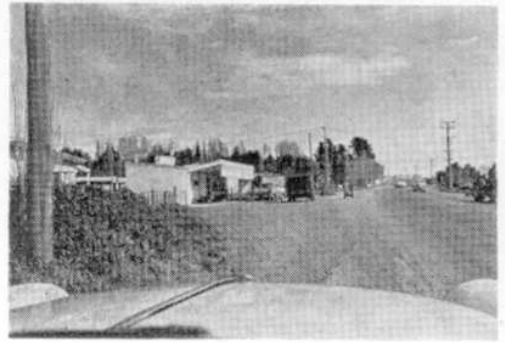


THE TARADALE CAR CRASH

Henk Hinfelaar and Claude Elmes

This article is adapted from *Spaceview*, the journal of N.Z. Scientific Space Research, edited by Mr. Hinfelaar, P.O. Box 21-007, Henderson, N.Z.



THIS case, which involved two teenagers, a brilliant white object shaped like a football, the police and an insurance company, received little publicity. The only New Zealand newspaper game enough to print the story five days after its happening was the Auckland *Sunday News*, and although its report was slightly exaggerated, the basic outline was there. The reason for this was that the two witnesses refused to talk to newspaper reporters, and the reporter who finally delivered the story was entirely dependent upon sources other than those involved in the car crash.

The first we heard about the incident was two days after it happened, on September 10, when at New Zealand Scientific Space Research, we received a letter from the two boys concerned (John Alfred Dow and Paul Franklin) in which they related how an unidentified flying object had cost them their car and caused them injury. They also asked for "observers' reports" so that they could give full details. To facilitate investigations, they were asked to get in touch with Claude Elmes, who from then on took charge. Although at this time of writing (November 26) almost every conceivable angle of the case has been covered, we are at present investigating an incident in the same area which may produce yet another witness to the Dow and Franklin affair.

The boys' story

On Friday, September 6, John Dow (19) and Paul Franklin (17) were driving around the Taradale area and were in Springfield Road when they noticed lights hovering above the city dump. They described the lights as "dozens of reds, greens and blues darting around."

While sitting in their car watching this display, they were startled by a tremendous explosion from the direction of the dump, followed by rumblings and vibrations which shook the car. The lights then appeared to group and speed off. This was their first thought of flying saucers and they notified the Taradale constable on duty immediately. Although he appeared

interested, he was non-committal and passed no comment.

On Saturday, September 7, they again went to the area hoping to see something, but to no avail.

On Sunday, September 8, they again visited Taradale and saw an object which shot off a beacon of light, although they could not see its shape. They reported this at the Taradale police station, this time finding another officer on duty who laughed at their story and who mentioned the salt-impregnated cable theory causing the flashing as a result of the wind. The only trouble with this theory—so the boys said—was that there was no wind!

On Monday, September 9, they were in the Taradale shopping area from where they saw, over the Puketapu Hills, a light which commenced glowing and suddenly shot straight up in the sky. As they were tired of being laughed at, they did not report this to the police.

On Tuesday, September 10, wanting to get to the bottom of it all, they drove towards Puketapu via Puketapu Road, then entered Omaranui Road to motor back to Taradale. While in Omaranui Road, they saw a lighted object in the sky in the direction of Hastings. This object, in addition to frequent changes of colour from white to red to orange to blue, kept sending out a beacon of white light. They decided to drive towards the source, but the object disappeared behind cloud. The boys then turned towards Taradale, crossed the Tutaekuri Bridge and entered the Main Road which becomes Gloucester Street.

Near the Taradale camping grounds, Franklin, who was sitting at right angles, saw the object again through the car's rear window, this time across the river, from whence they had come. The object appeared to pick up speed as though it had seen them, at the same time becoming brilliantly white. Franklin called out and Dow glanced around. Franklin then shouted: "Bail out, it's got us," and both leapt from the car on the passenger's side. As the car was then doing 30-40 m.p.h. both boys fell badly, suffering abrasions and bruises.

The object was now glowing an unbelievable intense whiteness and one of the boys (Franklin), lying on his back, covered his eyes with his hands as he thought he was about to be blinded. However, after hovering about 2ft. above them, the object suddenly shot up into the sky. The object, the boys claim, was a "spheroid" about 2½ft. in diameter, and although glowing brilliantly, did not cast any light whatsoever. Instead, they had the impression of a translucent brilliance with the light pointing into the object.

