

ROAD HAZARD DOWN UNDER?

Bill Chalker

A report of a bizarre encounter with a UFO by a lady driver of a car in a country district of New South Wales in Australia. Our contributor, who has a BSc (Hons) is an industrial chemist and consultant for the Australian Co-ordination Section (ACOS) of the Center for UFO Studies and Co-ordinator of the Sydney, NSW, group, UFOIC. His report is dated July 4, 1976.

THERE have been many incidents reported in Australia in which unknown aerial objects have followed cars, and several of these have contained a danger factor where the driving ability of the percipient is concerned.

Australian close encounter cases include several events of this type, such as the Pimble Station (Western Australia) event (27.7.65),¹ the Bourke's Flat case of 4.4.66 which involved the bending of headlight beams and possibly related road fatality,² the Wadonga occupant event (24.8.67),³ the north-west W.A. case of November, 1969,⁴ the Penrith to Windsor car chase (5.1.72),⁵ the Mooraduc road car stop case of July 25,⁶ the central Australian long distance car pacing event of August, 1972,⁷ and the Tayene case of September 22nd, 1974.⁸

In most of these cases, the presence of the UFO has called upon the car driver to make sudden efforts to maintain control of the car, and often the event leads to the vehicle leaving the road. Only the Bourkes Flat case of 1966 is suggestive of a fatality related to the presence of a UFO.

The incident which is the subject of this report, represents a variation on this theme, and as far as I can ascertain it is unique. Some cases in the literature provide interesting similarities, but if the reader is aware of cases in which the phenomenon to be described has occurred, I hope they will draw them to my attention.

The incident

Early on Monday morning, March 22, 1976, a Murrurundi couple were returning from their holiday. Nearing the outskirts of Tamworth (population about 25,000), the couple stopped at Nemingha, a small settlement about four and a half miles from Tamworth itself (see Figure 1).

Nemingha, situated on the New England Highway, consists of scattered houses, centred around a road intersection and a railway station. The New England Highway leads to Tamworth 4½ miles (7.25 kms) approximately to the west, while in the other direction it leads to Armidale approximately 65 miles (104 kms) to the north east. The minor road at Nemingha heads towards Numdla, some 32 miles (50 kms) to the south-south east.

In Nemingha itself, at the intersection, there is a post office-service station, the Nemingha Hotel and some houses. Powerlines run parallel to the eastern side of the highway, and a street light is situated

close to the road, in front of the post office-service station (see Figure 2).

The Murrurundi couple were towing a caravan, and they parked opposite the Nemingha Hotel, under the street light (in front of the petrol service station). They were studying a road map, trying to decide whether to take the road to the left (which would take them over a partially bitumened road to Murrurundi, via Nundle), or continue through Tamworth. The time was about 5.45 a.m.

Suddenly a small white car with its headlights on appeared on the road ahead (evidently coming from Tamworth). The couple stepped from their car, hoping to ask the driver for directions, but at that point a bright greenish-yellow light descended from above and completely enveloped the small car. The light apparently disappeared, and as the car started to drift to the wrong side (to its right) of the road, it became enveloped in a thick ball of white haze. The car then stopped on its wrong side of the road.

The Murrurundi couple described the events that followed:

"It seemed like two minutes had passed before the white haze disappeared (I assumed that at this point the car lights were out—B.C.). A lady dressed in blue stepped from the car and with a yellow cloth proceeded to wipe the windscreen which seemed to be covered in a white substance.

"After a few minutes she was about to get back into the car when its lights came back on (apparently by themselves—B.C.). She stared, as we did too, then she threw the yellow cloth on the roadside, got back into the car and proceeded towards us.

"We watched as the cloth she threw away burst into flames..."⁹

A driver of a utility truck pulled up beside the Murrurundi couple, evidently having observed the weird phenomenon. According to the couple he appeared to be very frightened.

