

FROM THE TASMANIAN "FLAP" OF 1974 - PART I

W. K. Roberts et al

Highlights from a report submitted by the Tasmanian UFO Investigation Centre*

This year (1974) has seen an unprecedented number of low-level sightings from part of Tasmania. Briefly, in the April-May period we had "nocturnal lights" reported from the North-West and the West: then from May onwards until last month (October), sightings have been concentrated mainly in the North and North-East. The Centre's representatives have contacted witnesses in the areas and examined sighting points. Where it was not possible to visit witnesses, follow-up was made by telephone.

The witnesses were just everyday people going about their normal routine, and no effort was made on any person's part to gain publicity or reward from the sightings. Some of the more notable cases are recorded here.

Motorists paced in Derwent Valley

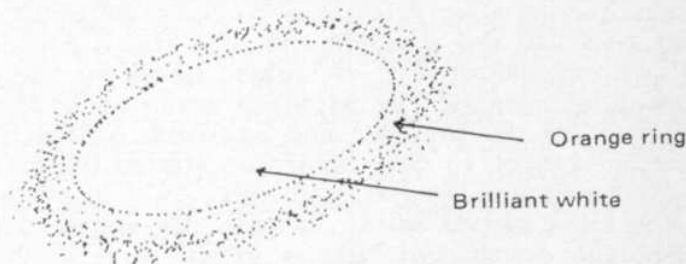
Late February brought low level UFO approaches to motor vehicles, first in the Derwent Valley, then in the Latrobe area. Our first witness will remain anonymous and we will refer to him as Mr. M.

In the early hours of Monday, February 25, Mr. M. was travelling home at about 4.20 a.m. on a calm night with a starry sky. The sighting took place on the Westerway-Plenty-New Norfolk road which travels mainly through open country, following the Derwent River most of the way from Rushy Park to New Norfolk with trees near the river. At the time, only one other vehicle was seen. Approaching the road junction at Westerway, he noticed a round light in the north-eastern sky. At first he took little interest in it, and turned at the intersection for Bushy Park (S.E. approx.). Initially the road heads out along a lengthy straight of a couple of miles to Koonya. It was here that a yellow glow suddenly lit up the front of M's motor vehicle. The glow increased in brilliance and looking around for its source the witness was surprised to see a mass of light above the car. With his attention off the road momentarily, he found the car running along the rough verge by the time he could pull to a halt. He got out of the car and made an inspection for damage, then looked around for the light, whose glow had faded.

It was still there, directly above the witness, and appeared as a disc of brilliant white light with a flat surface and an ill-defined orange ring near the outer edge. He estimated the size of the UFO from this and later observations as being about 15 feet across.

He decided to continue home, there being little else he could do. The thought occurred to him that he might find a second witness *en route*. The UFO now took up a position ahead of the motor vehicle at a 25 to 30 degree elevation. It seemed to follow

the light of the beams of the car for it tended to round a corner only after the headlights had swung round, and then it would swoop across to take up its position in front. A couple of times however he was disconcerted to find, on a long curve, that the UFO would go ahead and be waiting for him to catch up. At other times the object gained elevation where there were roadside trees.



Westaway-New Norfolk Road object

Once again, M. stopped to have a better look at the light, this time at Glenora. But the UFO, like a cat with a mouse, just hung stationary in the sky some distance ahead, waiting for him to continue on. Continuing via the Salmon Ponds road, the UFO moved well ahead, being visible below the distant hills and now much smaller in appearance. Near Plenty it went behind a hill, reappearing as a large light over the hills. M. now saw a truck coming and flagged down the driver to show him the object that had been pacing him for so long. The driver glanced back at the light in the sky, said it was only a big star, and then headed off towards Bushy Park.

M. shortly afterwards arrived home in New Norfolk about 5.10 a.m. He called out his wife and raced to find his camera for a photograph of the now stationary light high in the sky towards Brighton. It wasn't his night. He had no film for a picture and whilst briefly inside, the object disappeared.

