

No Close Encounters.

Close Encounters of the Third Kind has come and gone, an entertaining film no doubt to most people but a disappointment to the UFO Researcher. On the Tasmanian scene the film appears to have made no difference to the current situation, a point that has become apparent in other countries. It also failed to bring any response from the public, a display at the cinema by the Centre brought forth a couple of enquires.

Prior to the film's showing UFO activity had dropped to a virtual standstill, following the film there was no change in the status quo. The last month (Aug) has brought a ripple of activity to the otherwise placid scene, but the response by the public was due to newspaper items on local sightings, not the much vaunted film.

The twelve months August 77 to July 78 produced 121 reports to the Centre, of these only a mere 7 remain as Unidentified. Compare this with the twelve months of 1974 which brought 52 UFOs and one can see we must be at the low point of the pendulum. The last twelve months saw a UFO percentage of 5.8, the lowest since the Centre's inception. One has to go back to 67/68 for such a low number of UFO cases, 8 unexplaineds in the 2 years but then we only received 42 reports to investigate.

Maybe the few recent cases may be the first signs of a gradual build up in sightings. Most flaps in earlier years had been preceded by a trickle of sightings developing into a concentrated flpp? Predicting UFO events though is fraught with danger?

Public Response

A call on Wednesday August 23rd reported two sightings at 7pm and near 9,20 from Ouse. A green triangle object was seen briefly heading behind the same hill on each occasion, it appeared to have a row of lights at the rear. The same night saw the Search and Rescue alerted on the North Coast after a spate of green flares were reported as far afield as King Island and St Helens.

We had excellent response from the public following an item in the "Mercury", callers ringing from places as distant as Campbelltown and Dover. From well over 30 calls it was possible to piece together the nights scenario. Something had burnt up over states at various times during the evening with a predominant colour of green. The initial reports were at 6.55pm, followed by another burn up at 8.45pm, then the major reports at 9.04pm. Yes, thats right, the flares on the North Coast were more than likely due to the same stimulus as the Southern reports.

SIGHTINGS

Most of the sightings new and old originate from the Lake Country, a couple coinciding with the Lake Sorell Flap of 1975. The Poatina Highway event is an interesting case but due to the passage of time until it came to our notice has lost some of its impact. Other 1975 cases from the Lakes have also suffered due to details only just being learnt of.

DATE	TYPE	TIME	DURATION	WITNESSES	LOCATION
early 1975	NL	22.00	10min	2	Kingston

Witnesses noticed a white circular light below the skyline of Bonnett Hill about 1 mile distant, viewed through binoculars the light had a very distinct outline. It then moved off at a regular speed past the Golf Club and up the valley where the Southern Outlet from Hobart lies. The light disappeared in the Ridgewat area. The witnesses reported the sighting to the RAAF but the never received the promised sighting forms. Details passed onto the Centre in May 78, no further follow up possible re aircraft etc: at that stage. Sighting value O.B.

March 1975	CE 1	20.00	30mins	2	Lake Sorell
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Witness was staying at shack at Silver Plains. Whilst outside getting wood a large flashing light approached the shack at a rapid pace as if to crash into it. However, the red and green light stopped at tree top height some 200mts distant. The witness and her daughter watched from inside until the light moved slowly back up into the sky. Eventually it was just a distant light in the eastren sky and just faded into the distance. Details obtained Aug 78. Value 1.B.

April 1975	NL	05.00	few mins	2 plus Interlaken	
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Visitors to Lake Sorell woken up early by a noise similar to a plane engine except it seemed to be missing badly. The source of the noise could not be seen due to the overcast sky. The noise passed overhead and went south over Lake Crescent. Then there was a loud explosion followed by flashes of white light. One of the witnesses rang DCA to report a plane crash but was advised there were no aircraft in the area. Details obtained Aug 78. Value 1.B.

Do you need a copy of our Sightings Value system, just write or telephone the Secretary. Also available is a complete list of Tasmanian sightings 1948 to 1978, just send a stamp addressed envelope. Telephone 23 6009 or write to TUFOIC, GPO Box 1310N, HOBART 7001.

