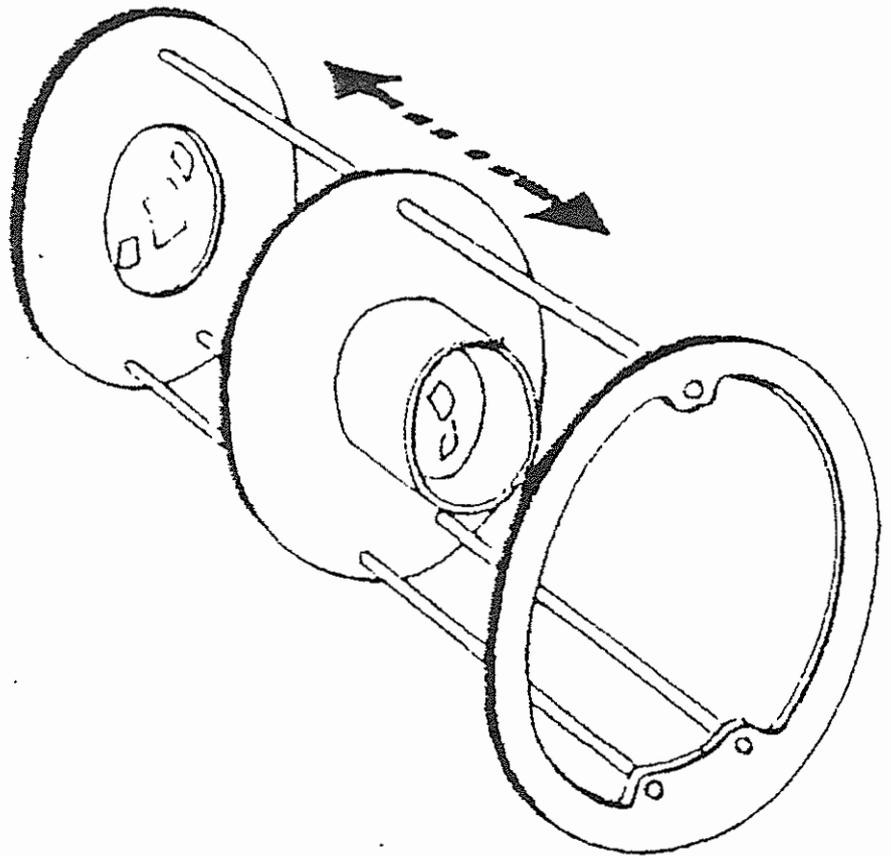
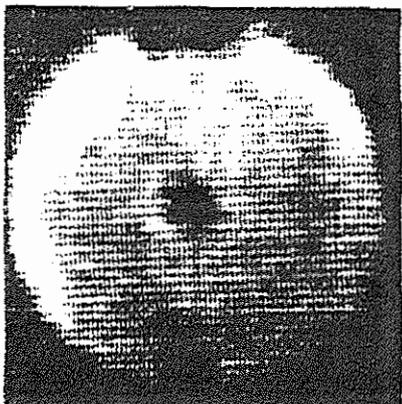
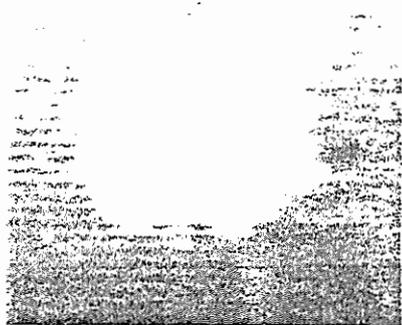
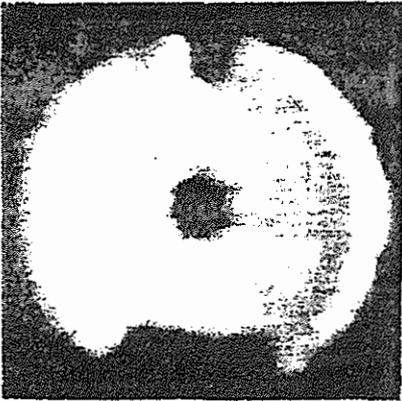


# UFO Reporter

Quarterly Publication of UFO Research (New South Wales)

Volume 2, Number 2

June 1993



**Orange lights**

**UFOs on video:  
Italy, Belgium, Australia**

**UFOs over Lapstone and Parramatta**

# UFO Reporter

Volume 2 Number 2

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It is the policy of the editors not to disclose the names of UFO witnesses.

**Cover:** UFO images on video (top Crosia; middle Amay; bottom Canberra). Plus a typical video camera zoom mechanism.

# The orange lights — what are they?

Bryan Dickeson

Over the last year, UFOR (NSW) has collected a large number of reports about unusual orange lights in the sky. These accounts range from bright star-like objects seen in the distance, to smallish globes or ovals up to about a metre in size, when seen close up.

Of course we do have some orange-light hoaxes as well — in some areas these become especially frequent during school holiday breaks, and have been found to be fire-balloons.

Some of these schoolboy pranks are now so regular, we can anticipate outbreaks and know when and from where people are most likely to phone in with reports.

Normally we would not get too excited about the other non-hoax orange lights either — there is never very much to be said about them. The objects have no hard edges, and are usually described as being 'covered with small orange flames' — still not much detail to get excited about.

However, we do have a goodly residue of incidents of a more intriguing nature. These involve groups or pairs of orange lights, often moving very quickly, or in very tight formation, or against the wind. When you compare these reports with standard accounts of unusual weather phenomena such as ball lightning or plasmas, they just

don't fit into any of these categories properly either.

In one case (of several incidents which may indicate a link with some abduction-type phenomena), a young woman reported observing an unusual orange light up in the sky outside her kitchen window, immediately before 'somehow' losing half an hour of time.

At one point her kitchen window curtains seemed to flutter 'in the breeze' (which is not particularly unusual, except all windows and doors were firmly closed at the time). Investigations continue.

## UFOS on video

In another intriguing orange light case we have obtained a video which shows an unusual series of objects manoeuvring near the Australian Air Force base at Glenbrook-Lapstone,

west of Sydney (the incident is described fully in this issue of *UFO Reporter*). The videoed objects appear to display a very definite, 'intelligent' response.

Furthermore, the same witnesses report a series of similar orange lights over Lapstone-Emu Plains, just on one year later.

While investigating the first Lapstone UFO video, we became aware of the many problems which can arise when analysing such material.

Fortunately, we were able to obtain information from overseas UFO investigators who have had similar concerns. This issue of *UFO Reporter* includes a translation of a sceptical Italian article which highlights problems with video material from Italy, Belgium and Norway.

I hope you find this issue interesting. □

## Contributions to UFO Reporter (NSW)

We need articles, photographs and cartoons for forthcoming editions of *UFO Reporter*.

If you think you can help or have something to offer, please contact The Editors, UFOR(NSW), PO Box Q95 Queen Victoria Building, Sydney 2000.

And for those of you who have provided the material here, our sincere thanks. We will always try to acknowledge your contribution as fully as possible. □

## UFOR(NSW) Members Survey, October 1992

UFO Research (NSW) held its first members' survey by show of hands at its inaugural meeting in November 1991. The information we obtained was then used to setup formats for public meetings and video nights throughout 1992.

A second members' survey was made a year later, to see if members supported the policies and activities that the Interim Committee had adopted, and to help fine-tune the 1993 program.