It was ascertained there were no aircraft movements at the time, whilst the only planet visible would have been Venus just rising in the east when the sighting terminated.

Motorists paced on the Moriarty Road

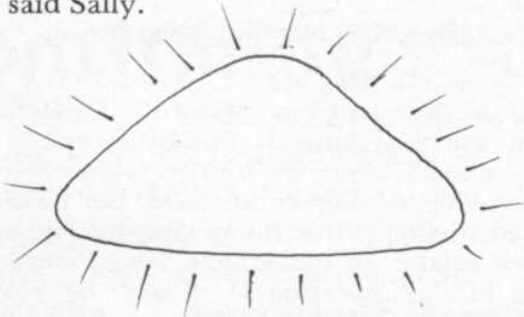
Running east from Latrobe is the Moriarty Road. It leaves the Bass Highway just outside the town, passes Staggs Hill and runs to the farming district of Moriarty some 4½ miles away. On Wednesday evening, February 27, something out of the ordinary occurred on this stretch of road. A UFO sighting was first reported to the *Advocate* newspaper and in turn to the Tasmanian UFO Investigation Centre the following day.

A surprise was in store for Greg Thornton and his girlfriend Sally Lamprey as they returned home to

* Secretary, W. K. Roberts. Address: 366 Huon Road, South Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7000.

Latrobe at 9.45 along Moriarty Road. Greg saw the object first when they were about a mile east of Latrobe. "What's that funny looking thing?" he asked his girl friend, having noticed a bright orange dot ahead. Roadside trees obscured the view briefly and the light wasn't sighted for a further 150 yards. When it was in view again, he pulled up his car and switched off the headlights. There, about a mile to the west over the Mersey Hospital area and several hundred feet up, was the bright orange light. It seemed to be increasing in size. Once he had turned off the car lights the UFO approached rapidly but slowed as it neared the witnesses. No sound could be heard at any stage.

The UFO was now estimated to be only 250 yards away above the roadside trees at some 80 feet height. It was beaming brighter and surrounded by a shimmering effect. Having been just a dot in the sky, it now had the apparent size of a tennis ball. Sally Lamprey described it as looking like a triangle with rounded corners. The witnesses were now little disturbed by the presence and approach of the mysterious object, so Greg Thornton started the car and then switched on the headlights. As if in response, the UFO turned on to its side. "It appeared as a straight orange line, like a pencil at a 45 degree angle," said Sally.



Latrobe object — as described by Sally Lamprey

The UFO accelerated to a high speed, too difficult to estimate under the conditions, and vanished behind trees on a hill to the north. In all, the sighting had taken some three minutes.

Minutes later, five miles further east on the Moriarty Road, the same or similar UFO appeared to the north of Mr. J. as he travelled towards Latrobe. He noticed an orange light at low elevation keeping pace with him some distance from the road. Wondering what it could be, he stopped for a better look. He could hear no sound, but noted that the light that had been moving west was not stationary. It had a distinct round shape which he estimated as being 20 feet in diameter (apparent size six inches).

Unable to ascertain what the object was, Mr. J. continued on his way to Latrobe, the UFO once again keeping him company at about 40 to 55 m.p.h. and parallel to the Moriarty road all the time. The object was at 15 degrees elevation and seemingly brightened at times. He kept glancing at the object, but on nearing the Bass Highway at Latrobe (near the Thornton/Lamprey sighting point) when he looked for the UFO it had disappeared.

No aircraft were in the area at the time, whilst the weather balloon released earlier at Launceston

had travelled east, away from the sighting point. As with the Derwent Valley report two days earlier, the UFO seems to have reacted to the headlights of a motor vehicle. Also we have the rare (for Tasmania anyway) occurrence of two motor vehicles being approached by the same or similar UFO within minutes on the same stretch of road.