Meanwhile the car, out of control, had swerved across the road and smashed into the doorway of a fruiterer's shop, demolishing the plate-glass window. A crowd had gathered as a result of the noise and found two badly frightened and shocked youths, calling out about the flying saucer which had attacked them.

Dow, in a personal report, states that the object was 2 to 3ft. away from the rear of the car when he dived out. That was the last he saw of it as he landed face down on the ground. The object was solid and made no sound—the time was 8.50 p.m.

Investigation

i. The boys

The immaculately dressed Franklin was found to be the spokesman, and appeared to know something of the UFO-subject. Queried on this, said he had recently read Adamski's *Inside the Space Ships*, but thought it very far fetched. He told the story, Dow occasionally interjecting with some minor detail.

Dow, although the older, was the more youthful in manner of the two. Throughout the interview he was tested on minor details, but would at any time repeat what Franklin had already said. No variation in the story was found. Both boys are definitely not the bodgie-type, but Franklin is obviously the leader.

They described their injuries, abrasions and bruises to the sides of their bodies, but said they had not sought medical attention until the following night when they attended the public hospital. The hospital staff did not

believe the story. Thinking their wounds were not serious, they had delayed examination until their clothes were "sticking" to them.

The boys also mentioned that on the Wednesday night following the accident they became very frightened and ran to the Napier police station for protection. The reason for their fright was contained in stories told them by a reporter. This reporter tried to impress upon them what happens to flying saucer victims, and advised them not to go out after dark.

ii. Scene of accident

The tow-truck driver, who arrived on the scene half an hour after the accident, reported seeing two badly shocked boys who were "cursing and swearing" about the "so and so" flying saucer that had attacked them. He commented that if the boys were putting on an act, it was a very good one. There was no suggestion that the boys had been drinking and there was no evidence of liquor. He also mentioned that the police were there (they had arrived a quarter hour earlier) and **appeared to accept the boys' statement.**

An inspection of the scene four days after the accident failed to reveal any skid marks. This indicated that the car did crash unattended by any driver, as the natural reaction to avoid a collision would be to apply the brakes. A close examination of the shop revealed a new door jamb and a new plate-glass window: the owners had been very prompt in having repairs carried out.

The boys approached from Gloucester Street, which has a speed limit of 55 m.p.h. One-tenth of a mile from the scene, where the road has a slight bend, one enters the 30 m.p.h. zone and it is assumed that the boys were doing maximum allowable speed when entering this zone. This would explain why they were still doing between 30 and 40 m.p.h. when abandoning the car.

iii. The car

The smashed car is an Austin A55 Mark I, 1957 model. It was thoroughly examined by Claude Elmes. There is no sign of burns or anything to indicate that this was not a normal smash. It has a lean to the right front similar to a sinking ship and is a write-off. The right front wing is wrenched off and twisted back along the side of the car, and the front axle assembly is a mess. The damage is consistent with a head-on collision at a speed of at least 30 m.p.h. Dow said that three months before the accident he had purchased new tyres for the front wheels and that after the accident one tyre was completely bald. This was found to be correct; the left front tyre looked as



Written-off, the Austin A55, Mk. I

though it was due for a retread. Both boys are quite certain that neither ignition nor lights were affected by the object. However, Dow mentioned that when they jumped from the car it was still in top gear, but when inspected right after the smash it was in third gear. The front wheels are pointed hard right, the direction of the swerve into the shop. This is consistent with the bend in the road at the time that the car was abandoned.

iv. The police

The police clamped down on the case, but there is a strong suggestion that the officer in charge was willing to discuss the matter with somebody who knew something about the subject. However, a crank apparently called at the station, and this resulted in orders being issued that *nobody else* was to be given information. This unfortunate happening is consistent with the boys receiving all manner of correspondence from different parts of New Zealand, most of it being "crank-type" mail. The boys have been advised to ignore it.

On the night of the accident the police said *they had simply seen a fireball*, but the weather did not cater for such phenomena. The weather map for that night shows the area half way between barometric pressure 1000 and 1005. Temperature 59.6°—fine. Cool south-westerly airstream over country. Fresh gusty N.W. winds to W. decreasing. Fine and mild, cold night. Frost 2.00 a.m. On the accident night, a constable was motoring down the Taihape Road and saw a reddish light in the sky towards Taradale. When he arrived at Taradale the accident had occurred.