While 1992 was a remarkably good year for UFO Research (NSW), for meetings, investigations and information dispersal, 1993 has been much less successful, for a number of reasons (these will be discussed in a future issue of *UFO Reporter*).

The latest survey was conducted at the October 1992 general meeting and by post to all paid-up members (75 in a total mailing list of about 190).

There were 31 responses, 41% of all paid up members, so the survey is an accurate account of members' views at that time. Results of the survey were first discussed at a general meeting on 6 December 1992, and the results are as follows:

Is UFO Research (NSW) value for money? There was a 100% response of 'yes' for this as well as satisfaction with the dissemination of UFO information.

Ninety-nine per cent thought the general meetings were entertaining (which is most encouraging). Twenty three per cent of paid-up members regularly attend general

meetings; most members (38%) had attended two meetings over the previous year (out of four meetings and two video evenings held). This data indicated that group membership was still fairly fluid, and is consistent with our rate of growth (about six new members per month). It was interesting to note that only 5% attended five or more meetings and video nights.

General meetings can run for over three hours, to allow lots of time for discussion breaks and networking. Eighty per cent considered the meeting duration was 'just right'; not too long or too short.

The next section of the survey asked for ideas on how we could improve the current meeting format. Some 90% of members asked for more meetings and video nights. However, when members were asked later in the survey how they might help to provide more meetings and video nights, there were very few offers.

(Organising meetings and video nights takes up most of a committee member's time. This severely affected our capacity to investigate UFO reports during 1992. Similarly, organising guest speakers is difficult — good speakers are a very limited resource; international speakers tend to come to Sydney at very short notice and for about a week at most. There is often not enough time to book a venue and advertise a meeting to suit either the speakers or members.

The survey then focused on how people had become members. I was interested to see here

that 35% were introduced by a friend, 22% came from reading newspaper articles, and 13% came from being members of the Australian Centre for UFO Studies (ACUFOS), or from attending other public meetings.

To help increase membership, 86% indicated they were prepared to bring along two potential new members in 1993; 92% of those surveyed felt UFOR(NSW) should have a membership drive.

The survey then asked if members could suggest any media by which people could be encouraged to join — 70% considered newspapers to be the best way to advertise for members, followed closely by 'word of mouth'. Radio was not considered significant.

Levels of funding: 89% of Members thought that even as a voluntary organisation, UFOR(NSW) should do more than just cover its operating costs (the present cost to produce four issues of the *UFO Reporter* is about \$1500 per year). Some believed that our annual budget should be about twice this figure

To raise more funds, 63% of members suggested raffles at meetings, or a stall to swap/sell goods (79%) with a 10% commission paid to UFOR(NSW).

The survey findings show both good support for UFOR(NSW), and yet that we still have some way to go.

Increased participation at all levels should ensure future success. □

Paul Sowiak

## Part I

## UFOs on video

*One question we get asked often is that 'If there are so many good UFO cases being reported all the time, why don't we have more pictures — more photographs, films, or videos of these events?'*

In fact, UFOR(NSW) does receive a small but steady trickle of photographic and video material, including a few hoaxes.

Now that video cameras are much more readily available, more people are sending us short UFO video clips from around Australia and New Zealand for comment.

UFOR(NSW) receives three or four videos of 'UFOs' a year for comment. These vary greatly in quality and content.

Often the unusual nature of the material is not immediately obvious and we have to delve a lot deeper.

UFO investigators still need to know as much about the circumstances surrounding the incident; how and where the shots were taken and so on.

This process of research and interpretation takes time.

The following news item was taken from the Sydney *Daily Mirror* of 19 February 1990, and is typical of the sort of material we see in Australia (thanks to S. Walters for this clipping).

**Note:** The newspaper printed the picture *sideways* for a better fit. The notches 'top and bottom', appeared left and right of centre, as shown. □

## UFO Footage Probed by Air Force

RAAF officials will today view footage of a UFO which was captured on videotape by a Canberra couple on the weekend.

Zoran Ivanesevic said today that he had been sceptical about the existence of UFOs until his eerie experience.

Mr Ivanesevic was walking around his home at Kambah, in Canberra's southern suburbs, about 5.15 am on Saturday.

He saw what he first thought was an unusual star in the east.

"I was having a restless night so I went outside to have a cigarette," he said.

"I first thought it was a star but I'd never seen one like that before.

"It was about 10 times bigger... like a type of disc."

Mr Ivanesevic called out to his wife, Ljubica to bring the family's VHF video camera and film the object.

After several minutes of filming, the couple returned inside to play the tape back.

The video, with its automatic focus and aperture, provided a much clearer picture.

"I realised it was not a star," said Mr Ivanesevic. "It was a bright circle and in the middle there was a black hole."

The tape shows a bright round light with small indentations at both the top and the bottom.

After watching the tape, Mr Ivanesevic said he went back outside but the object was gone.

He estimates it was about 1500m above the ground, possibly over Queanbeyan.

He said the object appeared to be hovering, projecting its light primarily sideways, parallel with the horizon.

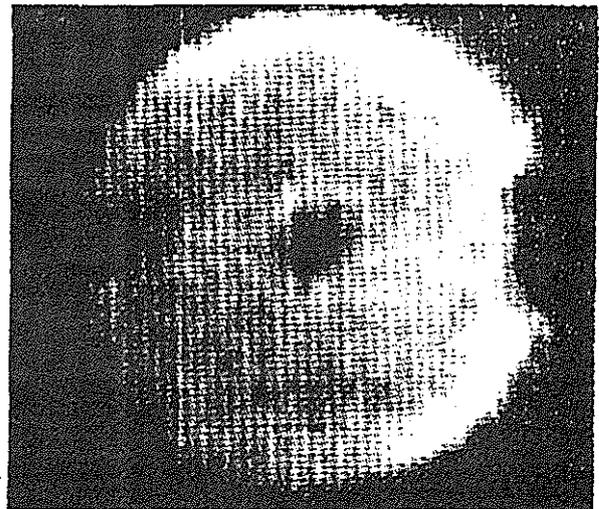
The RAAF will be given a copy of the tape today.

Mr Ivanesevic said he had already given details

of the experience to an RAAF official.

"I've read about UFOs and seen people on television talking about them," he said.

"I always had a little bit of doubt about those people. But now I am changing my mind."



# Analysing a UFO video

## The Crosia documentary

Giuseppe Stilo

*This somewhat sceptical article originally appeared in the Italian publication UFO, Number 11 (1992), produced by Centro Italiano Studi Ufologici, in Turin. It discusses many of the problems you encounter when assessing video material. We have been extremely fortunate to have UFOR(NSW) investigator Paul Bonett translate the original for us.*

Recently, a 1987 video taken in the small Calabrian town of Crosia has come to the attention of Italy's UFO groups. The video shows what appears to be a luminous disk gyrating in the night sky.

