Elizabeth-East London national road at 1.25 a.m., when, on the



Fish River object, based on witnesses’ sketches

left-hand side of the river, near the Fish River Bridge, Mr. Struwig saw a half-moon shaped luminous red object in the sky. It appeared to have an irregular pattern on it, like a net, or rope covering. Three or four minutes after the initial sighting, the object sank out of

sight behind the mountains. The cabin suddenly became ice-cold: "something that never happens as it is always very hot inside," said Mr. Struwig. The object was shaped like a baby's bottle, but with rounded ends, and the witnesses estimated that it was about 100 metres in diameter. It was a darker red than the light it was emitting. Mr. Struwig knows the route well: he drives it almost every night. (*Daily Dispatch* of July 6, 1972.)

10. Over Natal, and elsewhere, during the week-ended July 9, 1972. On a date not given, the Captain and crew of a South African Airways Boeing 727 reported a "bright, swiftly moving object" in close attendance. Captain Chester Chandler said that the UFO paced the plane for a while before veering off to the south west. They were at a height of 2743 metres, and gave ground control at Durban a running commentary on the object's moves.

The airliner was flying at 250 knots (482 km.p.h.) when the incident occurred, and was being prepared to

descend and land at Durban. The senior flight officer, Mr. Graham Smith, and the flight engineer, Mr. G. Koekemoer, also saw the object. Captain Chandler said the shape of the UFO was indistinct. "It was a bright light which ground control assured us was not emanating from any aircraft they knew of." Checks with the S.A.A.F. and other authorities drew negative replies. Captain Chandler continued: "Ground Control was very excited about the object as it is their responsibility to see that nothing is on our flight path." The object passed at 8.50 p.m., and paced the plane before it veered off.

On an earlier flight during the same week—this time to Cape Town—Captain Chandler has spotted another fast-moving object (but not near his plane) sweeping across the skies from north to south.

Again, on Wednesday, July 5, yet another UFO passed a Boeing 727 while it was on a flight to Cape
(Continued on page 20)

LATE EXTRA . . .

NASA TO URGE SCIENTISTS TO LISTEN FOR CIVILISATIONS IN SPACE

In the *London Evening Standard* of October 14, 1972, we read in an item received that day from correspondent Michael Jeffries in Vienna, under the headline "A BOOST FOR THE LITTLE GREEN MEN" that—

"Existence in Space of other intelligences and civilisations is so likely that scientists should now mount a serious major listening programme for their radio signals. This is the main conclusion of a report to be published shortly by NASA, the American Space Agency. It is based on the results of Project Cyclops, believed to be the most comprehensive study of the possibilities of extraterrestrial intelligence in recent times.

"This \$100,000 investigation, carried out under the auspices of NASA and the American Society for Engineering Education, has just been completed.

"Dr. Bernard Oliver, of America's Stanford University, gave the first details here, of the research programme he headed, to the International Academy of Astronautics' meeting on communication with extraterrestrial intelligence—CETI.

"Sceptics too are in for a shock. New discoveries in astronomy and biological sciences in the last thirty years—particularly the belief that amino acids, the precursors of life, can form in the evolutionary process of our galaxy—are changing the emphasis of the arguments.

"Dr. Oliver, who is also vice-president for research and development of the Hewlett Packard firm, Colorado, told scientists: 'In all likelihood intelligent civilisations have existed in the galaxy for four or five thousand million years. It seems very probable that many of these have established interstellar contact. If so, then communication has been taking place between civilisations for aeons, and beacons may well exist to help young races, such as ourselves, to join this galactic community.' He calls it our 'galactic heritage.'"

* * * * *

In the *Sunday Telegraph* of October 15, 1972, the story was taken up by Annelise Schulz from Vienna under the headline "SEARCH FOR LIFE IN SPACE"—

"Intelligent beings very likely existed outside the solar system and had probably been in interstellar communication with each other for 'aeons' a scientist told a conference yesterday.

"One day Earth might join these galactic communities and profit as the youngest form of intelligent life from them, he declared.

"Dr. Bernard Oliver, an American, speaking on the last day of the Astronautical Conference in Vienna, reported on his country's Cyclops Project which is devoted to the search for signals from civilisations outside the solar system.

"The most suitable microwaves for communicating with extraterrestrial intelligent beings were between 1,420 and 1,662 megahertz, he said, yet a whole 'orchard full' of giant radio telescopes, computers and other intricate technology were needed to search the skies for such signals.