A temporary lull

Following the car pacings there was a lull until April when "nocturnal lights" cases increased, coming mainly from the West and North West. Typical cases were —

6.4.74. 19.30 hrs. Mawbanna (North West). Four witnesses see orange/red light with oval glow at 400 feet (cloud at 2000 feet). Light disappears and reappears three times, goes away finally to north.

Mid April, 6.00 hrs. Cardigan Flat (West). Two witnesses see bright glow on hillside near road, then white light moves up into sky and goes slowly west.

2.5.74 3.00 hrs. Linisfarne (South). Huge red bowl object with lights on edge and steady red light below. Stationary over hilltop. Two witnesses see it fade into gully to north.

9.5.74 21.00 hrs. Linda (West) Two witnesses see large, mellow orange, glowing light 200 yards off road on rugged hillside; pulses on and off three times; witnesses leave in hurry.

25.6.74 17.45 hrs. Cardigan Flats. Two men in log truck going west; drizzling; cloud at 2,000 feet. See bright white light just top 200 foot hill by road and disappear in opposite direction to the east.

Motorist follows light near Gladstone

The town of Gladstone is situated at the north-eastern tip of Tasmania and is the centre for large grazing estates positioned to its north. It is roughly ten miles inland from the coast and is surrounded by mainly low-lying country with bush-covered hills a few hundred feet high, lagoons and, nearer the coast, large expanses of wind-blown sand dunes. South of Gladstone the country is hillier with some tin operations.

As is often the case during investigations into current reports, earlier sightings were uncovered. The Gladstone area was no exception. The first apparent visit in the current run of sightings occurred one Sunday night, early in December, 1973, around 11.00 p.m. Martin Riley was staying in the family caravan out on a dead-end road called Quakers Road whilst he helped his father with bulldozer work in the area. He was returning home, driving east along Quakers Road, when somewhere over a mile from the caravan he first saw the light. There was a new tractor in the paddock alongside the road and Riley could see a yellow headlight-type glare just above it.

He continued on towards the light and when 300 yards away he saw it move off parallel to the road. He estimated its size as being a couple of feet across. The witness was travelling at 40 m.p.h. but the light somehow kept the same distance ahead; it seemed to be only about eight feet above the paddocks.

He found the experience of following the round

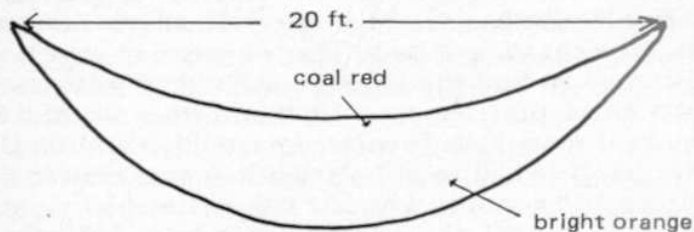
light rather disturbing, but he had to keep going to reach the caravan. A sandbank about eight feet high now lay in front of the light, but it just cleared the bank and was lost from view. The road swung around the end of the bank, but the light was waiting stationary some distance ahead when Riley came round the corner.

Almost at once, the light was on the move again, this time, however, the witness had to take his eyes off it to negotiate a gateway. On looking back a few seconds later, he found it had disappeared.

The Boobyalla bananas

Some half dozen miles north of Gladstone is a group of houses, farm buildings and stockyards that make up the Boobyalla Estate from where several sightings were made. It all started on the evening of May 25, around 7.30 to 8.00 p.m., when the three witnesses were a mile from home on the road running north from Boobyalla. It was a dark, cloudy evening. The witnesses saw what they took to be the moon low over paddocks to their north-west. They soon realised it could not be the moon (which did not rise until about 11.00 p.m.), so they stopped their car to watch the strange, silent stationary light.