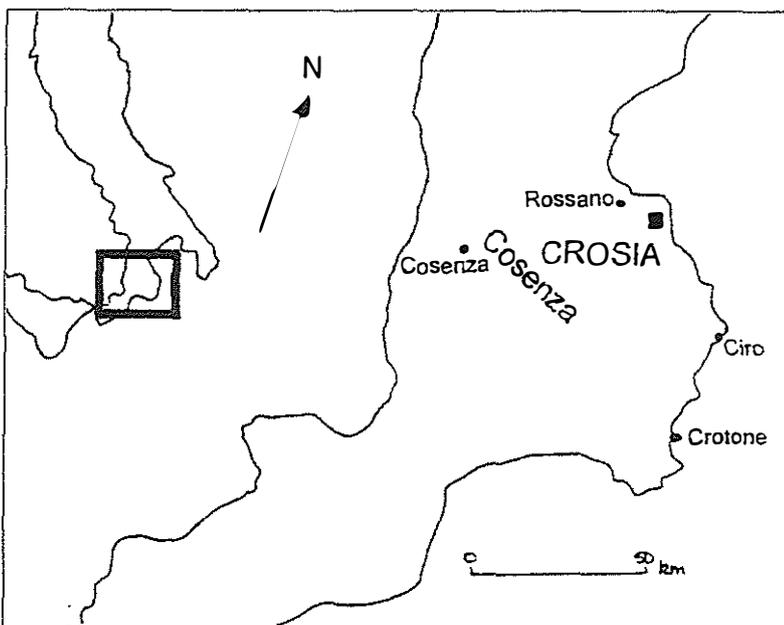
This much-publicised case first entered the public domain in Autumn 1988 when the Italian RAI TV network broadcast a documentary containing the video material.

The incident provides us with a good case study where a full and proper technical examination of supposed UFO material early on could have largely defused inappropriate public speculation.

Firstly, we should be concerned about the chain of events that brought the Crosia case to the notice of the public and UFO groups:

- During the summer of 1987, Anna Maria Touri (a journalist normally resident in Rome and a champion of religious visions and paranormal phenomena), was on holiday, travelling in Calabria. While there, she heard about a weeping statue of the Madonna and a 'luminous globe in the sky' in the province of Cosenza. Touri visited the coastal town of Crosia, acquired a copy of the video, and returned to Rome where she published her findings in an article in the daily *Il Tempo* on 15 August 1987.
- Early in 1988, events took a new turn when TV show host Maria Rosaria Omaggio began preparing a program titled *Incredible*. She had heard stories of the Cosenza events and decided to contact the witness who took the video. The rights for the video were then purchased by the RAI network, apparently for 3.5 million lira (about \$A3000).
- Finally, in May 1988 the *Incredible* host made her way to Crosia where she obtained a video segment for her program about UFOs, which was then broadcast on 17 October 1988.

Crosia (39°34'N, 16°46'E)



During these later developments, the ufological 'authenticity' and validity of the case were enthusiastically promoted and publicised by many unqualified individuals. All facts were quickly exaggerated.

### Reconstructing the events

During the afternoon of 23 May 1987, two children, Vincenzo Fullone (15) and Anna Basi (12), discovered that an old plaster statue of the Madonna in a small church near Crosia had started to weep spontaneously.

In the days that followed, this story reached thousands of people, including local authorities who converged on the site when local newspapers became involved. The children became the focus for a developing Virgin Mary cult. A few days later, while gathering for evening prayers, Vincenzo and Anna began having visions of the Madonna and started receiving messages.

As a result of the publicity, Pasquale Campana, a 26-year-old hairdresser from Mirto (some seven kilometres from Crosia) decided to keep vigil day and night in front of the church where the strange events were taking place.

During one of the evening 'manifestations', Vincenzo told the congregation to leave the church and look up into the sky. Campana, who was videoing the service made his way outside the church. He looked up and noticed an unusual light, much brighter than a normal aircraft light. With his camera resting on his shoulder, Campana started to video a revolving globe of light.

The RAI video segment lasts approximately six and a half minutes, and is only part of a substantially longer video sequence. The missing segments of the video might yet provide important details for evaluation and criticism. In any case, it should be noted that none of those people publicising the event took the trouble to check any technical details of the VHS video camera used. Even the time of the event itself is uncertain, and is given as somewhere between 22.00 and 22.30 hours.

When the video is viewed against a dark background, a large moving luminous spot seems to originate from a stationary object. The movements of this object seem to be due entirely to the crowd jostling the camera operator, and from the instability of the camera carried on the cameraman's shoulder.

The presence of a street lamp in the bottom right hand corner of the field of view, in a similar position to the UFO, initially raised some doubt as to the authenticity of the sighting. The street lamp is the only other recognisable object seen during the video and seems to

disappear as soon as the UFO appears. The UFO then enlarges out of proportion until it takes on the appearance of a circle of light that fades and darkens towards the centre. There are two indentations in the circle of light, one at the bottom and a wider one on top (see Figure 1).

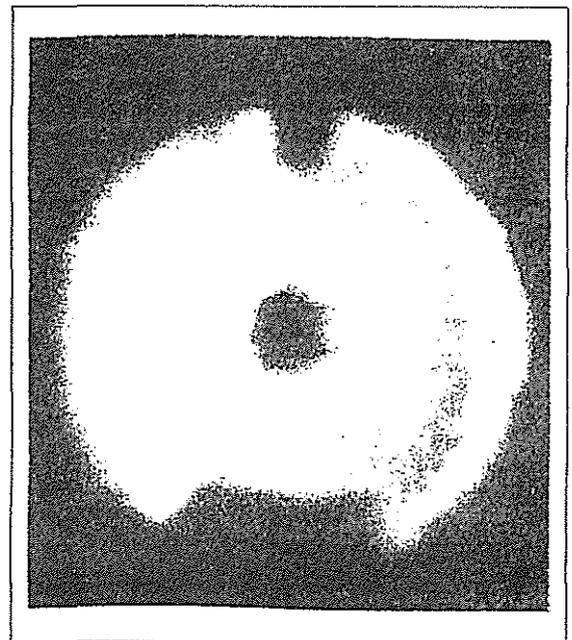


Figure 1: The Crosia "disc"

On first viewing the video, you get the impression of a quickly revolving light or object. This takes on the appearance of a globe when the surrounding field of view widens (when the video zooms back out), to reveal the street lamp once again.

On the sound track you can hear many confused voices and comments in the Calabrian dialect about people seeing something unusual in the sky. No sounds seem to come from the object itself. The witnesses on film include the 65-year-old local priest (Luigi Mazza), who believes in visions.

**Some contradictions**

As already mentioned, many aspects of the event are still unclear and the way in which they came to light has not helped authentication.

*Apart from these obvious inconsistencies, we seem obliged to accept that the number of witnesses was very high.*

For example, if we start by examining the uncertain date of the videoing of the event: Various sources give three separate dates for the sighting. Firstly, Anna Maria Touri of *Il*

*Tempo* (15 August, 1987) specifically mentions '4 June'. In another daily, *Corriere Della Sera* (5 March 1988), the same journalist changes the date to '30 May'.

The second date is quoted soon after by some ufologists, and in another article about the visions of Crosia in a popular weekly publication. This date was mentioned by *Incredible*, broadcast on 17 October 1988. However, *Incredible* compere (Maria Omaggio) has since written

*All accounts give a coherent view of there being some unexplained light source in the skies above Crosia.*

a book on the subject which puts the date as '2 June 1987'.

None of these people have taken the trouble to investigate the reasons for the

different dates, or how they arrived at the 'correct' date for the event. However, what is certain, is that since Omaggio's book was published, zealous ufologists have accepted this date as the correct one.