The small car, now being driven very slowly, came towards the witnesses, then turned (to its right) taking the road to Nundle. The Murrurundi couple noticed when the small car passed them that it was covered in a "...thick white substance not unlike white paint. The only part of the car not covered was where the windscreen wipers were working."¹⁰

The Murrurundi couple were very shaken and

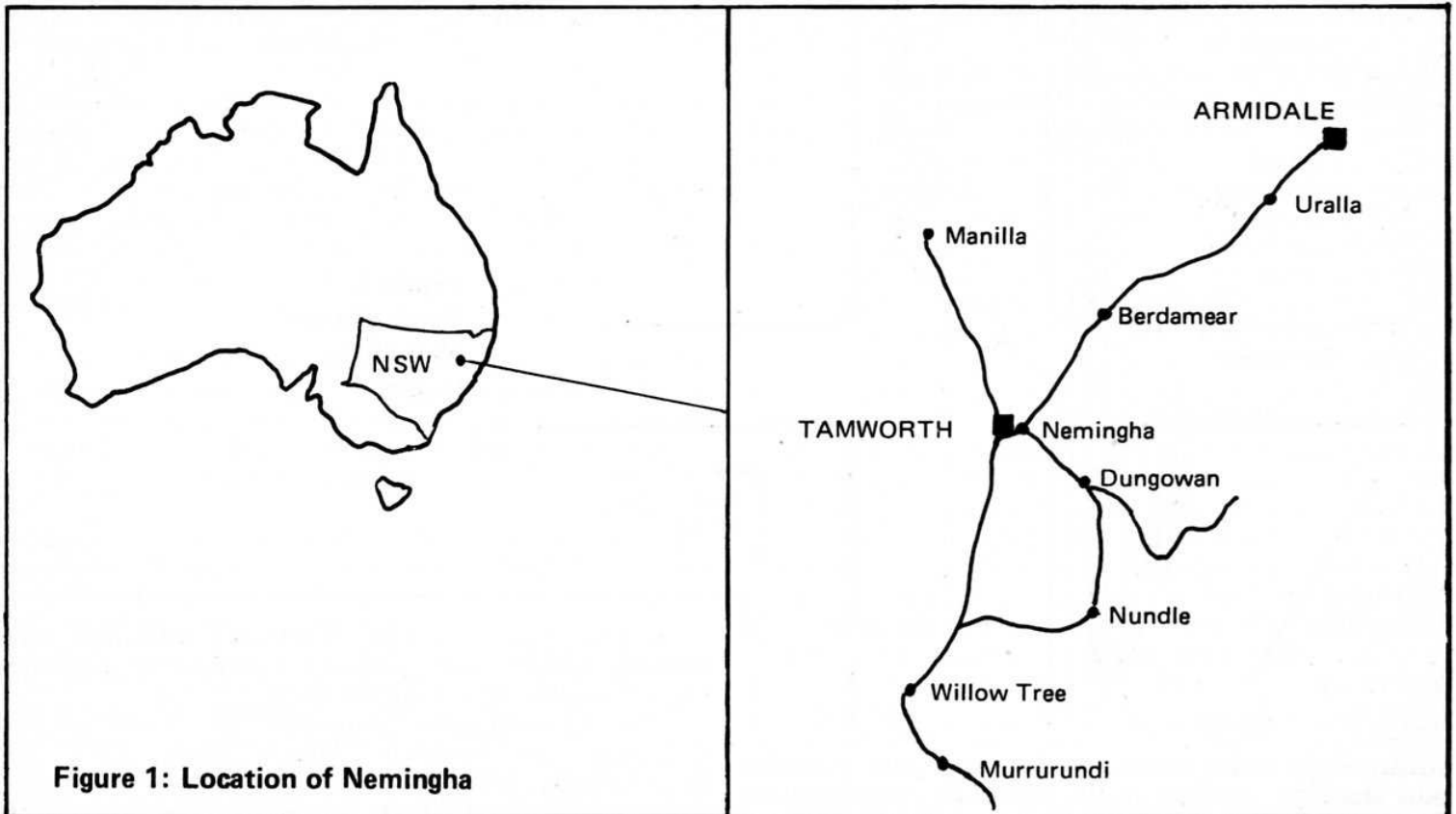


Figure 1: Location of Nemingha

decided to take the same road as that taken by the woman in the small car. They continued their journey at only 30 miles per hour. The area where the car had been during the incident was on the road to Tamworth, and the couple did not want to risk driving across it.