"Professor Sebastian von Horner, of Greenbank Observatory in America, said that our galaxy—the Milky Way—contained about 2,000,000,000 planets on which superior forms of organic life were possible. The nearest was some 15 light-years away, too far for any astronautical expeditions but still within possible reach by signal.

"According to Professor von Horner, about 40,000 technologically developed civilisations might exist in our galaxy."

THE FORT BEAUFORT POLICE OFFICERS: *An Interview*

Ivan Clark

Our contributor is a correspondent of *Flying Saucer Review* who lives in Queenstown, Cape Province, South Africa, a relatively short distance from Fort Beaufort, the scene of the incidents that opened the recent UFO wave in the Republic.

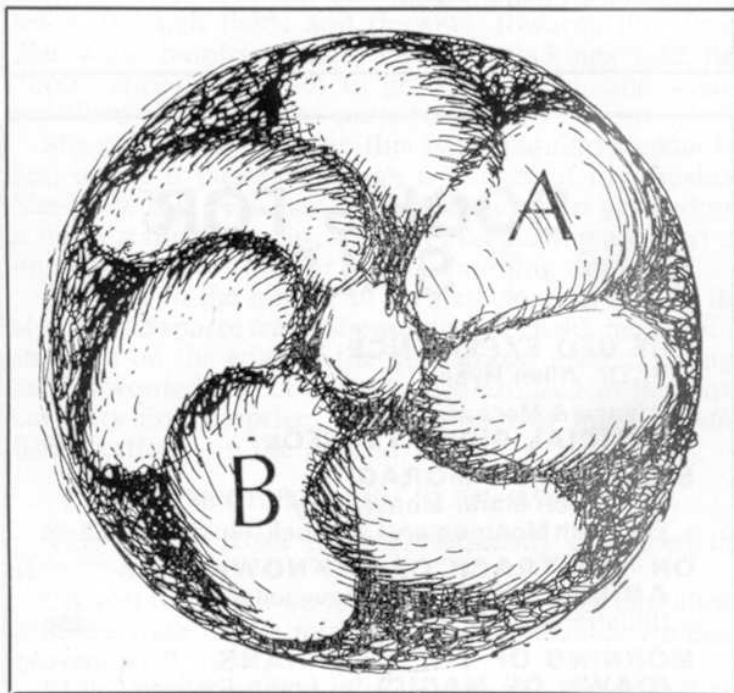
BY now, your journals will have received plenty of newspaper reports of the UFO events at Fort Beaufort in the Eastern Cape.* Nevertheless I am sending this report because it is based on an interview with the two policemen concerned in the events, and the account may well include information which was not published in the newspapers.

The two officers, Warrant Officer P. van Rensburg and Sergeant P. Kitching, do not scoff about UFOs, and refuse to accept explanations of their UFO experience as satellites (in tree-top orbits?), or elephants suffering from some sort of strange malady! Here is a brief account of the events *based on what I was told in my interview.*

object was about 200 yards away, and was egg-shaped and glowing all over. After a while Mr. Smit became uneasy, and decided to call the police; the two officers named earlier in this report arrived at about 9.00 a.m.

Sergeant Kitching described the object as being about three metres long and egg-shaped. "It was hovering length-ways, just partly hidden behind some bushy trees. The colour of the object was a gun metal blue-black, and after we watched it for a while it started to glow a coal red all over, the same as when Mr. Smit saw it early on. Then we noticed a vivid bright star-like light to one side of the object; this was flashing at intervals."

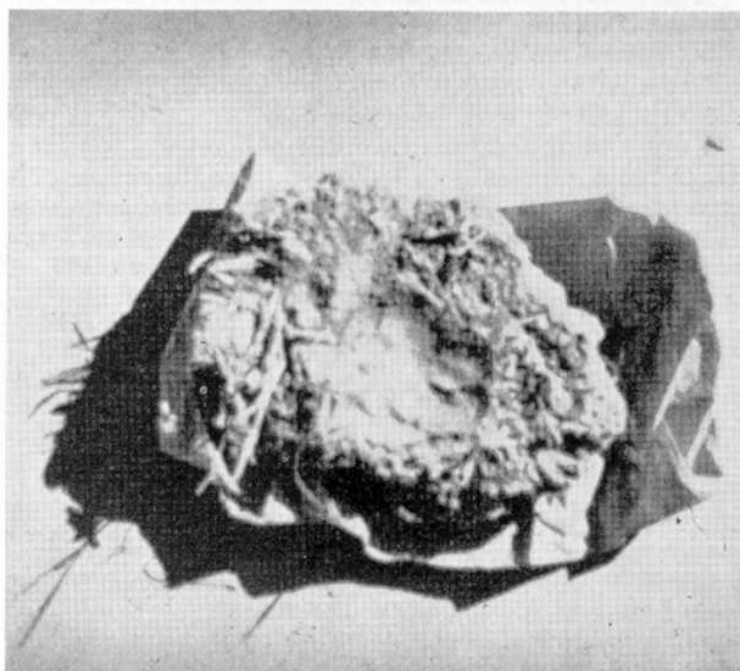
As they directed the native labourers to the object in thick bush, Sergeant Kitching says he was positive



