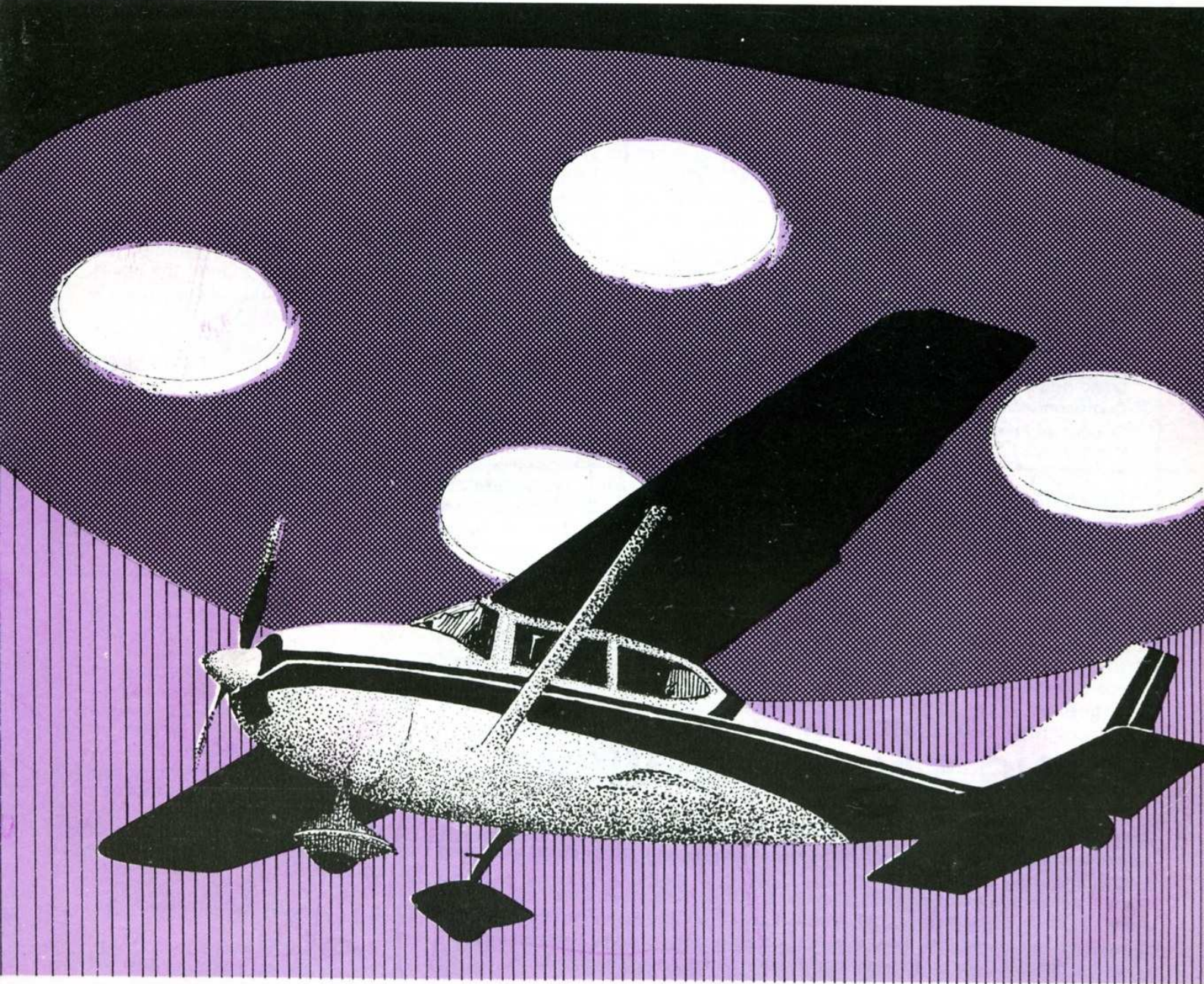


FLYING
SAUCER
REVIEW

FSI

Volume 24, No. 5

70p



Our artist's impression of ...

