

IAN LAWES.

# UFO attack: a storm in an eggcup?

A FAMILY who said they were attacked by a UFO in the Australian outback might actually have been at the centre of a dry thunderstorm, a scientist said today.

Faye Knowles and her three sons, aged 18 to 24, say they were stalked by the eggcup-shaped object which lifted their car off the road and spun it around before dropping it back with a flattened tyre.

Professor Peter Schwerdtfergger, head of meteorology at Flinders University, Adelaide, said the details they gave were consistent with a dry thunderstorm, a natural phenomenon in which charged particles of dust

create strange effects.

A fine covering of ash on their car could be a product of lightning and the violent shaking of the vehicle a result of the storm, said Professor Schwerdtfergger.

"There is no doubt that if you are in the middle of a fairly intense electric field, you're going to feel very strange," he said.

Many bushfires in Australia were the result of dry storms, he added.

## Terrified

Mrs Knowles and her sons were travelling 1,500 miles from Perth to Melbourne to see her mother but said they were too terrified to repeat the journey home.

Mike Manton, head of the Bureau of Meteorology's

research centre in Melbourne, said there had been many reports of dry thunderstorms but there was no thunderstorm activity in the area at the time.

## Chase

The family said a huge eggcup-shaped object chased them for more than 90 minutes along a remote highway before leaping on to the top of their car and clinging to its roof with suction cups.

After trying to evade it they stopped the car and hid in nearby bushes, only to be pursued by it 15 minutes later.

Police said crews aboard three fishing boats and a couple holidaying in Melbourne also reported seeing a similar unidentified flying object and investigations were continuing.

# School witch report