Even more confusing is the number of witnesses mentioned by a range of sources:

- 'thousands' — (*STOP*, 5 June 1988)
- '500-600' — (announced by Omaggio in *Incredible*)
- 'hundreds, maybe thousands' — (*Seven*, 5 March 1988)
- 'more than 900' — (*Notiziario UFO*, numbers 112 and 113)
- '960' — Carlo Malanga of CUN (in *Il Tirreno* 12 April 1990)

- 'more than 1000 witnesses' — (Malanga & Pinotti, in *Il Fenomeno BVM*, p.77)

Apart from these obvious inconsistencies, we seem obliged to accept that the number of witnesses was very high. Under these circumstances, it seems incredible that the local press failed to mention the correct date, in spite of repeated references to the sighting.

A local daily, *La Gazzetta del Sud*, and the local weekly *Il Crotonese* do not mention the date of the sighting at all. On the contrary, it is difficult to find evidence confirming the unusual sighting in Calabria.

Suggestions made during the *Incredible* program and other 'people shouting' at the appearance of 'a star, or half an apple', and 'a round ball that kept approaching'.

All accounts give a coherent view of there being some unexplained light source in the skies above Crosia, notwithstanding the fact that local people were expecting 'signs' from the Madonna.

During an interview, Pasquale Campana described the phenomenon as 'something very like a star crossing the sky overhead, while people were kneeling'. Compere Omaggio confirmed this on location near the 'butcher shop at Rosano', but apart from a few brief references, she provided no detailed account from the 'thousands' of witnesses in her documentary.

The camera operator assured the media that the fast retreat and approach movements of the light source could not have been done with the zoom effect of the camera.

It is tempting to reinforce the authenticity of the Crosia video by comparing it with previous UFO videos taken in Belgium and elsewhere, as mentioned below. These observations can provide useful details needed to understand the nature of the effects observed in the Crosia video. However, to best judge this event, we should concentrate on facts internal to the case.

### A Norwegian precedent?

A UFO film taken in Southern Norway on 20 February 1976 is frequently mentioned in the literature, and shows similarities with the Crosia case.

Steinsholt is a small town situated about 100 km south-west of Oslo. On the night in question, two locals videoed a small rosy ball of light moving in a northerly direction in a completely dark sky.

The group UFO-Norge organised a detailed investigation of the film. The Solar Observatory of the Department of Astrophysics at the University of Oslo gave them the following explanation: 'We measured the darkness of the film with a microdensitometer, which showed that the camera was out of focus. All frames display a circle of object just inside the circumference of the light itself (the same details observed in photographs taken from the Crosia video). These details also appear on the negatives.

'From witness reports, the dimensions given for the object are about 0.5 degrees (the size of a pea at arm's length), but the film shows a two-degrees wide object, indicating that the camera was out of focus.'

Captain A. Knutsen and A. Bratzege of Kjeller Photographic Laboratories confirmed, after examining the film, that the camera was out of focus and that the film gave no points of reference (which unfortunately is also the case with the Crosia event).

On the positive side of the Steinsholt phenomena, a dark stain can be observed cutting across the top portion of the disc — this obvious feature is discussed later. UFO-Norge made no comment about this in their film.

The conclusion we arrive at here from considering purely technical details, suggests a conventional explanation for Pasquale Campana's film.

### Technical considerations

An important development occurred in August 1990 when French ufologist and mechanical engineer Giles Munsch,

produced a five-page report about the Belgian and Crosia sightings for a number of French UFO groups and the Italian Centre for UFO Studies. His conclusion is that the ghostly images found on the films are due to a video zoom lens effect.

Munsch emphasised the curious lack of perspective shown by the object sighted at Crosia. Coincidentally, during his investigations in France, Munsch obtained a video of the Crosia area. To his surprise, he noticed some luminous shapes like those on the Crosia video while viewing this film. After examining the facts, it became clear that the images only appeared while the videocamera was 'zooming' whenever there were rows of street lamps in view. The images, however, would disappear when the auto-focus mechanism was shut off.

Munsch produced a video sequence showing the camera zoom progressively transforming street lights into more complex luminous shapes, identical to those at Crosia. At that point, Munsch came up with three hypotheses:

- the images could be caused by an optical property of the video camera
- the images could be caused by a characteristic of the electronics of the camera; specifically the CCD (charge-coupled device) sensor
- the images may have been caused by a particular type of street lamp.

The last conclusion was rejected when Munsch realised that the same effect could be obtained with other types of street lights.

All the effects seem to have been caused by the internal characteristics of the video camera. Difficulties obtaining technical details for Munsch's Japanese

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*The film shows a two-degrees wide object, indicating that the camera was out of focus.*

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*All the effects seem to have been caused by the internal characteristics of the video camera.*

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equipment were overcome by carefully examining the equipment itself.

When the zoom mechanism is at maximum, the contours of one metal section seem to perfectly match the images seen on the video (see Figure 2). However, the shape of this part varies with the model of videocamera. The ef-

*Two triangular indentations are also visible on the top and bottom edges of the disk. The use of the camera zoom is noticeable.*

fect occurs only while approaching the maximum zoom setting and focusing.

Later, Munsch was able to reproduce the effect in daylight by filming a helicopter landing light. However, Munsch concluded that the lack of technical data from the Crosia case did not allow him to decide whether the phenomena in question was totally due to similar effects.

A more detailed reason for the phenomenon was later provided by Patrick Ferryn, a photographic expert from the Belgian UFO group SOBEPS. Ferryn had obtained and analysed video film taken by witnesses during the spectacular Belgian wave of triangular UFOs,

These showed similar zoom effects to those already discussed.

This time however, apart from giving a better technical explanation, SOBEPS was able to identify the light source for two of the three films they investigated.

On the evening of 30 November 1990 at Gemmenich, a town in the area of Eupen (in the province of Liege), Mr Etienne Durnbruch took a video of a 'very bright', stationary light. SOBEPS immediately suspected the cause of the repeated enlargement of the object might be due to the video zoom effect, but first attempts to reproduce this with another camera failed.

After checking an astronomical ephemeris for Gemmenich for the night in question, they concluded the bright light on the film was the planet Jupiter.

An almost identical light to that seen at Crosia was shown in a program by the Belgian Radio-Television Service during Easter 1990. A large luminous spot became a disc with dents front and back, and a dark centre. This time the film was taken by a resident of Amay in the province of Liege, some time in February 1990.