THE CESSNA AND THE UFO

See page 3



FLYING
SAUCER
REVIEW

Editor CHARLES BOWEN

Consultants

GORDON CREIGHTON, MA, FRAI, FRGS, FRAS

C. MAXWELL CADE, AInstP, FRAS, AFRAeS, CEng, FIEE, FIERE

BERNARD E. FINCH, MRCS, LRCP, DCh, FBIS

CHARLES H. GIBBS-SMITH, MA, FMA, Hon Companion RAeS, FRSA

R. H. B. WINDER, BSc, CEng, FIMech E JONATHAN M. CAPLAN, MA

I. GRATTAN-GUINNESS, MA, MSc, PhD, DSc PERCEY HENNEL, FIBP

Overseas J. ALLEN HYNEK, PhD

AIME MICHEL

BERTHOLD E. SCHWARZ, MD

Secretarial Assistant JENNY RANGLES

An international journal devoted to the study of Unidentified Flying Objects

Volume 24, No. 5
(published March 1979)

CONTENTS

Editorial: "Spanners in the Works" (on New Zealand UFO film):	1
The Missing Cessna and the UFO:	
W.C. Walker	3
Three Landings in Italy:	
P. Toselli & E. Russo	6
'Motherships' over Australia:	
Paul Norman	9
Near-Landing in 1946 in Johannesburg:	
John Judge	14
UFO Lands on Spanish Air-Force Target Range:	
Gordon Creighton	17
More Evidence for the Psychic Link?:	
Janet & Colin Bord	19
UFO Physics - Pt. 2 (b):	
Jan Heering	21
The Light from Nowhere:	
Bob Webb	23
Lincolnshire UFO & "Car Chase":	
Nigel Watson	25
UFO plus Beam of Light:	
Paul Murray	27
Humanoids Encountered in 1901?:	
J. Randles & P. Barnett	28
Close Encounters in Australia in 1977:	
Keith Basterfield	29
Mail Bag:	31
UFO Frightens a Dog:	
Ian Cresswell	32

© Flying Saucer Review

Contributions appearing in this magazine do not necessarily reflect its policy and are published without prejudice

For subscription details and address please see foot of page ii of cover

SPANNERS IN THE WORKS

ANYONE who was prepared to take time off from the heady business of seeing in the approaching New Year was treated to 1978's passing ufological shot, all the way from New Zealand, via Australia. By the time January 3, 1979, had been reached, almost everyone in the country — and no doubt a very sizeable portion of the rest of the world's population — knew of it by virtue of the repeated showings of the item in question, a film of UFOs said to have been taken from an aeroplane near South Island, New Zealand. By then, too, the explainers were at work, and one is forced to wonder what makes these people "tick."

Convention decrees that the editorial leader of this magazine is not the place for a sighting report, but away with dull convention; we make no apology for here recording the details.

It seems that on Saturday, December 30, 1978, an Australian TV team from Melbourne, Victoria, led by Quentin Fogarty, set out from Wellington. They headed south, with a camera mounted at the ready, in the freighter aircraft used for the purpose. They had planned to fly in an area where there had been numerous recent UFO reports, particularly from pilots and crews of Argosy airliners. There had also been a number of radar interceptions of "unknowns" above Cook Strait which separates North and South Islands.

To put it bluntly, the Australian TV crew were out hunting UFOs — a rather sophisticated "skywatch" in fact. According to their testimony they were over the Kaikoura region in the north eastern side of South Island, when they — pilots and passengers — encountered something that even they hadn't bargained for. Captain Bill Startup, a pilot with 23 Years' experience, was alerted by a signal on his radar at a range of 40 miles. In a second this had reduced to 39 miles, and the "target" turned in towards the plane at an estimated speed of 1000 miles per hour. The film, which presumably, was taken from this point, was what was shown to the world on December 31, 1978.

Early in the reel, the camera was trained on the aircraft's instruments, and thereafter through the windshield at an approaching object. It is assumed there was some degree of shake, possibly due to bumpy conditions; nevertheless the object on the film seemed to move considerably, a fact that was confirmed by the eyewitnesses. The enlarged stills revealed an object which appeared like the Moon seen through broken cloud.