We are also aware that a certain Wing Commander in Wellington has received the police file and is showing much curiosity. Another unusual fact

is that three days after the accident there were four Canberras in Napier for—as the Air Force said—exercises. Napier normally does not see an AF plane for months on end.

Although the police booked the boys on a charge of dangerous driving, it would appear that they accepted the story as told by the boys but played the case down as much as possible. Constable Barry Martin-Bus of the Napier police later testified that when arriving at the scene, he found two youths in an hysterical condition. However, at the same time he conceded that the story pouring forth from the boys sounded sensible and logical in spite of their excited state of mind.

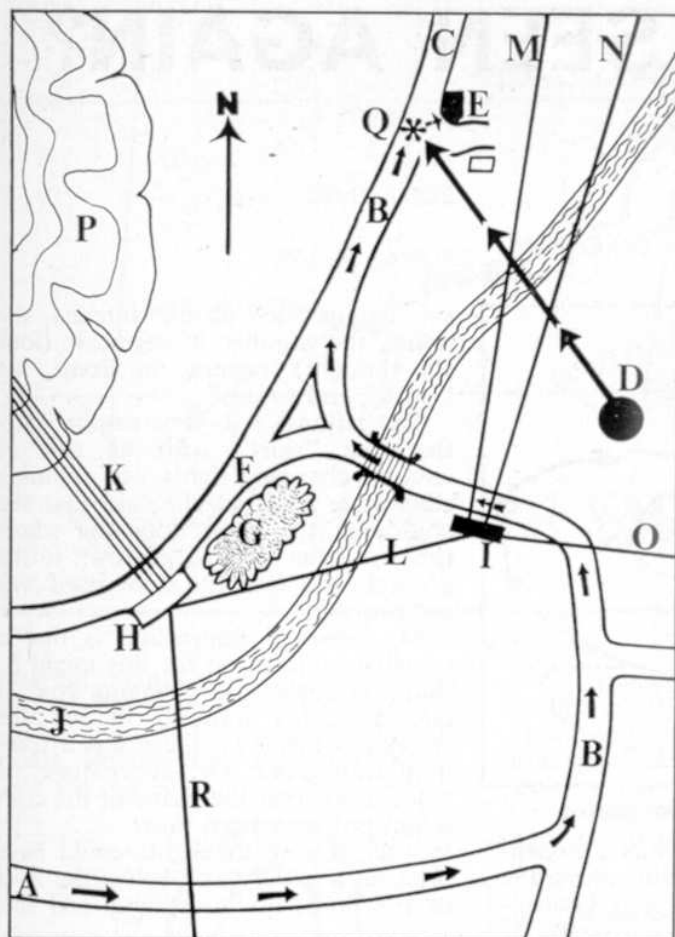
v. The Auckland Sunday News

When compared with the story which we obtained from the boys and residents of Taradale, the newspaper's story of September 15 is indeed exaggerated. Nobody in Taradale is jittery or frightened at the prospect of travelling alone at night, nor did the boys see a "massive flashing object" rise from the ground at the dump.

The journalist who interviewed the boys is not on the staff of the *Sunday News*, but is in fact a reporter of the *Napier Daily Telegraph*. This newspaper, however, never published the story. The *Sunday News* admitted to us that the reporter's name is George Fraser and that it was he who passed the story on to them in his capacity as correspondent. Somewhere along the line Fraser "elaborated" on the facts and we have no doubt that the same reporter frightened the boys with some scary stories.

vi. The insurance company

The insurance company involved is the N.I.M.U. When Claude called at their Napier office, he was referred to the claims manager, who, as soon as



- A. Omarunui Road.
- B. Highway 50.
- C. Gloucester Street.
- D. Object seen here from where it dived on car.
- E. Damaged shop.
- F. Springfield Road.
- G. City Dump.
- H. Redcliffe Power Station.
- I. Power distribution junction.
- J. Tutaekuri River.
- K. Power lines from Tuai Hydro.
- L. Power to distribution junction.
- M. Power to Taradale.
- N. Power to Napier.
- O. Power to Pakowhai.
- P. Puketapu Hills.
- Q. Accident scene.
- R. Power to Fernhill.

Arrows show route of car.

he knew what Claude required, refused to pass any comment. All he suggested was that their Wellington head office be contacted. Asked if they would pay out on this case, treating it as a straight out claims case, he declined to comment, but he did say that the *Sunday News* story was exaggerated.