The couple were so upset by the incident, that they wrote to the Tamworth newspaper, *The Northern Daily Leader*. Their letter appeared on Thursday, April 8, 1976, in the "Readers have their say" column. The letter appeared with the heading "MOTORISTS UPSET BY UNEXPLAINED HAPPENINGS." In it the couple make the following comments:

"We gave this incident a lot of thought before writing this letter as we were so upset. The driver of the little car also must have been shocked as she continued her journey very slowly.

"Can anyone tell us what may have happened?"

"Could this be the explanation why some very good drivers are killed in accidents?"

"As this accident happened in minutes it could be the cause of many unexplained accidents.

"Luckily for the person driving the car, the highway was free of traffic, except for ourselves and the truck driver who were both stopped. She may have been killed if the road had been busy."

The investigation so far

When the letter appeared in the paper, there was no reference to any unusual aerial phenomena or UFOs in the headline. Unfortunately, therefore, our clipping services and contacts apparently missed it. A young Tamworth man passed on the clipping to

the Australian Co-ordination Section (ACOS) for the Centre for UFO Studies, based at Gosford, NSW. ACOS sent the material to me in view of the fact that the area had been "my home territory" during my university years, and because I specialise in trace cases.¹¹

My preliminary field trip to the area, enabled me to reconstruct the sequence of events on the spot (see Figures 2 & 3). I examined the site on Friday, June 18, 1976, and any inspection served accurately to place the witnesses and approximate the path taken by the small car. A search for the "yellow cloth" was fruitless, and as we only learnt of the case several months after it occurred, this evidence would almost certainly have been long gone. A local television team visited the site just after the letter appeared in the paper, which was over a fortnight after the event. Apparently a search for any material was not even thought of, and when the TV story went on the air, it consisted mainly of interviews with patrons and licensee of the Nemingha Hotel. They had nothing of value to say about the event. I questioned these people, and it appeared that no local people reported anything unusual. The patrons did contribute low weight anecdotes about recurring nocturnal light observations over nearby Farrar boarding school.

The local newspaper, however, lent its assistance in locating both the witnesses and the woman whose car was covered with the white substance, by publishing a letter I wrote in their June 29, 1976 edition.

In this letter I alluded to the following:

"At this stage, I cannot offer an explanation, but I can point out that conventional atmospheric combustion reactions of the constituents of air do not produce precipitates like the white substance