It should be noted that one of the news reports mentioned the presence of two UFOs which appeared directly in front of the plane, and of another which was seen away to the right. In another report the copilot, Bob Guard, stated that they had watched about eight objects for some 20 minutes, objects that were intensely bright, and not unlike strobe lights. Capt. Startup remarked about one large ball of light: "No aircraft would have the acceleration that thing did." He added that, when it came within 18 miles of them, they decided to fly closer to it. When they had closed to within 10 miles the object suddenly moved above them, and then below, before shooting away at high speed.

There seemed also to be ground radar confirmation of objects behind the aircraft from Wellington. Erratic blips were reported by Mr. Geoffrey Causer, air traffic controller of 15 years' experience. We recall too, that during the broadcast relayed by BBC TV-News on December 31 at 10.00 p.m., a reference to Christchurch radar was made by people in the plane.

That then is the gist of an affair which BBC made their main news item, and to which they devoted about half of their available time, an affair which at first sight was really just a glorified lights in the sky (LITS) incident. Nevertheless it left everyone wondering. Everyone, that is, except the experts. By January 2, 1979, the debunkers were on parade. According to the *Daily Mail* of that date Sir Martin Ryle, Astronomer Royal and expert in radio astronomy, was reported to have said "...the film could have been a hoax and that he could have produced one like it within a week." In the same newspaper Sir Bernard Lovell, expert in radio astronomy, was stated to have said "...the suggestion that the object might have come from another world belongs to science fiction" although, as we recall, no such suggestion was made anywhere in the TV film from Australia. Again, in the same article in the *Mail*, Patrick Moore, TV astronomer and expert entertainer, said: "It would have been some kind of reflection, a balloon or an unscheduled aircraft. But I'm sure it came from the earth and not the skies..." Lucky man to be so sure.

Pushing aside those largely anticipated statements, and turning our minds from the olympians who uttered them, we continued to wonder, a frame of mind that remained unchanged even when we watched Mr. Ian Ridpath on BBC-TV (the *Tonight* programme) discussing an edited showing of the Australian film, and admitting that he is not an expert in radar. Yet in the next breath he voiced an opinion that the radar images reported from Wellington Control were "angels." It is trusted that he had discussed this theory with the Wellington air traffic controller — an expert, it would seem, with considerable experience of radar — who surely must be aware of the pitfalls of anomalous propagation, the effects of temperature inversions and so on. Mr. Ridpath was also of the opinion that the TV crew had trained their camera on the planet Jupiter, a view expressed earlier on ITV by Dr. P. C. W. Davies.

Naturally the possibility exists that this hit-or-miss style of explaining may land on the truth somewhere along the line, but some statements made in public by the instant debunkers seem ill-considered to say the least. So what do these "experts" expect to achieve? Casual conversation with members of the public reveals that not only are they vastly amused by some of the utterances, but also that they interpret them as crude attempts at a cover-up. Because of this more and more people evince an interest in a topic which they might otherwise have ignored with a shrug. Thus do the habitual debunkers contrive to throw spanners in their own works.

Moral support for us came from an unexpected quarter. *The Daily Telegraph* of January 4, 1979, published an editorial entitled "Close encounters

of a kind" in which it was suggested that "...it is possible to take a good thing too far — and that is what such eminent scientists as Sir Bernard Lovell and Sir Martin Ryle appear to be doing in their immediate and automatic dismissals of the UFO sightings reported in New Zealand. 'Incredulity is but credulity seen from behind' said Coleridge. The reaction of these learned gentlemen seems to be altogether out of keeping with the spirit of scientific enquiry.

"Let us examine the facts. There are a number of pictures, purporting to be of UFOs, which are so unclear that they might depict practically anything from a road sign to a poached egg. But they were taken by people whom we would not normally distrust, and the objects they photographed were clearly visible on an independently maintained radar. The scientists who suggested that all they were seeing was Venus on a particularly bright night can therefore be safely consigned to Bedlam.* It is true that the objects could very well have been satellites or meteorites, yet quite a few people thought they were not. Very likely they were wrong. Very likely those 15 policemen in Queensland who have just reported a UFO sighting are also wrong. The world is very full of fools... and of course no scientist would wish to join them."