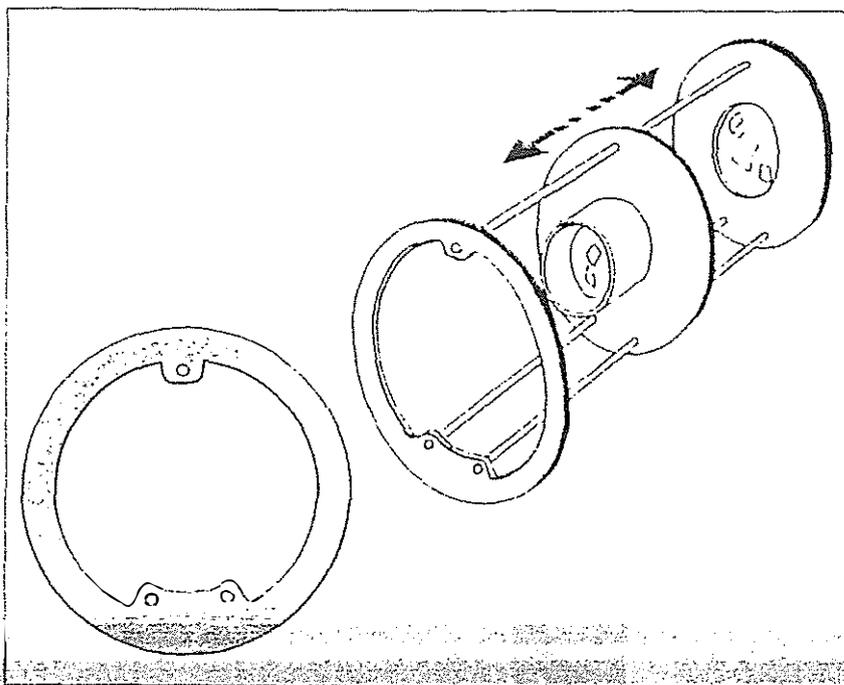
Subsequently, Patrick Vidal, investigating for SOBEPS, pointed out that the film image (taken without a tripod and with autofocus on), was that of Jupiter.

Finally, the daily *La Libre Belgique* of 1 April 1990 mentions that Joaquim Sferrazza and his wife had filmed a "strange round disc" at Flemalle, in the district of Liege. When played back, a flying object with a dark centre is distinctly visible for about twenty seconds. Two triangular indentations are also visible on the top and bottom edges of the disk. The use of the camera zoom is noticeable.

Ferryn wrote that in spite of his inability to reproduce these effects, SOBEPS 'should have started its investigation by looking at the videocamera's optical system.'

Watching a video playback, it is very clear that during each close-up

Figure 2: The video camera zoom mechanism



zoom sequence, an indented disc develops (exactly as in the Crosia case). So the phenomenon observed has a more mundane cause.

In most instances, the effect occurs at maximum zoom settings (f54mm or f72mm), or while the zoom mechanism is being operated. Finally, the autofocus system for video cameras using CCD sensors and VHS, VHS8 or VHSC, require additional computer enhancement to improve image clarity.

There is a problem if focussing is out of synchronisation with the zoom. The problem is greatest when camera settings are f9, at zoom x6, or f72 at zoom x8.

Ferryn also pointed out the basic instabilities of a lightweight videocamera carried on an operator's shoulder (as in Crosia). The slightest movement would produce undesirable results even with a stationary celestial body such as Jupiter. Such operator movements seem to have caused the visual effects found on the Crosia videotape.

The indentations seen on the circumference of the disc can be readily attributed to the internal configuration of the videocamera's zoom mechanism, as discussed earlier. However, these vary slightly from one model to another.

Ferryn says that it is important to note that all the effects mentioned so far cannot be reproduced with a videocamera due to the complex features of the optical systems used. More sophisticated and expensive video equipment might allow for the technical problems that have been mentioned here.

### The 'hole' in the centre

To remain objective, one should also mention the dark, circular zone in the centre of the disc, as appears in all videos we have examined. Munsch could not reproduce this characteristic in his video experiments.

All facts considered, this writer finds there is little hope for the 'UFO-ness' of the Crosia case. In a brief note CUN stated that the cause could be en-

tirely explained from known technical details.

In May 1989, after writing an article for the periodical *Il Giornale dei Misteri*, I received a letter from a student in Rome. In his letter, the student detailed other optical causes for the Crosia disc: (he also commented on the zoom effect, the emotiveness of nearby witnesses, the non-aerodynamic stance of the disc, and the lack of reference points in the video in particular; any of which are sufficient to reduce the ufological interest.) Using a videocamera and a torch lightbulb, the student was able to reproduce the phenomenon in a darkened room with the video 10-15 mm from the light bulb, by activating the zoom mechanism. His result is identical to the Crosia video, showing a central, eight-sided hole, and indentations top and bottom.

### An astronomical cause?

It is still unclear exactly what the Crosia light source was, but from what we now know it seems likely that it arose from conventional sources, as explained earlier. The Crosia video does not suggest anything abnormal.

Once slight movements of the videocamera are taken into account, it can be proved that the object was low down in the sky and may well have been stationary. Given the events as reported, the video image size for the bright light at Crosia seems excessive.

After seeing the Belgian videotape from Amay, we cannot dismiss the idea that the Crosia 'disc' has an astronomical origin. This possibility was confirmed by the Italian research group SHADO in a video they took at Cerreto di Borgo at Mozzano, during a televised *Sky Watch* program on 24 June 1990 near Passo Saltello on the Tuscany-Emilia border.

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*Munsch could not reproduce this characteristic in his video experiments.*

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The SHADO video cameraman saw 'a luminous dot that rose up from the horizon, slowly but steadily' at day-break. Excited group members saw a shape on their TV monitor similar to the

*We should start addressing the theoretical and technical problems involved with this new medium, if we want to avoid repeating the mistakes now being made by the ufological community.*

Crosia object. However, after adjusting the video controls, it became clear that the image was nothing more than the brilliant planet Venus. Once again, the

effect had been caused by the camera zooming in on the planet and the internal characteristics of the videocamera.

Finally, the interpretation suggested here should not be taken lightly.

Part of the *Incredible* program shows Maria Rosaria Omaggio interviewing Mr Campana on location. The video pans to show the immediate area, and a nearby street lamp. Behind, as a reference, is a high, steep hill. You get the impression that the bright light need not have come from a star or planet, but from a light source fixed to the ground. This impression remains when a picture from the Crosia video is superimposed on one from the Compana-Omaggio video interview; the outline of the hill overlaps the point where the light source was seen. The on-site shot very closely matches the position of the Crosia object with the famous street lamp.

Naturally, it is hard to fully check for possible astronomical causes without a detailed on-the-spot investigation, which has not been made. This check would be very difficult from the conflicting dates for the event, and the lack of celestial co-ordinates provided for the light source.