A local iron curtain having been drawn over the matter, we wrote to the General Manager in Wellington, asking him whether his company accepted the story as related by the insured John Alfred Dow as to the cause of the accident. He was also requested to comment on Franklin's testimony in the matter, and police co-operation in general. Within three days we received a courteous reply, indicating that . . .

1. The company had no reason to doubt the account of the circumstances leading up to the accident as related by Dow.

2. The company was satisfied, on the facts presented to it, that the damage to the car arose from an accident.

3. There were no discrepancies in Franklin's testimony as compared to Dow's.

4. The police report had assisted the company in evaluating the accuracy of Dow's account of the circumstances. N.I.M.U. in fact concedes that its decision to honour the claim has a

direct bearing upon the events preceding the accident.

vii. The court case

Dow's case, based on a charge of dangerous driving, was heard in the Napier Magistrates' Court on November 11, 1968, before Mr. W. K. L. Dougall. S. M. Dow, an apprentice joiner, pleaded *Not guilty*. Sergeant W. T. Pender, of the Napier Police, prosecuted and Mr. A. K. Monagan appeared for Dow. The Magistrate dismissed the case on the grounds that *Dow's state of mind at the time had made him lose control of the car*. Further evidence by the defence was not heard. This was merely because the evidence for the defence was similar to that of the prosecution.

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The first witness for the prosecution, Constable Barry Martin-Bus of Napier, did the accused a good turn, for everything he said was in Dow's favour. In addition the police had to admit to the sightings they had themselves made. Moreover, Dow had got together a number of witnesses who were on the scene of the accident soon after its occurrence. In other words, they had a watertight case.

In dismissing the case, the Magistrate said it was evident the accused had got himself into such a state of mind that he had acted involuntarily when something had distracted him. This in itself is a fair enough statement, but Mr. Dougall went on to say: "Most of these lights people see have a natural cause and 'the flying saucer in hot pursuit' might have been the lights of a car coming around the corner."

This case has not been an "ufologist's dream" by any stretch of the imagination, but the circumstantial evidence gathered is such that there is no doubt in our minds that the boys' story is authentic.

Apart from the boys' story, there are certain factors which tend to back up the case, such as the smashed car and the fact that both police and insurance company have accepted the unusual circumstances leading up to the accident. Ever since the happening on September 10 there has been a spate of UFO-sightings in the Napier district, which, in more than one case, confirm the descriptions given by the boys.

There have been vibrations, tremors, rumblings and bangings in the hills which are not confirmed by earthquake recordings. Many people report flashing lights for which no natural explanation can be found. In the area where sightings have been reported there is a Sub-Power Station (Redcliffe) and several distribution transformers. There is also a river (Tutaekuri) and the area overall is peaceful. We know that *Water, Power and Quietness* are usually conditions frequently sought out by our alien visitors. An interview of Dow's parents established that the father accepts his son's story, and that the mother, although a little doubtful, is more willing to accept it since the insurance company is doing so.

'PLATILLOS VOLANTES'

en Iberoamerica y España

For those who read Spanish, we heartily recommend this new work by the indefatigable **ANTONIO RIBERA**, which presents a history of the UFO phenomenon from Mexico to the Antarctic, with a few cases from Spain.

EDITORIAL POMAIRES S.A., AV. INFANTA CARLOTA 157, BARCELONA (also SANTIAGO de CHILE, BUENOS AIRES, MEXICO).

BALEIA ENTITIES SEEN AGAIN?

Nigel Rimes

Representative of Flying Saucer Review in Brazil

THERE are substantial indications that the Brazilian Air Force and other Brazilian authorities have lowered the customary curtain of silence over quite a number of further landings that have taken place in the region of Baurú and Lins (in the State of São Paulo) during the course of 1968. Investigation is difficult and may become much more so, and it is necessary to proceed with great caution.

In the meantime I am able to give below a preliminary outline of a remarkable case in which, as it seems, the tall type of men seen at Baleia¹ have again been encountered.

The single-known witness, whom I have interviewed personally and questioned in great detail, is a young Brazilian woman aged about 21 or 22. A tall, well-built country girl, she comes from a town in the State of São Paulo. I have given FLYING SAUCER REVIEW full details as to her name and address, but for obvious reasons it is most necessary that these remain confidential at present, and I am requesting that they be kept out of this account.

The young lady states that she happened to read a report in a newspaper about the "Symposium of Flying Saucers" recently held in São Paulo. This prompted her to go to the offices of the *Brazil Herald*² to tell her own story, which she felt must surely be of great importance. She was just relating it to Mr. Willi Wirz, the managing director of the newspaper, when, by chance, I too appeared at his office and so was able to take part in the interrogation.