The UFO was shaped roughly like a large banana, but fatter in the middle. It was a bright orange below, and more of a fire-red in the middle, blending to bright yellow on top. The object was only 20 feet above the ground, and after the witnesses had been looking for a minute or so, it commenced movement in their direction. It was now so low it passed in front of some fencing and a large log heap, and was probably only about 200 yards away. They felt the object was large, giving estimates up to 100 feet for its length. The object now being so close, they felt frightened and decided to head for home to call out a few more witnesses. Their car was not affected by the UFO, which was left behind in the paddock. However, on returning, nothing could be seen in the area and a check next day revealed no marks or evidence of the previous night's happenings.



Boobyalla object, 25.5.74

The same, or a remarkably similar object, was back again two nights later on May 27; this time it was seen from the houses at Boobyalla.

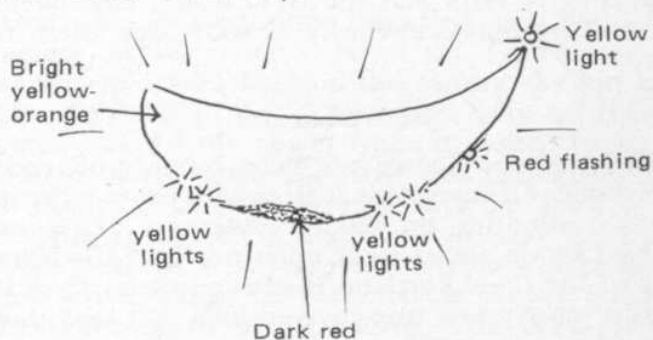
Mr. M. Richards had gone out at 10.00 p.m. to lock up the fowls, when he noticed a bright object in the north-eastern sky. He called out other residents at the farm, about ten in all, including six children. Once again the object was described as moving slowly, varying its height from fence top to 30-40

feet. It moved gradually towards the houses at Boobyalla, passing to the north about a quarter to half mile away.

Its shape was described variously as like a banana with one end rounded, the other pointed, and as a half moon on its side. Even witnesses' descriptions of the colours varied; some thought it was a very bright yellowish orange with a dark patch below, others mentioned a dark area above. Whatever it was, all agreed on the glare which lit up the paddocks. The cattle and fencing could be seen clearly, whilst the glare was said to be hard on the eyes.

One estimate of its size was about 15-20 feet long, another as moon-sized (apparent). The UFO now started to move away from the witnesses, brightening and fading at times as it went towards the west. One witness thought it had an antenna on each end with a yellow light. Another description gave only a yellow light on the right hand side.

The UFO now neared some trees and a red flashing light came on under the right hand side. Then, as it passed behind the trees, four yellow lights came on, two on either side of the dark area below. The UFO now faded somewhat and was lost from view in a valley.



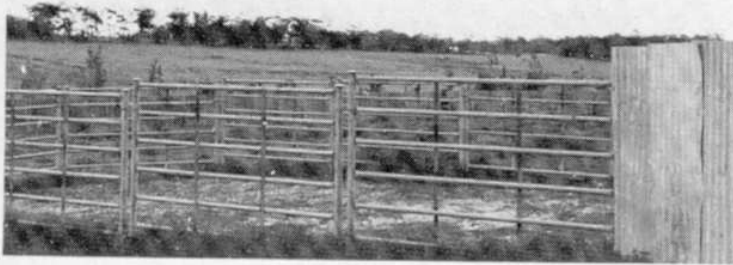
Boobyalla object 27.5.74

Two groups from the farm decided to see if they could catch sight of the strange object again; one party went along the road but saw nothing, the second group, consisting of six children, caught a glimpse of a glow which faded away behind the trees to the west.

Mr. Richards says he saw this strange object on three later occasions. Twice he says the object was fairly distant and he did not take much notice of it. We wonder if his sightings could have tied in with reports from shooters in the Mayfield-Rushy Lagoon area on June 11 and 12.

The final sighting of the UFO from the Boobyalla farm was in the early hours of Saturday, June 15 at 2.15 a.m. The bedroom of the Richards house was lit up by a glow and on looking out for the source of the light the witness could see the now familiar banana-shaped object, glowing brightly away in the north-eastern sky. Mr. Richards estimated it was 70 feet up and much further away than on the original occasion it was seen.