Key: A=Unflattened area B=Ovoid depressions
Illustration is actual size

At about 8.00 a.m. on June 26, 1972, some native farm labourers came running to Mr. Bennie Smit the owner of the farm Braeside, near Fort Beaufort. They had seen what they thought was a fire in the thick bushland.

Mr. Smit, thinking it might be poachers on his land, proceeded to the spot with his .303 rifle. He there observed an unusual object hovering partly hidden behind some bushy trees about eighteen feet high. The



The sod of earth dug up by W/O van Rensburg

that it was under some form of intelligent control, for when the labourers shouted from the bush, the object moved down out of sight of the observers. The labourers were unable to locate it and were ordered back. Now Mr. Smit decided to try to locate it and went into the bush with a handkerchief tied to a long stick so that the police could see him and guide him: this venture also failed and Mr. Smit returned.

Unfortunately the observers now decided to take other measures, and shoot at it. Fifteen rounds were

nired, the seventh of which (they said) hit the object, and, as Sergeant Kitching said, made a dull thud. The object rocked from side to side. (Apparently a .303 rifle shot has an impact of about 18 tons at full velocity.) At this point the object turned from a red glow to a green glow and then to yellow. The police watched it for an hour before having to leave the area, but Mr. Smit stayed to see it leave a little while later. He says the object turned on end and moved away climbing quite rapidly, and was soon hidden by the trees. Mr. Smit said that when he was in the thick bush he could hear the object making a humming noise, and that he and family had since then heard the noise over the house, but had not seen it again.

The police returned later to the farm and found the spot where the UFO seems to have landed. Three sets of three impressions, or prints, found in the *damp* [My italics—EDITOR] clay (see drawing). W/O van Rensburg dug up a print, and he was kind enough to show me this when I visited him. The print is most unusual. It is about 2½ inches in diameter, and gives the impression that legs from the object may have spiralled out of it and stopped just as the pads touched the ground. The clay print was turned slightly in a clockwise direction, with a portion of the mark—just to one side of the middle of the print—not flattened at all. Thus it left the same kind of impression as the hoof of a cow or a sheep might leave, flattened down at the sides and hollow in the middle.

There have been a number of UFO reports from Queenstown, my home town, mostly by night, and although I have been on the alert, I have not managed to see anything myself. I carry my camera, with a 375 power telephoto lens, wherever I go.

I don't think the Fort Beaufort police will shoot at a UFO again, especially as I showed them the report of a reservoir security officer in the United States who was blinded after shooting at one. Mr. Smit says he'll try to catch one next time—using a large net.

* *This is so: an article summarising the mass of material was published in FSR CASE HISTORIES Supplement 11 August 1972*
—EDITOR.

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BUFORA NEWS

London Lectures: "The Mystery Machine" by Alan Watts, BSc, FRMetS, Saturday, 2nd December. "UFOs, Science and Scientists" by Mark Stenhoff, Saturday, 6th January, 1973. Both at Kensington Central Library, Campden Hill Road, W.8, at 7 p.m.

Research HQ: The Association is in the process of setting up an office at Newchapel Observatory, in Staffordshire. This project is under the direction of Anthony Pace, FRAS, BUFORA'S Director of Research and joint owner of the Observatory.

"A Guide To The UFO Phenomenon": This 18-page booklet has been authored by members of the Executive Committee to provide factual information about UFOs and the Association for serious enquirers. Copies, price 42p, inc. post, available from the Vice-Chairman, Lionel Beer, and the Hon. Treasurer, Arnold West, 49 Mill Road, Burgess Hill, Sussex.

Send 9in. x 4in. S.A.E. for lecture programme and details of the **BRITISH UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION** to: Miss Christine Henning (R8), 99 Mayday Gardens, London, SE3.

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by Bernard Heuvelmans
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- MORNING OF THE MAGICIANS (DAWN OF MAGIC)**
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THE CENNINA LANDING OF 1954

Sergio Conti

NOVEMBER 1, 1954, is a date that marks the occurrence of one of the most extraordinary UFO landing and contact cases ever recorded (it has already been quoted by Vallée as No. 24 in his *Century of Landings*).