We found the witness's manner direct and simple, and she created an excellent impression. She made it clear that she desired no publicity and that she had only come forward with this information because she felt that it was her duty to do so and that the affair must be important. She appeared throughout our interview to know exactly what she had seen and she would not be swayed in any way from her story when we tried to suggest that what she had seen was perhaps something else of a more conventional nature.

Her story

She states that, on the evening of

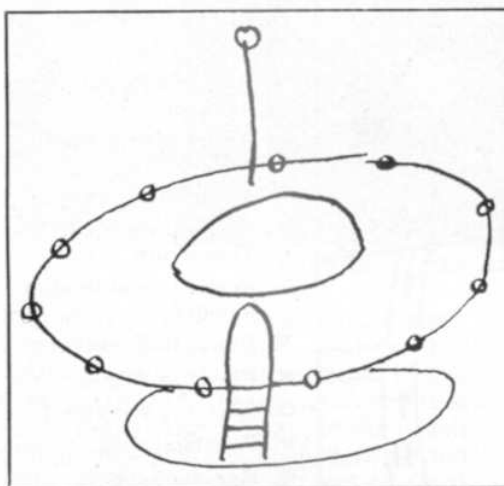


Fig. 1. Witness's own sketch.

November 21, 1968, she was a passenger on a rural bus travelling along the Via Dutra, on the "Circular Guarulhos" Line, between the towns of Guarulhos³ and Vila Barros (both places in the State of São Paulo).

At 9.30 p.m. the bus halted at a rural stop near Macédo, where it is customary for the driver to "take a break" and wait a while—especially if, as on this occasion, he was perhaps a little ahead of his timetable.

There was no street lighting at the spot, but, as it was summer time, it was still quite light. To the left of the road lay a piece of waste ground and upon it, at a distance which she estimated to be about 40 metres from the bus, there was, either standing, or hovering close to the ground, "a shining metallic object of the size of an Aero Willys car" (i.e. approximately the size of a British Jaguar four-door saloon).

Fig. 1 shows the witness's own first sketch of the object, drawn in our presence.

We then showed her pictures of various alleged types of saucer for comparison, and she immediately selected, as the most similar to what she had seen, the Botucatu⁴ UFO—although with certain definite modifications. For example, she was adamant that the thing she had seen possessed no tripod landing-gear, but a set of three steps.

Since she had now selected the Botucatu type as the nearest in general shape, I drew the outline shown in Fig. 2 and got her to fill in all the vari-

ous details such as the antenna, the dome, the number of segments (four she thought) forming the dome, the "skirt", and so on.

The witness felt very emphatically that the "skirt" with its row of circular changing lights was spinning clockwise. And yet she said that she could see the open door the whole time, and the three steps down to the ground, and that the door itself was not moving.

My personal impression is that a possible explanation for this might be that the constantly changing row of circular lights induced in her the erroneous idea that there was a spinning movement. Or, alternatively, I wonder whether the shape of the craft might not have been thus:

In such a case the lights could have been on a lower band below the level of the door, and the lights and this

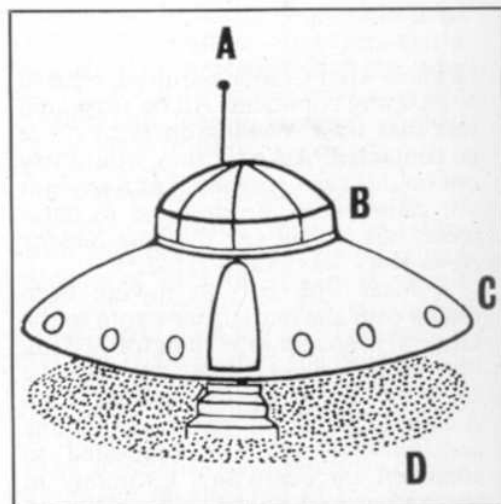


Fig. 2. A. Antenna with red light. B. Dome, in segments. C. Skirt, seemed to be spinning clockwise. D. Patch of violet light beneath.

lower band of the "skirt" might have indeed been spinning while the upper portion of the "skirt" containing the door remained motionless. I hope that she will perhaps be able to confirm this to me later without any prompting.

The entities

We come now to the most astonishing part of the lady's story. For she claims that, standing in front of the landed UFO, there were three men about 2 metres in height. "They were