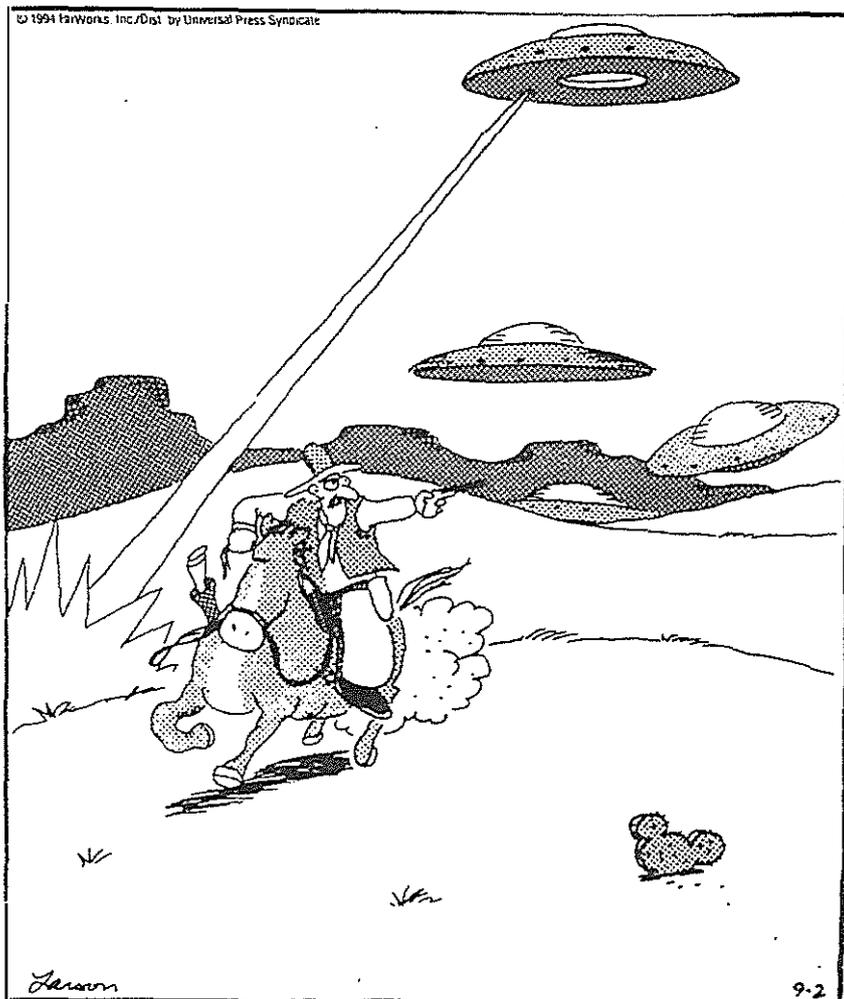
### Conclusion

After the Crosia incident, we can expect a vast increase in the numbers of UFO videos we receive as more Italians purchase videocameras. (For example, 20 videotapes were produced during the Belgian UFO wave).

We should start addressing the theoretical and technical problems involved with this new medium, if we want to avoid repeating the mistakes now being made by the ufological community. Until recently, video reports have been a very minor concern in Italy.

Until the 1970s, most UFO research groups were very low-tech concerns. The hundreds of poorly defined UFO photographs they provided have routinely been ignored or considered as simple curiosities, rather than becoming topics for critical, scientific evaluation.

Unfortunately, the Crosia case shows that these problems are likely to continue. □



The often romanticized image of cowboys and aliens

### Crosia investigation follow-up

At the end of March 1992, *UFO* received a phone call from Mr. Campana during which he added some interesting facts arising from an official investigation.

The videocamera he used was a Panasonic with combination auto-focus and zoom. The exact date of the event must have been 2 June 1987 at about 2100hrs — he could not be more accurate except to say that it 'had just started to get dark'. The bright light remained visible for some time and disappeared suddenly — it did not vanish gradually in the distance. It was videotaped for almost twenty minutes and a 6-minute section of the tape showing a close-up of a globe of light was removed by RAI.

"The light kept approaching and receding, and manoeuvring in the sky". The witness had definitely not interfered with the film, quite the contrary (as confirmed by Malanga and Pinotti in their book *The BVM Phenomenon*). In fact, Campana was quite irate that RAI had kept all of the original video-cassette containing other sequences he had taken of 'Virgin Mary visions'.

Mr Campana was constantly on location during the Virgin Mary manifestations from 25 May 1987. He decided to videotape the statue of the weeping Madonna until 2 September 1987, out of curiosity. Due to work commitments, he was unable to stay on location longer for subsequent events. He took 37 hours of videotape in all, without duplicating the bright light.

On Mr Campana's invitation we telephoned Mrs Biasi Gisa, Anna's mother (Anna and Vincenzo Fullone first claimed to have seen the Madonna). Mrs Gisa could not remember the exact date, except that it was in June and she was the first person to notice the strange light in

the sky. The church had been crowded so she had stayed in the car with her four month-old child, parked behind the church. At one point her attention was drawn to a large light that disappeared suddenly then re-appeared. At first she thought it was a street lamp blinking out over towards the countryside, but then she noticed that it kept moving and seemed to be 'signalling'.

Slightly worried, she called out to Mr. Campana who was carrying his videocamera. 'While I was looking for Pasquale, my daughter and the other boy were leaving the church, and Pasquale started videotaping.

'The light kept moving, scribing small and large strokes; I became excited. Then the light transformed into a disc and continued to draw symbols and letters, but we could not understand much. Then quite suddenly the light went out and we saw nothing more.'

Mrs Gisa's account was confirmed by daughter Anna. 'We were inside and the Madonna told us to "go outside and look at the sky, there's a sign. We all went outside. The object was moving continuously. We then saw it on the videotape and noticed it was an eight [shape]. Maybe for the 8 of 1988, even though 1988 has passed.'

They agreed that the phenomena did not appear again, although Anna remembers seeing a pulsating sun. 'We saw a round thing like a communion wafer, and it kept coming and going'.

It has been impossible to confirm the numbers of people present that evening. No one would volunteer a guess. However, Anna explained that since the visions had only occurred recently, there were a 'number' of people, all locals. □

## Taking UFO videos

For those of our readers with videocameras and a sense of adventure, a few important pointers:

- 1 Keep your video powered up and ready to use (for every video clip we receive, we get several more reports of people who grabbed their camera only to find the battery was flat, or there was no tape cassette inserted. This can happen to absolutely anyone.)
  - 2 Make sure you know how to use the camera properly (practice with it beforehand and play back the results to see what you get). Do some test shots of street lights at known distances from you, or an aeroplane/helicopter, or Venus/Jupiter; adjust the focus manually to get it as clear as possible.
  - 3 Avoid using the autofocus setting to film your UFO, especially at night time. Use the manual focus setting at all times. Under dark conditions, the camera's inbuilt computer may automatically adjust the colour setting for the brightest object in view to **white**, or something close to white. What you actually see as a bright red object may film as orange or even yellow.
  - 4 To avoid the movement you get with hand-held shots, rest the camera on or against something substantial (and not a friend). Use a fencepost, corner of the house, or a lamp post; these are much better.)
  - 5 Provide some commentary as to what is happening while you are filming. It is possible that the camera's inbuilt computer and your brain will see things differently.
- Sorting out these differences later on will provide investigators with a lot more information as to what actually happened.
- 5 While filming, try to include on film other 'known' objects nearby, as a reference; either during or immediately after filming the UFO will do.
  - 6 Note down as many details about the incident as possible (such as the time, directions, and heights); note the brand and model of videocamera used, and any zoom lens details.
  - 7 Finally, send us a good copy of your video film, and make several more for yourself. Store the original in a safe place — do not let anyone (even us) 'borrow' the original!
- Note:** While TV channels may want to look at your material and use it (mostly for free — it has no real value to them except as an immediate news item), chances are they won't give it back to you, or they will 'lose' it (but use it later with other material). They may only give you a copy back and not the original. Or they may substitute something else altogether, or 'accidentally' delete it/ over-record it/ destroy it, or will offer you blank tapes as a replacement, and will generally stuff you around (and they don't give a damn!).
- Initially, you have the copyright of your video or photographic material and have considerable discretionary power over what happens to it. Once broadcast, it is in the public domain, and anyone and everyone can, and will, use it — you lose almost all control.
- Remember, you usually only get one chance to video a UFO.
- Good luck! ☐

B.D.

## Part IV

## Orange lights videoed over Lapstone

Maira McGhee, Bryan Dickeson

On Monday 13 July 1992, the Bs and some out-of-town house guests had returned home to Emu Plains and were talking around the dining room table. Suddenly, at around 2130 hrs, their teenage children came running into the house very excited, yelling that there was a strange, flaming object flying towards the house. They thought it might be an aircraft on fire, coming in to crash.