The witnesses watched for the best part of half an hour as the UFO moved very slowly away to the north-east, seeming to brighten to a yellow-orange and becoming very glaring to the eyes. The

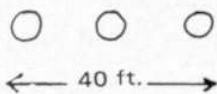


Stockyards, Boobyalla Estate, five miles NW of Gladstone. Witness watched UFO move from right to left over paddocks at tree-top to fence height, lighting up the area.

Richards returned to bed but for some time could see the shadows cast in the room from the glare of the UFO as it slowly travelled further away. It is interesting to note that the UFO would have been in or near the Mayfield-Rushy Lagoon area when last seen.

Rushy Lagoon

This year the Centre has had a number of reports from Police Officers. One officer with other witnesses was out shooting on the New Airport Track near Rushy Lagoon about eight miles north of Gladstone. West of the Cape Portland road running north of the town is mostly low tree-covered hills that lead down to level open country by the Ringarooma River. A new airstrip is being constructed near the river. The Boobyalla Estate is roughly four or five miles south-west of the sighting area. About 10.00 p.m. on June 11, the shooting party first noticed to the west three very bright star-coloured lights, appearing like three vehicle headlights.

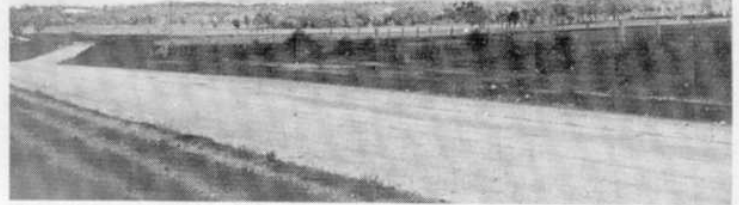


Rushy Lagoon 11.6.74

The lights were about 20 feet apart horizontally, giving a size of 40 feet in all. They seemed to be sitting on top of the hill over which the track passed. When first seen, the lights were stationary, but as the witnesses moved up the track they seemed to keep their original distance ahead. After following the lights for some 15 minutes, the party left the area and the lights behind.

Mayfield Flat

Was the same UFO back the very next night, June 12, around 9.00 p.m.? On this occasion, Mr. G. and four others were puzzled at first then disturbed by the presence of a row of lights as they were shooting in the Mayfield Flat area. If it was the same



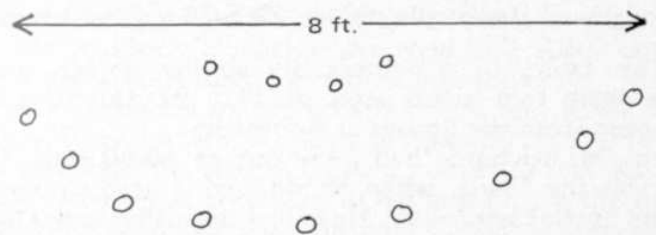
Road to Rushy Lagoon, approx. seven miles north of Gladstone. Mayfield Flat sighting area is over low tree-covered hill in right foreground. Distant mountain is Mt. Cameron

object, one can't help wondering where it spent the 24 hours between sightings.

Stopping at a gate about a mile west of the Cape Portland road, Mr. G. says the spotlight was swung round to the north-west. There, at almost ground level, a row of lights suddenly lit up about 400 yards away. Unable to make out what was causing the lights, the shooters moved on after a minute or more, going around the hillside towards Mayfield Flat and leaving the lights behind.

Looking out over the Flats towards the new airstrip area, Mr. G. and his companions were surprised to see the same set of lights again, only this time a couple of hundred feet up in the sky. No sound could be heard, and he described the row of lights as being a sort of green/yellow colour with a second row half the length just above. No shape could be discerned but from the first observation he thought the lights covered a length of about ten feet.