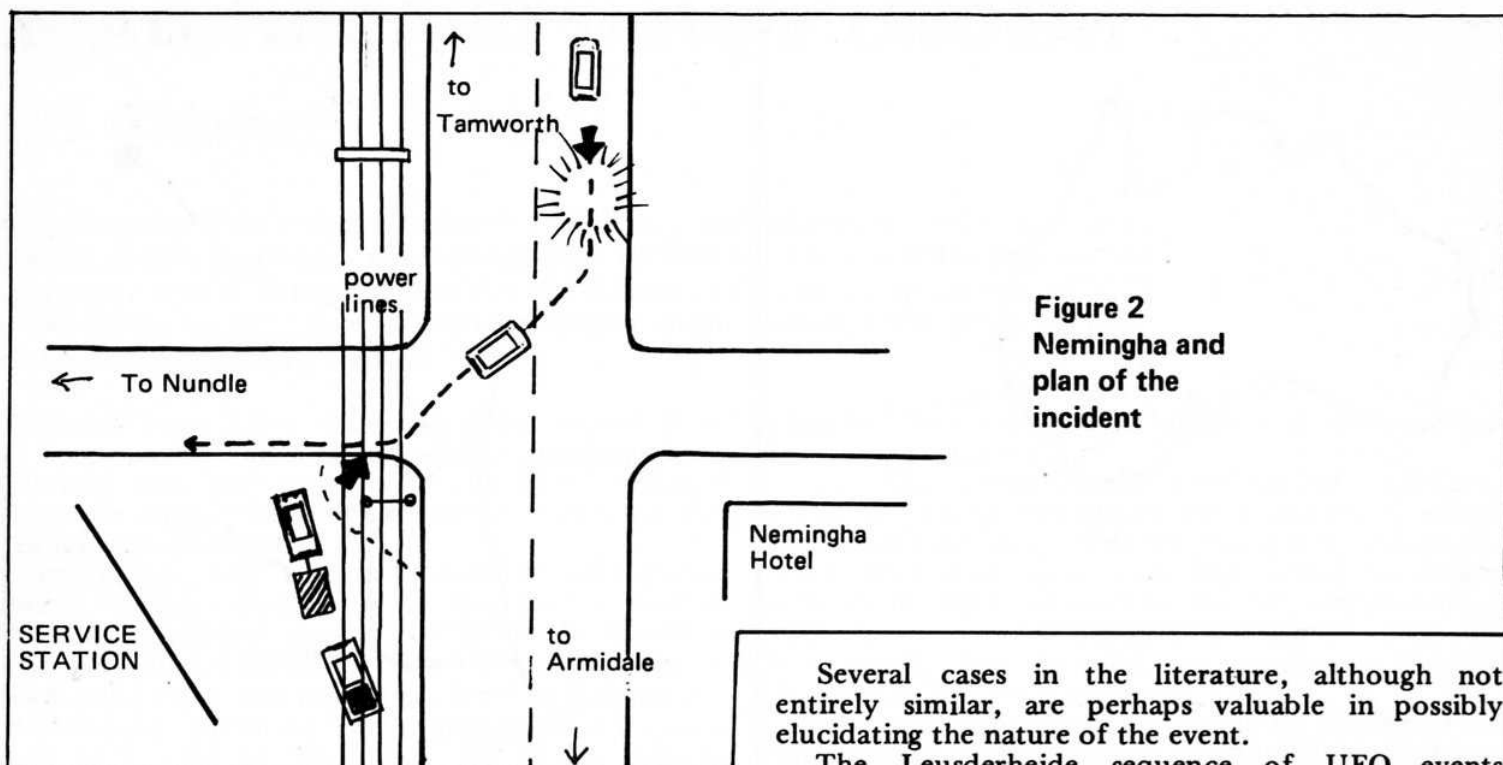


Figure 2
Nemingha and
plan of the
incident

mentioned, under normal conditions. But I might add that the incident could hardly be considered as being normal."¹²

Discussion

The case described in this report, presents a remarkable variant on the usual kind of trace case. Perhaps the white substance is a variant of that in the "angel hair" cases. Most of the latter cases could possibly be attributed to migratory spider web formations. But some cases seem to be quite inexplicable and therefore it is worth speculating on a possible mechanism of formation.

Combustion reactions involving the major constituents of air, namely nitrogen (N_2) and oxygen (O_2), in the presence of an electric arc, lead only to nitrogen dioxide (NO), a colourless gas. This is blue when in the liquid state. In normal atmospheric combustion processes, nitrogen oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) are liberated. Nitrogen dioxide is a brown gas which can dimerize if the temperature is lowered, producing a colourless gas, dinitrogen tetroxide. At $22^\circ C$ this vapour is pale reddish-brown, but at higher temperatures the colour becomes darker, almost black. All this tends to confirm Menzel's 1963 statements that isotopes of O_2 , N_2 and hydrogen, and other elements in the atmosphere cannot react with their normal analogues to produce precipitates.¹³

Therefore I would suggest that the mechanism producing this white material would be either a relatively complex chemical reaction, or one produced in a manner hitherto unknown in the chemical literature. Any mechanism invoked as a possible explanation would have to explain why the "yellow cloth" self-ignited after being used to clear the windscreen of the white material in the incident described.

Several cases in the literature, although not entirely similar, are perhaps valuable in possibly elucidating the nature of the event.

The Leusderheide sequence of UFO events occurring on Saturday March 25th, 1972 at Leusderheide, Holland¹⁴ begins with an event somewhat similar to that at Nemingha. The percipient was awakened by a loud humming noise, and soon observed light coming through his bedroom window.

I quote from G.S. Wiersema's article in *Flying Saucer Review*:

"My curiosity was roused and I walked to the window to peep outside on the street. I saw a blinding light, as if someone in front of the house had lit a Bengal light. I also saw a sort of 'fog' in the vicinity of that light. This 'fog' stood like a 'fence' on the pavement and was approximately 4 metres long and 2 metres high. Parked behind it stood my car, a V.W.1300. I did not understand what it meant, but my first impression was that my car was on fire..."