And by the way, the Royal New Zealand Air Force were sufficiently impressed by the report to place two fighter aircraft on standby, ready to scramble if further radar reports of UFOs were received.

On Sunday January 7, 1979, Mr. I. Ridpath was in the Capital Radio studio (Independent radio, London and South East England) as an expert who would answer listeners' phone-in questions. The programme went out at 4.00 p.m. A telephone call was accepted from a certain Mr. Tony Whetstone, an electronics, radar and communications engineer. This gentleman announced that he had video-taped the BBC's December 31st UFO news item, and he pointed out that during a re-run he saw that early in the film the aircraft's instruments were shown. Re-running this section he observed that the compass was gyrating in an unusual manner. (Naturally the assumption was that there was present some sort of EM effect that certainly could not be attributed to Jupiter or to angels.) Mr. Ridpath sounded at a loss for words. The presenter quickly thanked Mr. Whetstone and turned to the next questioner.+ We suspect that another spanner had been dropped in the works!o

* A notorious lunatic asylum of bygone days

+ Ken Phillips also took part in this Capital Radio feature, and announced that he ran a "clearing house" for reports for UFOIN and BUFORA. He gave his telephone number and subsequently received a call from Mr. Tony Whetstone. He put FSR in touch with Mr. Whetstone for which we are grateful.

o Acknowledgements to *The Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Mail*, all of January 2, 1979, whose articles on the New Zealand incident were consulted.

THE MISSING CESSNA AND THE UFO

A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE BASS STRAIT — KING ISLAND AFFAIR

W.C.Chalker

WIDESPREAD media coverage has been given to an extraordinary incident that purportedly took place over Bass Strait, the ocean passage that separates Victoria (mainland Australia) and Tasmania. The events revolve around the alleged disappearance of a young aircraft pilot en route to King Island, to the north of Tasmania. The pilot and plane went missing early on Saturday night, October 21, 1978 and initial reports made no mention of any possible UFO connection. The proverbial cat "got out of the bag" late on the following day, when news of a possible UFO event first leaked out — which is unprecedented in terms of official statements in other spectacular cases. By Monday morning, the media throughout Australia were not only carrying accounts of the incident, but were quoting from actual transcripts from the taped conversation between the pilot and the Melbourne Flight Service.

The circumstances surrounding the event are well documented. The pilot was Frederick Valentich, 20, of Avondale Heights, a suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, and he had taken off from Moorabbin Airport at 6.19 p.m. Saturday, October 21st, in single-engined Cessna 182 aircraft owned by Southern Air Services of Moorabbin. Only the pilot was on board.

Valentich intended to fly to King Island for two reasons. To log up more night flying time and to pick up some crayfish for the officers of the Air Training Corps, where he was an instructor. He was an inexperienced night flier but although this was the first time he had flown the trip at night, he had done it several times before [*presumably by day* — EDITOR]. He intended to get back to Melbourne at 10 p.m., to join his family in a reunion with friends. The young pilot had flown with an unrestricted licence since February of 1978, and had an instrument rating.

He flew over Cape Otway (which has a lighthouse) at about 7 p.m. At 7.06 p.m. the first hint of something untoward came when Valentich contacted Melbourne Flight Service. The copy of the transcript of the conversation follows. Under the headline **WHAT THE PILOT SAID**, in The Sun (October 23, 1978), it speaks for itself:

7.06 p.m. Pilot to ground — Is there any known traffic in my area below, 5,000 feet?

Flight Service Unit: — Negative. No known traffic.

Pilot: Seems to be a large aircraft below 5,000 feet.

Ground: What type of aircraft?