The shooting party now turned for the main road, puzzled now by the strange lights. Once again they were lost to view as they went back over the hillside. The lights had been stationary when first seen, but seemed to keep pace with the party as they left for home. Nearly back to the road, a rabbit was shot and Mr. G. went to pick it up. The whole group were now disturbed to find the UFO a few hundred yards away just above the tree tops to the north-west. Mr. G. thinks it must have been accompanying them on the way back. It had to move from its position near the airstrip to be visible when he stopped to pick up the rabbit. Some of the lights were steady, but others



Mayfield Flat lights, 12.6.74



The location of the sighting by Raymond Groves, one mile South of Gladstone. The object passed in front of Sugar Loaf Hill on the left.

flashed. The strange thing, Mr. G. said, was that the longer you looked at them the quicker they flashed.

Deciding not to go back and investigate the lights, the witnesses went down to the main road a short distance off, losing sight of the UFO behind the trees. At the road the group halted, turning off the lights and the engine. They waited for five minutes but all was still whilst nothing of their mystery light could be seen.

Another car pacer

The next night, June 13, just before midnight, another UFO was back again. Raymond Groves, aged 19, of Rushy Lagoon was in Gladstone when he noticed a large round pulsing light in the southern sky. The silvery ball would fade at times, leaving a glow in the sky; then every five minutes it would change to red, green, orange, then back to its original silver colour.

Having heard of other sightings (his father was a witness to the Mayfield UFO the previous night), he decided to drive south from Gladstone to have a closer look at the light. He lost sight of the object as he left the town, there being a rise of some 200 feet, which the road ascends. After driving about one and a half miles, he noticed the light low to the south-east. It seemed to pace his car, now passing in front of the Sugarloaf Hill in the process. This would put the object closer than half a mile and some 400 feet high. After being paced for half a mile, Groves decided it was "time to get out of there". The object now appeared huge and close (he gave the apparent size as roughly five inches). He turned the car round and headed back to Gladstone at up to 80 m.p.h.

On the return trip the UFO still kept pace on the witness's eastern side, passing again in front of Sugarloaf Hill, then it shot over the top of his car when a mile from town, being lost from view on the other side (west) of the road. Groves estimated some six

minutes had passed since he first saw the UFO. Stopping at his uncle's house in Gladstone, the light was relocated back in the eastern sky but now at an elevation of 45 degrees and only a fifth the apparent size of the object when it paced Groves on the road. Once again the light was fading, pulsing, and changing colours. Groves says he flashed his car lights at the UFO and both he and his Uncle saw it pulse as if in response. After watching for about ten minutes, he returned to Rushy Lagoon, eight miles north of Gladstone. The light seemed to maintain its position to the east of his car as he drove home. Once home, he called out his parents, brother and grandmother to see the strange light. However, they only watched it for about ten minutes as the UFO was now in the north-east sky and fading slowly away.

THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES

An investigation into the Mysterious
American Visits of the infamous
Feathery Garuda

by John A. Keel

Saturday Review Press/E.V.
Dutton and Co. Inc.,
201 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10003

\$7.95

IOWA'S BASHFUL HUMANOID

Jerome Clark

ON AUGUST 1, 1965, a major UFO wave erupted all through the central United States. On the first night of the month alone sightings were logged in Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Wyoming and Washington state. During the flap, which took several weeks to run its course, several persons claimed to have seen UFO occupants.

The two known ufonaut reports came from Grand Forks, North Dakota, on August 8 and from Renton, Washington, three days later. In the former, three young women saw a transparent, circular UFO resting on a golf course lawn; inside it they could see the silhouettes of "little figures." The object and its occupants abruptly disappeared when the UFO "just blew up." In the second case two teenaged girls observed three weird five-and-a-half foot humanoid beings who approached them, causing the frightened girls to take to their heels. When they looked back, the strangers were gone.²

Now a third ufonaut case has come to light, thanks to the efforts of Ralph C. DeGraw, a private UFO investigator living in Hazelton, Iowa. DeGraw first heard of the incident in January 1974 through a relative of his who worked with the witness, by now 24 years old. On January 13 DeGraw interviewed the man at his home in Denver, his current residence. This is the story that emerged:

Between 3.00 and 4.00 one hot afternoon during the second week of August 1965, David Gibson was sitting in the front yard of his Waverly, Iowa, house with his father and sister.