The man ran out to the car.

"I jumped into my car, while noticing that it was not covered any more with a layer of ice due to night frost, but that it was wet with melting water, in contrast to the other parked cars. So presumably there must have been a source of heat somewhere around. Was it the light or the 'fog'? I did not wonder about this until later. At any rate, it was strange and frightening. When I had started the engine, the strange 'fog' crept, as it were, round the car; at the same time I felt the back of the car bouncing, as if 'someone' had jumped onto it.

"In my rear mirror I saw the light (or fire) phenomenon at the back of my car and I thought that my car was on fire! I panicked and accelerated; I drove out of the street without actually realising where to.

" 'I have to drive,' I thought, 'perhaps that way the flames will be extinguished.' At the end of the street I turned to the left and after first going through a dry ditch and closely passing a few

trees, I then came onto an asphalted road. Panic seized me, I was terrified..."

Of possible relevance also is a motorist's encounter in Northern Sweden with "unusual lights, dense black cloud and kite-shaped UFO" on September 20, 1971.¹⁵ Here the driver, Sten Sture Ceder, drove into a mass of vertical beams of light like the Northern Lights, then an unknown force moved the car forward until it was enveloped totally in blackness.

"The blackness seemed to be a dense, floating mass of smoke that lay around me so that it was impossible to see anything. There was no light coming from the headlights despite the fact that they were switched on at full beam..."

Ceder drove out of the blackness, and simultaneously observed a black mass rising from the ground. It became kite-shaped and it eventually disappeared below the horizon.

Reidar Salvesen's Norwegian encounter of October 29, 1970, featured "an intense light-body, maybe 20 metres in diameter," with a very strong light, blue-white in colour. It hovered over his car and a few seconds later he viewed a distinct rounded aerial object. Salvesen fell on his back after he got out of his car, and his car's windscreen shattered at the same time. As Salvesen started to get back up, the object left.¹⁶

As far as I have been able to ascertain, few cases in the literature have exhibited the characteristic of a white substance persisting after a UFO encounter. In one case, of a patently bizarre nature, which I have been attempting to investigate, one "percipient" noticed a sticky white substance over the car.

A few years ago, two young women were relaxing in their residence in Canberra (A.C.T.), when they heard a strange noise. They both felt "compelled" to go outside to their car. The car then allegedly *drove them* ("by itself") to a remote site. They said they were escorted all the way by a brilliant light source. Upon stopping, a weird chant started up, apparently coming from behind the car where the girls could make out vague human-like forms. It seems that at this point, both girls felt or "realised" their greatest personal fears. For one it was the imminence of death; for the other it was a fear of being violently raped. For some reason the latter girl got out of the car. What followed them is unclear, but when she tried to get back into the car, she could not for several minutes. The reason for this was the presence of a viscous material like that in a spider's web which covered the door. Apparently the girls could now get away, and they eventually drove to the local police. The police apparently believed that something unusual had happened to them. They went to the site of the incident and then escorted them back home.

But, we are told, the story does not finish there. After the police left the whole sequence of