All seven people went outside onto the front lawn on the east side of the house. The object was already moving off into the northeastern sky, and they watched it slowly recede. It made absolutely no noise and was moving parallel to the ground, some 300 metres up.

While this object was still in view, a second identical object was noticed, following the same trajectory as the first (perhaps slightly lower) about one minute behind. It moved at the same speed, had the same shape, colour and surface as the first object.

The object passed directly overhead. It was a little larger and brighter than a full moon, and moved at around 20 kph. It appeared to be covered in small, orange 'flickering' flames and cast a definite orange glow around the witnesses, 'like orange moonlight' (see Figure 1). The second object also disappeared into the northeastern sky.

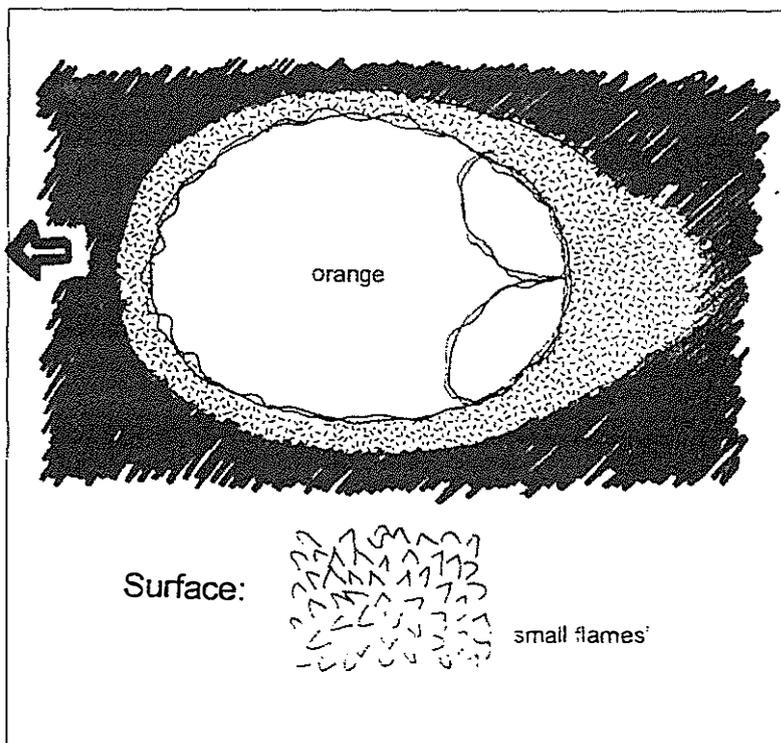
As it passed by, one of the visitors remembered that they had their brand-new videocamera nearby (this had been won in a phone-in competition run by their local radio station several weeks previously). Mr D ran inside, grabbed the camera (a Sanyo 8mm VM D6P model), and aimed it at the object. He set it manually for maximum focus and exposure and took a couple of minutes of

videotape. This shows a very small orangy-white light fading into the distance, set against a dark blue-black, grainy sky. There are no other points of reference on this tape at all.

The weather was clear and cool, there was no noticeable wind, and we would calculate the objects' size as being around 1.5m long.

The whole incident had lasted 10-15 minutes, and UFOR(NSW) received four more telephone calls about it from individuals in nearby streets. (Three did not respond to questionnaires we sent subsequently; when we phoned they said they had decided the objects must have been balloons, let off by school children, or that they 'did not want to get involved').

Figure 1: Lapstone object (13 July 1992)



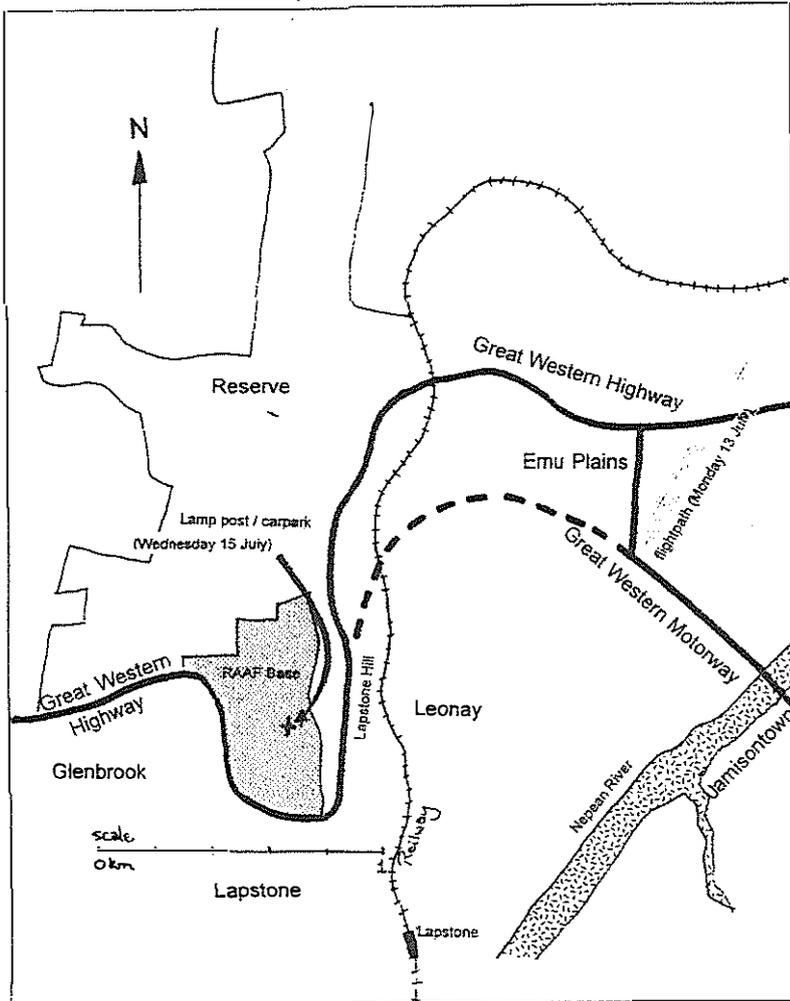


Figure 2: The Lapstone Hill area

The following Wednesday evening (15 July) at around 2150 hrs, Mr B was shutting up his workshop/garage to walk back to the house. Looking west (towards the foothills and Lapstone Hill, some 1.7 km distant), he noticed four or five orange 'stars' manoeuvring around a street light within the nearby Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) base, up on the hill. He assumed these were similar to the orange lights seen the previous Monday and rushed inside to tell the three other adults (the three children were away with friends).

This time they took the videocamera outside with them and set the zoom to automatic 'to save time'. For the next twenty minutes, the witnesses watched and filmed the highly manoeuvrable 'stars' flying around the street lamp. The fluorescent lamp is a standard

street lamp, used to illuminate part of a little-used carpark on the downhill (eastern) side of the RAAF base.

There appeared to be two separate sizes of spherical orange object involved; the larger kind were about the diameter of the street lamp (1 metre) the smaller, only about half that size. The cameraman also took shots of other nearby street lamps as a reference, while filming the stars.