Pilot: I cannot confirm. It has four bright lights that appear to be landing lights... aircraft has just

I wish to thank the many readers who have sent in news reports of this incident which received wide coverage by the world's news media. (I watched a TV report of the incident while on vacation in the United States). In particular I would like to mention the kind assistance of Keith Basterfield of UFO Research, South Australia; of Roger Thornwell of Christchurch, New Zealand; D. Anderiesz of Noble Park, Victoria; of J. Butler and the author, who with a B.Sc. hons. degree, is a Director of UFO Research Lane Cove, NSW, Australia

EDITOR

passed over me about 1,000 feet above.

Ground: Is large aircraft confirmed?

Pilot: Affirmative; at the speed it is travelling are there any RAAF aircraft in the vicinity?

Ground: Negative.

Ground: Confirm you cannot identify aircraft?

Pilot: Affirmative.*

Then, three minutes after his original transmission, Valentich reported again:

Pilot:... It's not an aircraft, it's... (break in transmission).

Ground: can you describe aircraft?

Pilot: It is flying past. It has a long shape. Cannot identify more than that... coming for me right now. It seems to be stationary, I'm orbiting and the thing is orbiting on top of me. It has a green light and sort of metallic light on the outside.

Valentich then told ground control the object had vanished.

Ground: No military traffic in the area.

7.12 p.m.: pilot: Engine is roughidling and coughing.

Ground: What are your intentions?

Pilot: Proceeding King Island Unknown aircraft now hovering on top of me.

Ground: Acknowledge.

Then came the long metallic noise and contact with Valentich's aircraft was lost.

* * * * *

* The Australian of October 23, 1978, published a similar text of the conversation which included additionally the following:-

At 7.08 p.m. Aircraft (pilot): Melbourne, its approaching from due east of me. It seems to be



Above: from the Sydney *Sun*: artist Berto's impression of what could have happened if the Cessna had been flying upside down (turn page upside down to see).

Cover: Pauline Bowen's impression of the scene.

Left: The route taken by the Cessna.

playing some sort of game. Flying at speed I cannot estimate.

FSU: What is your altitude?

Aircraft: 4,500 feet.

FSU: Can you confirm you can't identify aircraft?

Aircraft: Affirmative.

When the Cessna failed to arrive at King Island on schedule at 7.28 p.m., light aircraft began a visual and radio search, but nothing was found. Conditions at the time were clear, with a mild north-westerly breeze accompanied by unlimited visibility. The Cessna was equipped with a life jacket and a radio survival beacon. Nothing had been heard from the beacon.

The RAAF *Orion* (a long range maritime reconn-

aisance aircraft) from Edinburgh, South Australia, conducted a "tracking crawl" following the course taken by Valentich's Cessna and continued searching all day Sunday. The only thing found during Sunday was an oil slick lying some 18 miles north of King Island. On Monday, October 23rd, the search continued and shipping was sent to sample the oil slick to determine whether this was oil or aviation fuel. What was first thought to be debris in the area turned out to be packing cases and plastic bags floating in the sea.

The Witness

Fredrick Valentich was considered to be a competent pilot and was highly thought of. He was the son of Mr. & Mrs. Guido Valentich and one of 4 children. During interviews on October 23rd, Mr. Valentich was quoted as saying that his son was "a believer" in UFOs, and apparently had an interest in the subject which may or may not have been due to a previous UFO sighting. Eight to ten months ago, i.e. January to March, 1978, he apparently claimed he saw "a brightly lit object" in the western sky flying at tremendous speed from south to north. His father also stated that his son had read a lot on the subject and was quoted as claiming he had seen "secret UFO files." Just what this does to a percipient's credibility in the post CE3K days cannot be assessed in this case because of Valentich's disappearance. But certainly it will figure heavily in further enquiries into this extraordinary case.

The Theories

Inevitably, the incident has come in for its share of

speculation as to what happened. Transport department officials suggested the pilot may have become disorientated and somehow inverted his 'plane and what he saw was either reflections of his own lights on the sea, or those of the lighthouses at Cape Otway and King Island! However the 6 minute conversation on record gives no such indication, and the type of aircraft would only operate for some 30 seconds or so upside down before the motor would stop from fuel starvation. Experienced pilots publicly stated they found this explanation as extraordinary as the reported event. Meteor activity was also suggested as a stimulus. Apart from the UFO hypothesis, the possibility of a hoax cannot be entirely ruled out, however the matter is far from resolved with the disappearance.