Cennina is a small town near Búcine, in the Province of Arezzo.

On the morning of that day (a Monday and a feast-day in the Catholic Church) Rosa Lotti nei Dainelli, a forty-year-old peasant woman, mother of four children, living at a farm called "La Collina" which is situated in a lonely region between Cennina and Capànnole, had risen early to go down into Cennina to visit the church and the cemetery. She was carrying a bunch of carnations, destined for the altar of the Madonna Pellegrina, whose procession had taken place the preceding evening.

It was 6.30 a.m.

Rosa Lotti rarely went into town, and spent most of her time on her arduous duties on the farm.

On this feast-day morning however she had put on her new dress and started out along the footpath that leads, through fields and thickets, towards the town. She went barefoot, carrying her stockings and her "best" shoes so as not to get them dirty. She would put them on before she came to the first houses.

She reached a point on this path, regularly taken by her, where it passed through a thicket of low bushes. She knew this path perfectly. She had even gone along it many a time at night, without ever having any sort of unpleasant encounter or noting anything unusual.

Arriving in the middle of a small clearing among the shrubs and sparse trees, she suddenly beheld, near a pine tree and on the edge of the little grassy area, a strange and unwonted object that at once aroused in her both curiosity and surprise. It was a sort of huge *spindle*, fixed vertically in the ground.

The Craft and the "Little Men"

This is how Rosa Lotti subsequently described the strange machine:

"A sort of double cone, over 2 metres high and about a metre wide in the middle." (In *La Nazione Italiana*, November 2, 1954.)

"Like two bells joined together at their bases." (In *La Settimana Incom*, No. 24, Year XV.)

"The object was very swollen out in the middle and pointed at the two ends. It seemed to be covered with leather." (In *Il Giornale del Mattino*, November 2, 1954.)

"The outside of it shone as though it was of very polished light metal. On the lower cone there was an open glass door, and inside it could be seen two little seats, *little seats like those used by children*. In the central part of the *spindle*, where it was widest, there was a sort of roundish glass, closely following the round shape of the mysterious machine. Rosa Lotti had heard no

AN ITALIAN CLASSIC

Thanks to the work of Aimé Michel, Charles Garreau, Jacques Vallée, René Fouéré, Raymond Veillith, and of the many other excellent French investigators, we now know the great French UFO Wave of 1954 in much detail.

But naturally a UFO wave cannot be expected to stop short at one of our national frontiers, so it will carry on and spill over into neighbouring territory. It seems that the Italian part of the Wave of 1954 will one day be seen to have been just as great as the French phase, but our knowledge of the Italian picture for that year is still very far from complete. The Umbrian Section of C.U.N. (Centro Unico Nazionale) have promised us for the near future the first full Catalogue of all the Italian cases of that extraordinary year, and we look forward to publishing it.

In the meantime, I have translated from *Il Giornale dei Misteri** No. 17 (August 1972) Signor Sergio Conti's exhaustive account of what the Italians consider to have been perhaps the most remarkable of all their 1954 cases. It figures briefly in Dr. Jacques Vallée's *Century Of Landings (Une Siècle d'Atterisages)*—published by *Lumières dans la Nuit*—which is an up-to-date version of the catalogue which accompanies the American version only of his *Passport to Magonia*, but so far as I am aware, no full description of it has ever appeared in English. I am sure that our readers will welcome it. I believe also that the Cennina case will be accepted as a very important one, on account of the duration of the encounter (ten minutes) and the reported very close approach (at a distance varying from under 1m. to 4m. or so) of the entities. This gave the eyewitness plenty of time in which to study the features and the dress of two homuncules who, to my way of thinking, bear a remarkable likeness to certain small creatures seen repeatedly by our European forebears over the past thousand years and more.

GORDON CREIGHTON.

sound from it." (In *La Nazione Italiana*, November 2, 1954.)

Rosa Lotti had stopped in her tracks, astonished and curious. But her surprise was only just beginning. From behind the "spindle" she beheld two strange beings emerge. "Almost like men, but of the size of children," was her description.

The two little beings approached her with friendly expressions on their faces. She had plenty of time to

* The new Italian monthly, *Il Giornale dei Misteri*, devoted to Forteana, Ufology, Parapsychology, Mysticism, etc., is published by Corrado Tedeschi Editore in Firenze (Florence) and can be recommended as excellent value to those who read Italian. We are indebted to its Editors, Giulio Brunner and Sergio Conti, for permission to reproduce a translation of Signor Conti's account of a truly remarkable Italian case.