Annual Meeting will take place at 8pm on Friday, October 13th, usual venue at Scots Church rooms, Bathurst St. (rear of Church in Chalmers House)

Sightings Contd:

- Winter 1975 CE 2 03.20 2/3mins 1 Poatina Highway
 Witness was returning to his home on the North West Coast after completing his shift on Hydro projects in the South West. The night had been cold and snow had fallen in the high Lake Country. Travelling alone on the Poatina Highway the witness experienced a chilly sensation (not due to the cold), then had difficulty with the steering of his car, he nearly ran off the road. After slowing he noticed a bright orange light to the right of the road. A second time he had trouble with the steering and pulled the car over to see if anything had gone wrong. He noticed the light was still there and was in fact coming from an object hovering 100 mts from the road. It seemed to be similar to the first light he had seen 2kmts earlier. The outline was something like a helicopter without rotors, it was orange below with blue above, and blue and yellow on the tail. It was estimated to be 6/7 mts long. The silent object just slid away at tree top height disappearing through a gap in the hills to the south east. The witness could find nothing wrong with his car and continued on home. Sighting details received May 78. Value 2.B
- March 78. NL 20.30 2/3mins 4 Lake Crescent.
 Witnesses had been shooting and were just packing up to go home near dusk. Then two orange lights were seen approaching out of the northern sky. There was no noise or flashing lights, just large round steady lights about 1km apart. The lights passed by just to the east going away to the south. One of the lights veered off and disappeared to the south west whilst the other continued on the original course. Sometime later planes passed by well to the east but could be recognised by the sound and flashing lights. The sighting bears some similarity to the Maydena lights of early 1976. Sighting details received Aug 78. Value 1.B.
- 6.7.78 NL 00.30 1 1/2 hrs 4 Blackmans Bay
 Husband hears report on news of flare (probably a meteorite) and goes out to have a look. Calls out rest of family when sees several lights out over water off Bruny Island. Lights look to be couple hundred mts up and white tinged with yellow. The numbers of lights varied, at times there were 8 visible at other times only 2. They kept darting back and forth in an erratic manner, sometimes moving behind each other and not reappearing. The pattern of movement seemed to be repeated aimlessly so the witnesses eventually tired of watching and went to bed. On spot investigation July/Aug 78. Value 1.B.
- 5.8.78 DD 11.30 1min 3 Lake Crescent.
 Witness out on lake in boat with companions, a second friend is testing another boat on the lake. The witness took up a position near the southern end of the lake whilst the other boat moved about 2kmts north. One of the witnesses then noticed an object moving quite fast from the north east corner of the lake and passing behind their friend's boat. Their friends were facing south in the other boat and missed out on seeing the object.
 It looked like a thin cigar, estimated as 30mts long but only half a metre thick. It was 1 or 2 mts above the water and going faster than any speed boat they have seen at the Hobart Regatta. The surface of the lake was choppy but the object moved smoothly without any smoke, lights, or sound. It was black to brown in colour well defined but otherwise featureless. From the distance it covered the speed was estimated at 150 to 180kph. The object disappeared behind trees into the north west corner of the lake. There were no other boats on the lake that morning. Witnesses interviewed for details same week. Value 2.B.
- 5.8.78 NL 21.50 25mins 5 Interlaken
 Family staying at their shack by Lake Sorell near Interlaken, an area they have often visited over the years. Two of the family were outside when a glow appeared north east of the lake beyond the Dogshead area, there is a small valley beyond the Head. The source of the glow seemed to be hidden from the witnesses. The glow grew in a few minutes until it was reflected off the overcast sky lighting up the foreshore and lake. The clour was a bright white. This was followed by the appearance of a white light on the opposite shore some 2kmts distant. This light proceeded over the next 15 to 20 minutes to dash back and forth through the trees over a distance of 2kmts. The light would cover the distance in just a few seconds, other times it disappeared only yo reappear at the other end of its run. With binoculars nothing extra could be seen.
 The big glow which had beams coming up as if from searchlights moved very slowly southwards but the light's source was always hidden.. Eventually it reached a position south east of the witnesses and after the little foreshore light blinked out it also faded away.
 However, within a minute the glow and beams appeared south west of the lake but looked to be further away and over some minutes seemed to be receding away into the distance.
 A few other calls came in the same evening of glows seen in Southern Tasmania but there were insufficient details to complete investigations. None of the glows were connected with the recent displays of the Southern Aurora. Value 2.B.