Discussion

The similarities with the Kinross and Mantell cases looms large, and the object described also reminds us of the Coyne Ohio helicopter case of 1973. Another single-engined plane disappeared without trace in Bass Strait on December 24, 1969. The plane crashed into the sea 8 km off Cape Otway on a flight from King Island. No trace of wreckage was ever found. King Island itself has had a number of reports in past years including one spectacular one: a "beam" case on Saturday, April 10th, 1976.

If the pilot remains missing the case could escalate into a classic mystery; if however, the pilot is found alive and well, speculation will centre on three hypotheses. Either he experienced the UFO sighting as described, or he underwent a severe disorientation or, finally, the event was a hoax of some sort. If he is found dead and the wreckage is found, the matter may be satisfactorily resolved. Only time will tell.

NOTE: This preliminary report has been based on details determined by our enquiries, on press reports, and on the many radio and TV reports carried on October 22nd and 23rd.

Second report on the Bass Strait — King Island affair (Thursday, October 26, 1978)

Here is a record, with some brief notes, of further developments in this case.

The search for the missing airplane in Bass Strait was called off yesterday, Wednesday, October 25; the pilot and 'plane had been missing since Saturday night, October 21, 1978. No trace has been found. An oil slick located near the assumed position of the Cessna 182 during the last R/T conversation between Frederick Valentich and Flight Service Unit, Melbourne, had been sampled on Monday, October 23, but no information regarding this has been forthcoming.

The suggestion of acute disorientation — i.e. flying upside down — cannot be considered as a reasonable explanation of the report of an unidentified flying object. So there are two options:-

i) That the UFO report was genuine. Valentich is described as somebody who "lived for flying" and it is unlikely that he would have done anything to affect his chances of improving his status as a flier. Even if the UFO encounter report was factual, suggestions of an abduction by UFO entities are unfounded. Less critically-minded ufologists have made such suggestions when interviewed by the media, and the pilot's father, Mr. Guido Valentich, has been reported (e.g. in *The Sun*[†] of October 24, 1978) as believing that his son had been "borrowed" by visitors from another planet, and as saying that telephone calls he has received from various people have "reinforced his beliefs." It seems likely that speculation like this is more acceptable to him than the possibility that his son's aircraft has gone down into the sea. Although Valentich's voice throughout the "UFO transmission" was stated to have been calm, the final circumstances could have precipitated either the crashing of the aircraft into the sea, or an aerial collision. On the evidence so far available there is no foundation for speculation that there was an overt act of hostility on the part of the unknown object.

ii) That the whole thing was a hoax. This must be a consideration if Frederick Valentich turns up alive and well, but as time passes the possibility becomes increasingly less likely. It should be noted that the pilot has been quoted as having an interest in the subject, probably stimulated by an earlier sighting experience. However, even the advent of the movie "CE3K", and similar material, cannot be reasonably held against any apparent validity of the Bass Strait incident.

"Not on Radar"

The Australian newspaper *The Daily Mirror* of October 24, 1978, carried an item stating that "Senior traffic controllers doubt that missing pilot Frederick Valentich... was anywhere near his last reported position."

The account continued: "Traffic controllers who monitored his last dramatic message on the UFO sighting were unable to pick up his Cessna 182 on their long-range radar — yet radar conditions were unusually good. 'With conditions such as Saturday's we can even pick up King Island, which is only 215m above sea level — yet we couldn't find the plane,' a senior traffic controller said. 'We seriously doubt he was anywhere near Cape Otway...'"

After this initial bandying-about of the lack of radar confirmation as evidence that the plane was not where it was thought to be, officials have stated that the Cessna was not being tracked.

[†] [*The Sydney, Australia, newspaper — ED.*]

Don't forget to tell your friends about . . .

FLYING SAUCER REVIEW