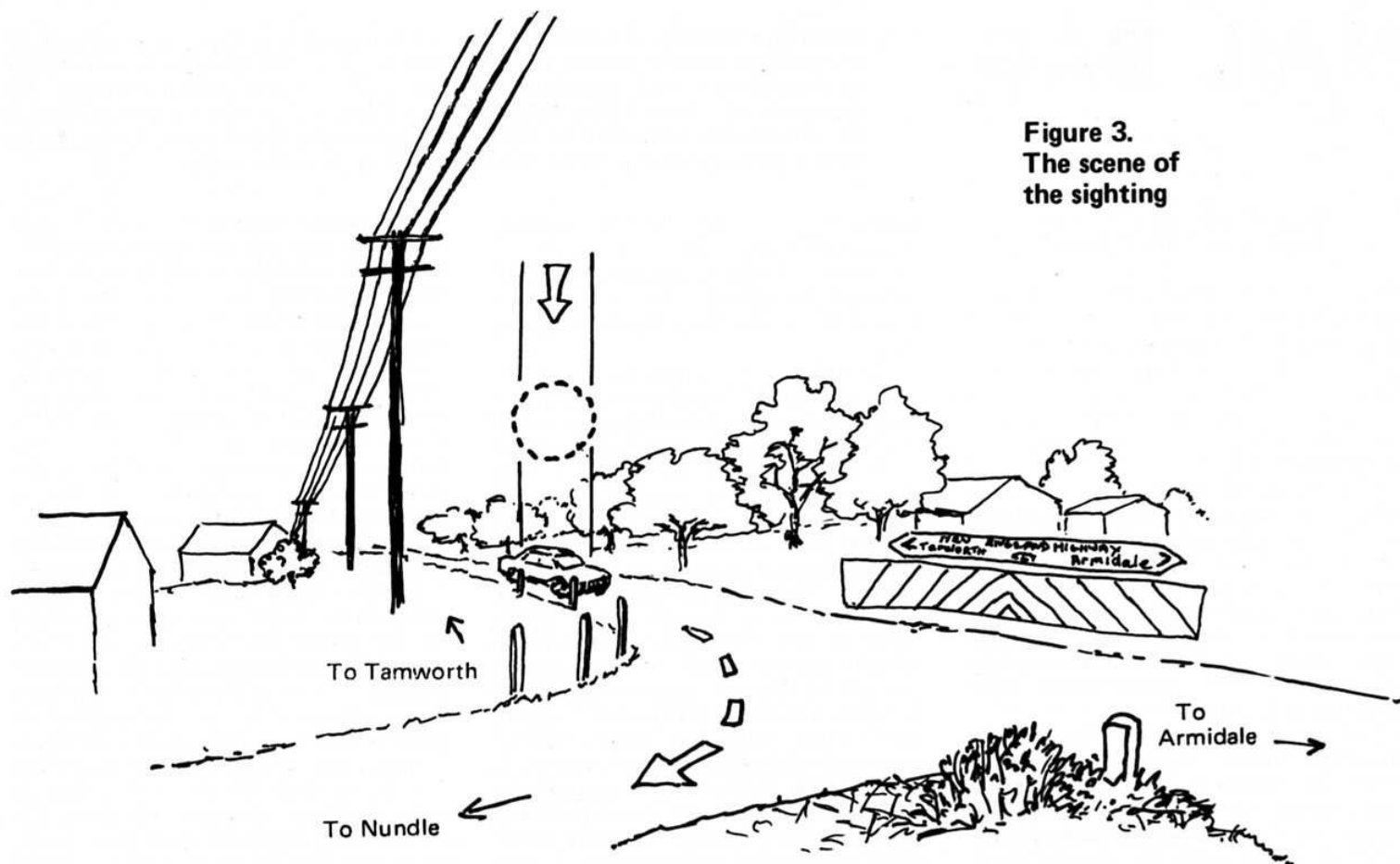


Figure 3.
The scene of
the sighting

events apparently repeated. This time fear was replaced by guilt — guilt because they had “betrayed a trust” by informing the police of the original incident. After the incident, the young woman who had left the car during the first incident, developed a severe speech impediment, and “lost” certain basic skills such as writing. Her friend suffered no adverse effects other than fright. Apparently as at now the “victim” has recovered from most of the post-UFO-event ailments. Apparently police patrols had observed strange lights during the same night, and one patrol had come upon a massive procession of snails crossing the road and heading towards the area of the bizarre event. Could the snails have had something to do with the viscous material?¹⁷ This incident bears some remarkable similarity to the Umvuma to Beit Bridge UFO escort case in Rhodesia of May, 1974.¹⁸

Whatever the nature of the Nemingha phenomenon, further elucidation depends on receiving further information from the two witnesses, and from the woman who experienced it all. Had some of the white substance been recovered and subjected to analysis the case may have set quite a precedent for formulating theories about the nature of the unknown aerial phenomenon.