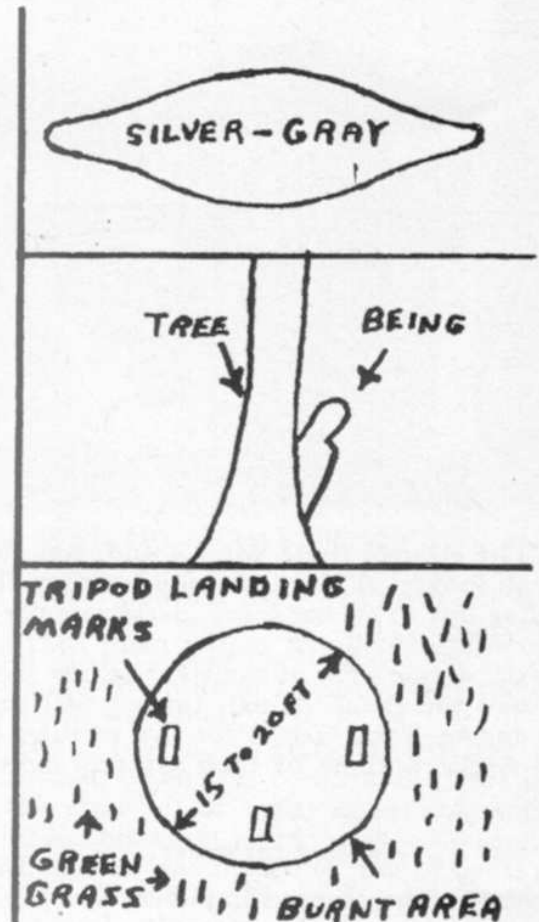
Suddenly, he recalled, "...We heard a high-pitched whining sound. We looked for a few minutes but didn't see anything. Then I looked towards the south and saw the craft descending slowly from the sky."

The UFO, which looked like "...two saucers glued together, about 15 to 20 feet in diameter and silver-gray in colour," had a shiny surface "...like polished aluminium" but it did not reflect the bright sunlight. It was windowless and there were no other visible markings.

The object slowly descended until it settled behind a tree-lined hill out of view. Once it was out of sight, the "whining sound" associated with it faded away.

South of the hill, on which sits an abandoned farm house, is an old quarry. Noting that the UFO had disappeared in that direction, Gibson set out in hopes of getting a better look. To negotiate the distance — between a quarter- and a half-mile — Gibson was forced to cross a ploughed field.

"About 160 yards from the scene," he said, "I spotted a being or some object standing behind a tree at the top of the hill, but only for a few seconds. After I saw this thing I speeded up my



DeGraw's sketches based upon Gibson's testimony

stride, almost tripping. To keep my balance, I had to look down for an instant. When I looked up again, the thing was gone. I missed my chance for a good look at the being.

"A few minutes later, I saw a blur and a sound like air rushing around a speeding object."

Gibson continued on his way to the spot where the being had been standing. Once there, he searched the surrounding area for evidence of its presence but found nothing, not even footprints or pressed-down grass.

The being appeared to have been three- to three-and-a-half feet tall. It had been watching him from behind the tree, which had covered all but his head and left shoulder. He was too far away to discern facial features, if there were any, but he said it seemed to be "bald." He was able to determine its height by noting how high it had stood relative to the tree.

He then walked over the hill to see if the UFO itself had left any physical evidence behind. He discovered quickly enough that it had: about 40 feet south of the tree near the northern bluff of the