

Stopping at her house, Mrs. Alexander called her neighbours out, and they watched the object as it completed a large circle and shot off at high speed towards Paarl. There were other independent witnesses of the same incident. (*The Argus* of July 22, 1972.)

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Some indication of the month-long enthusiasm in the South African press for UFO stories may be gathered from the full-page treatment accorded the subject in the *Sunday Times* of July 9, 1972. Page 5 of that issue carries (i) an undated story of a sighting by several people at a drive-in cinema near Johannesburg of a glowing object with three tails—a suspected satellite or rocket re-entry; (ii) an account of a feather-duster-like object seen over Johannesburg; (iii) a series of photographs of a “UFO” over the skyscrapers of Hillbrow—an object *not* seen by the *Sunday Times* photographer, and small wonder, for the images look just like a series of lens flares; (iv) the Vryburg account featured earlier in this article; (v) an interview with Elizabeth Klarer who warned that “Space ships are watching us”; (vi) an item by Peter Pollock (the Test Cricketer?) about the Port Elizabeth airport weather office men who directed their radar on the UFO seen over the town (see part I of this article) but failed to get an echo, and (vii) a small piece about Fort Beaufort’s other claim to fame, the Beaufort Series of vertebrate fossils, named after the district, where the sediments are the world’s greatest storehouse of fossil amphibia and reptilia.

Sample negative

On July 26, 1972, *The Pretoria News* was one of the newspapers which announced that the tests by the C.S.I.R. scientists on the Fort Beaufort soil samples¹ had proved “negative.” It was stated that if a foreign object had come in contact with the soil, it had done so in such a way that its composition was not disturbed. The spokesman added that there was “nothing to indicate the presence of a rocket.” Which is fogging the issue, for as far as I recall, none of the witnesses had suggested that what they saw bore any resemblance to, or acted like, a rocket.

The Brigadier believes!

In the *Rand Daily Mail* of July 19, 1972, it was stated that Brigadier G. C. Bester, the Divisional Commissioner of Police who defended his Odendaalrus and Welkom constables, is now a “believer,” for he had seen a UFO for himself. What he saw was bigger than a star, and it stayed in view for five minutes. The Brigadier called his wife and children, and they watched it too, just before it moved off in an easterly direction towards Bethlehem (O.F.S.).

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Notes

- ¹ See *A hot reception at Fort Beaufort* by Charles Bowen, in FSR CASE HISTORIES Supplement 11.
- ² See *A UFO photograph from Umkomaas* by Philipp J. Human in FSR Vol. 18, No. 5, September/October 1972.

THE ‘FLYING SPECTRE’ OF NATAL

Philipp J. Human

SPOOKY creatures reported without attendant craft may not fall strictly within the bounds of ufology, but I suggest that the apparition which bothered residents of both Mayville (Durban), and Roosboom, near Colenso, each in the Province of Natal, may be admitted in view of its unconventional method of departure. Again, the case should be considered because of the stubborn refusal of the parties involved to dismiss the incidents as fantasy or fraud. Furthermore, it follows close in the wake of a UFO wave.

One of the first witnesses was a Mrs. Thelma Hansen, and I am glad that my friend, Dr. Carl van Vlierden of Westville, Natal, a regular reader of the *Flying Saucer Review*, was able to visit her at Mayville. He wrote to me about the results of his interview, but more of his report later.

Details of the incidents were published in *The Natal Mercury* on August 22, 1972.

The Roosboom giant

Part of the *Mercury* report was the story of Mrs. Doris Muthwa, a young mother of five, who, accompanied by her daughter Joyce, aged 12, was drawing water from a river near her home at Roosboom, north-west of Colenso. The time was about 4.30 a.m. The

newspaper account continues:

“Doris takes up the story: ‘I looked up and there seemed to be a man in a white suit. I thought he was smoking a cigarette but then the smoke became like a big fire.

“‘There was a bright light shining from his chest which went pink and blue.’

“Doris’s employer, Mrs. N. E. Harding of Colenso, continues: ‘Doris said he was about 3.5 metres tall. She indicated his height to me against a tree. (That would make him about 11ft. 3in. to 11ft. 6in. tall.—P.J.H.)

“‘He must have been emitting some kind of electricity because she said it was just like when she touches the iron and her body goes all jerky.’