References

1. Newspapers; also see “What is the truth about these

- mysterious sightings?” by Tony Barker, *Sunday Mail*, October, 1965.
2. *Maryborough Advertiser*, “AUFOR”, No.10, Dec. 1969 & “AFSR” (Victorian edition) No.5, July, 1966.
3. AFSR (VUFORS) No.8, & *Flying Saucer Review* (UK) — FSR — Vol.14, No.2.
4. *Pix-People*, September 7, 1972.
5. UFOIC Newsletter, No.37, Sept./Oct. 1972 & *Melbourne Sun* April 15, 1972.
6. *Australasian Post*, August 24, 1972, & Investigation by B. Stapleton & Garry Little (Investigation notes compiled by K. Basterfield). See also FSR Vol.18, No.6.
7. *Pix-People*, October 12, 1972.
8. TUFOIC. See also FSR Vol.21, No.5.
9. *Northern Daily Leader*, 8.4.76.
10. *Ibid.* (9)
11. Australian UFO Trace case catalogue compiled by B. Chalker, consisting of 63 UFO related trace cases to date.
12. *Northern Daily Leader*, 29.6.76.
13. *The World of Flying Saucers*, Menzel & Boyd (1963), page 194.
14. FSR Vol.18, No.6, “Landing on the Leusderheide” by G.S. Wiersema.
15. FSR *Case Histories*, No.10, June, 1972, “The Strange Force that moved a car,” GICOFF (Sweden) report.
16. FSR *Case Histories*, No. 4, April, 1971, “Strange Norwegian Encounter near Helleland” by Anders Liljegren.
17. Personal investigation (B. Chalker).
18. FSR Vol.21, No.1, “Car teleported by UFOs in Rhodesia” by Charles Bowen & Vol.21, No.2, “Escorted by UFOs from Umvuma to Beit Bridge” by Carl van Vlieden.

MAIL BAG

On J.M. Bigorne's "Forced Feeding by UFO Entities"

Dear Sir,—The events of the encounter described in FSR Vol.21, No.6 can, I feel, best be explained as a testing of the reaction of a chance human witness to a sudden and unexpected confrontation with the unknown and an *apparently* senseless action by unknown beings.

In terms of human logic, visitors from an advanced alien civilization would not approach a person alone on the road. Furthermore, they would not stop him, hand him something to eat, and then depart after he had consumed it. Human logic says that any such visitors would openly approach world leaders and land perhaps before the U.N.

However, in view of the all too frequent human reaction of fear — with its resultant violence — when confronted by that which is of the realm of the unknown, such an operation could only be termed foolhardy. Before contact of an involved nature could be initiated, some method

would have to be devised whereby this fear/violence reaction could be overcome. Chance encounters with isolated individuals the world over would be an excellent means of doing this.

In these encounters, each of the witnesses would be approached and his reactions (perhaps also thoughts) noted at all times. Some of those who reacted with fear would be allowed to simply depart, as in this case. This would demonstrate the lack of hostile intent on the part of the unknown beings, for no attempt is made to prevent the witness from departing. In other instances, even though fired upon, there is no retaliatory action taken which proves fatal to the human being(s) involved — at most a paralysis beam is used on a temporary basis. In still other instances, these visitors approach the witnesses and engage in such things as physical examinations. Beyond that there are those instances in which they engage in some *seemingly* nonsensical actions such as the “piece of chocolate” given to this witness.

Correspondence is invited from our readers, but they are asked to keep their letters short. Unless letters give the sender's full name and address (not necessarily for publication) they cannot be considered. The Editor would like to remind correspondents that it is not always possible to acknowledge every letter personally, so he takes this opportunity of thanking all who write to him.

In all such encounters, regardless of the particular events which transpire, each side obtains a bit more knowledge regarding the other. The more each knows about the other, the better the chances of a successful open confrontation at some future date. It would be expected that curiosity would ultimately replace fear. Thus, those instances in which a human being were approached and he sought only to greet the unknown, having replaced fear with a desire to learn from the experience, would indicate a measure of success in the *programme*.

That such an *alien study programme* might well exist is evident in the world wide reports of UFOs and their entities which form a definite pattern. There is a logical progression from nocturnal lights, to brightly lit objects that fly by, to craft that hover nearby and reveal certain structural details, to craft which land, to beings seen peering through windows, to beings seen emerging from these craft, to beings seen engaged in such actions as specimen gathering, and, finally, to close encounters with human wit-