“The giant man then shot into the sky and disappeared. The two were so frightened that the mother cried out, while the daughter began to cry and bit her mother’s hand in her terror. They ran away, falling over and spilling their water as they went.

“‘Doris is a bright, intelligent woman. I know she is telling the truth,’ Mrs. Harding said.”

The Mayville giant

The same newspaper account revealed that a similar spectre had put in an appearance at Mayville, Durban,

on the Saturday night (August 19, 1972), and on two other, earlier occasions. Most people, however, saw it on the Saturday on a piece of wasteground behind the house of Mrs. Thelma Hansen in Molver Road.

It was the sight of the creature's head that most disturbed Mrs. Hansen: "There was fire coming out of its eyes, and the head was square like a machine."

Miss Jane Claassen, who was accompanied by Mrs. Hansen's daughter Ingrid (aged 8), was the first to see it. She said: "It was staring at us by the fence. It was horrible. It was not a real person."

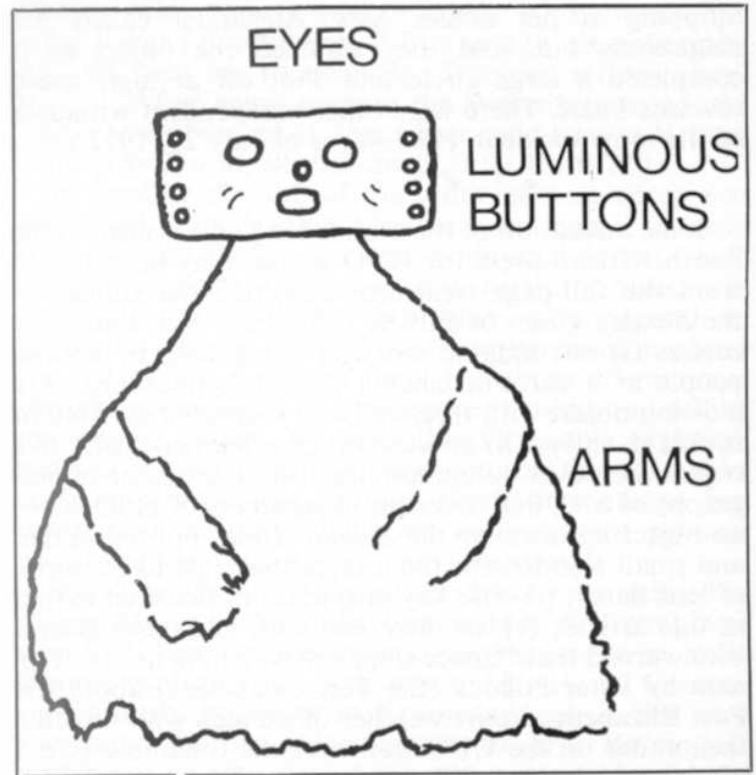
After the fuss had died down, Dr. Van Vlierden visited Mrs. Hansen and discussed the event with her; he also spoke to three other witnesses. The doctor reported that Mrs. Hansen was still disturbed by her experience. She and seven of the other witnesses have suffered after-effects, such as headaches and pains in the legs, apparently due to their encounter with the phenomenon. Mrs. Hansen also revealed that she felt "some sort of hypnotic effect," as if she was being drawn towards the object.

The spectre put in three separate appearances on the Saturday night (August 19). Dr. van Vlierden gave each of the witnesses a pencil and paper, and asked them to draw what they saw. The drawings were all very similar, basically of a science-fiction-like monster as shown in the illustration.

It was the eyes that had the greatest effect on the witnesses. The bottom of this thing was 7ft. above the ground, and when it departed it went straight up, then sideways, and disappeared.

Another Roosboom claim

The Natal Mercury carried a follow-up account of the Roosboom incident in its edition of August 23, 1972. In it we read that one Elias Khosa, who works at the Indian-owned trading store, states that he saw the monster on Wednesday, August 16, when he was



walking home. The spectre faced him, but he could not see its head, although he noticed small flames burning around its feet. Elias says he invited the "visitor" home for a drink, but it turned and sped off through the veld at high speed, emitting flames and smoke.

Elias's employer, Mr. Suleman Sager, says he has lived there for 44 years, and has "never seen things like that."

The latest news about Mrs. Doris Muthwa was that she was still frightened, and refused to go to the stream. It seems that her daughter Joyce bit her hand when the white-suited monster began to give off whirling lights.

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