No fine details of the objects could be made out by the witnesses, or were filmed; but the objects moved around energetically below the brow of the hill (that is, some 6-8 degrees above the horizon), and occasionally one or more of the objects would peel off from the group, heading inland (westwards) at great speed (estimated in excess of 100 kph), or regroup back at the car park light. Occasionally, several lights might appear to merge, and at one point, one of the larger lights appeared to superimpose itself on (or rest upon) the bluish-white streetlamp for about a minute, before flying away again (the streetlamp's position is estimated to be  $33^{\circ} 45' 45'' \pm 2''$  S,  $150^{\circ} 37' 51'' \pm 2''$  E). The larger light seemed to be somewhat brighter than the streetlamp itself.

Finally, after about 20 minutes of this 'light show' (no noise could be made out from that distance), a car with its headlights on came over the brow of the hill (south of the light) and entered the carpark. As the car came over the hill, the few objects remaining around the streetlamp went off simultaneously ('switched off, as if responding to the carlights') and did not reappear.

The video soundtrack includes numerous animated comments relating to the antics of the lights being viewed.

When the video was played back afterwards, some sections show the video 'zoom' and image dilation (or figure-eight) effect, as already observed in the Crosia and Canberra material. (At first, this caused considerable confusion to the witnesses, who did not recall seeing this kind of 'detail'.)

Once it was all over, the four adults were both excited and concerned; they had something that should be of interest to someone (everyone?), but did not quite know what to do with it. Also, they wanted some kind of explanation for what they had seen. Their experience had been so unusual as to be unnerving.

The following day, Mr B had several copies of the videofilm made. He contacted a local astronomical observatory and was given the contact number for the NSW Skeptics. Mr B telephoned, explained what had happened, and arranged for all four adults to meet the Skeptics' representative (an academic) at his home. After travelling quite some distance, video in hand, to talk to the Skeptic, he refused to meet them, sending his very young daughter to deal with them. After waiting for some considerable time, during which the skeptic refused to meet them or view the video, they left very disenchanted.

Fortunately, the witnesses contacted UFOR(NSW) soon after and we were able to tell them what other people had reported. After interviewing the witnesses, we were provided with a copy of the video for research purposes. We have found it to be most interesting.

Lapstone Hill is the point where the Great Western Highway starts climbing from the coastal plains up over the Blue Mountains, joining Sydney to much of the rest of Australia. It is a very strategic location.

The RAAF base at Lapstone has a commanding view of the Plain of Cumberland where Sydney is built and is the major communications centre for the Australian Military. Its telecommunications facilities include satellite links to the rest of Australia and the world, and microwave equipment, so we know there is a slight chance that these lights may be a side-effect of some of this sophisticated microwave equipment.

Light-emitting zones can develop near high-power microwave equipment under special circumstances. However, it would be unusual for

someone to set up such complicated and expensive equipment in a car park.

Although we cannot see any details of the objects themselves, from their complex manoeuvring they cannot be dismissed as just small balloons, kites, aeroplanes or anything of that sort. It also makes the possibility of a hoax less likely.

There are sufficient reference points in the film (and obtained from our on-site investigations) to make the video analysable at some future date.

Possibly the most interesting part of this particular video comes right at the end, when the lights appear to respond to the car headlights coming over the hill. This could be just a coincidence, or even a series of coincidences. But when you get so many coincidences so close together, you usually have something that is quite extraordinary. It also suggests that the objects are not your usual plasma — plasmas are not known for their responsiveness or aversion to external light sources.

At this point, we do not know what the orange lights were. □



## Parramatta UFO video

Paul Sowiak, Bryan Dickeson.

During mid-September 1989, at around 0100 hrs mid-week, two Sydney men were driving eastwards along the James Ruse Drive north of Parramatta. Looking ahead and slightly to the left of the road, S noticed an unusual cluster of bright lights moving across the dark sky, probably some 2-3 kilometres in front of him and drew W's attention to it.

There was little other traffic on James Ruse Drive at that time of morning, so S stopped his car on the north side of the motorway, near the Windsor Road on ramp (immediately before the large 'Parramatta' road sign — position  $33^{\circ} 47' 41'' \pm 2''$  S,  $151^{\circ} 00' 00'' \pm 2''$  E), for a better look

S is a private investigator and routinely uses a video camera for surveillance work, sometimes under difficult lighting conditions. Fortunately, he always carries his video camera around with him in the back of the car, so he reached over and took it out. It still contained the videocassette he had been using some hours before, so he taped the object over the top of that film.

Fortunately, S knows how to use a video camera properly and had it set to manual, not automatic. The first few minutes of his video sequence clearly show the 'Parramatta' road sign and environs (as a good reference point), with the object about 25 degrees up in the eastern sky behind it. The UFO appears as a small but distinctive horizontal circle of about a dozen yellowish-white lights. Each light seems to be surrounded by a slight haziness.

The entire array is slowly rotating about a vertical axis while moving east-

wards, at a slow, steady pace estimated to be less than 30 km per hour.

The early spring morning was cool but calm, and there were very few (if any) stars visible. At that time of year, Sydney's central western suburbs have moderately high pollution levels and significant ambient light from surrounding street/motorway lights.

There are no stars or planets evident in the grainy video background. An ephemeris indicates there were no planets in that area of sky at that time, and that the constellation of Orion was rising in the East (surmounted by the constellations Lepus and then Eridani — nothing exceptional; the bright star Sirius would have been somewhere between 5 degrees below or above the horizon, depending on the actual date, but significantly south of due East).

The object was about one-quarter to one third of a degree across, meaning it was probably 10-15 metres in diameter.

After several minutes filming the object, S and W got back into their car to follow it. They sped further along James Ruse Drive, keeping the object in sight, and turned east into Pennant Hills Road. Half a kilometre down Pennant Hills Road, they turned left into Masons Drive and stopped outside the old public school (position  $33^{\circ} 47' 37'' \pm 2''$  S,  $151^{\circ} 1' 2'' \pm 2''$  E).

Less than five minutes had elapsed since they started following the UFO. The new location was surrounded by mature Eucalyptus trees, but S took out his video camera and began filming the object for about ten more minutes.

The video shows the object slightly closer up (the video image is larger and

its angle in the sky is greater—about 60 degrees from the horizon). It moves across a grainy sky, occasionally traversing a foreground of bluegum leaves and branches from the nearby trees. At one point the object moves behind a power pole, and then it slowly and deliberately turns upside down, while still rotating—this is simply one of the most unusual UFO videos ever taken.

There is no noise from the object itself and no traffic noise from the nearby roadway at that time of day. The lights are a definite yellowish-white colour. The video is hand-held, but reasonably steady, so we get a good picture and little movement (a reflection of the cameraman's skill). The object is travelling reasonably slowly—less than 30 kilometres per hour, but we can't be certain about the speed until we can estimate the size and distance of the object itself from a detailed analysis of the video.

After some time, and when the object had moved further away, S and W decided not to pursue it any further, got into their car and continued to their respective homes. The whole incident had taken a bit less than half an hour.

After taking the video and looking at it on a video some days later, S and W did not quite know what to do with it, so S kept it under his bed for almost four years.

In 1992, after seeing a television news item about an object seen and videoed over the seaside suburb of Manly, S thought that his 'UFO video was much better than that'. He looked out the video from under the bed and approached a television technician he knew for advice. The TV technician checked the video and found there had been a slight deterioration in quality over the intervening three years, and some loss of colour intensity. A section of the video (taken near the public

Figure 1: North Parramatta area

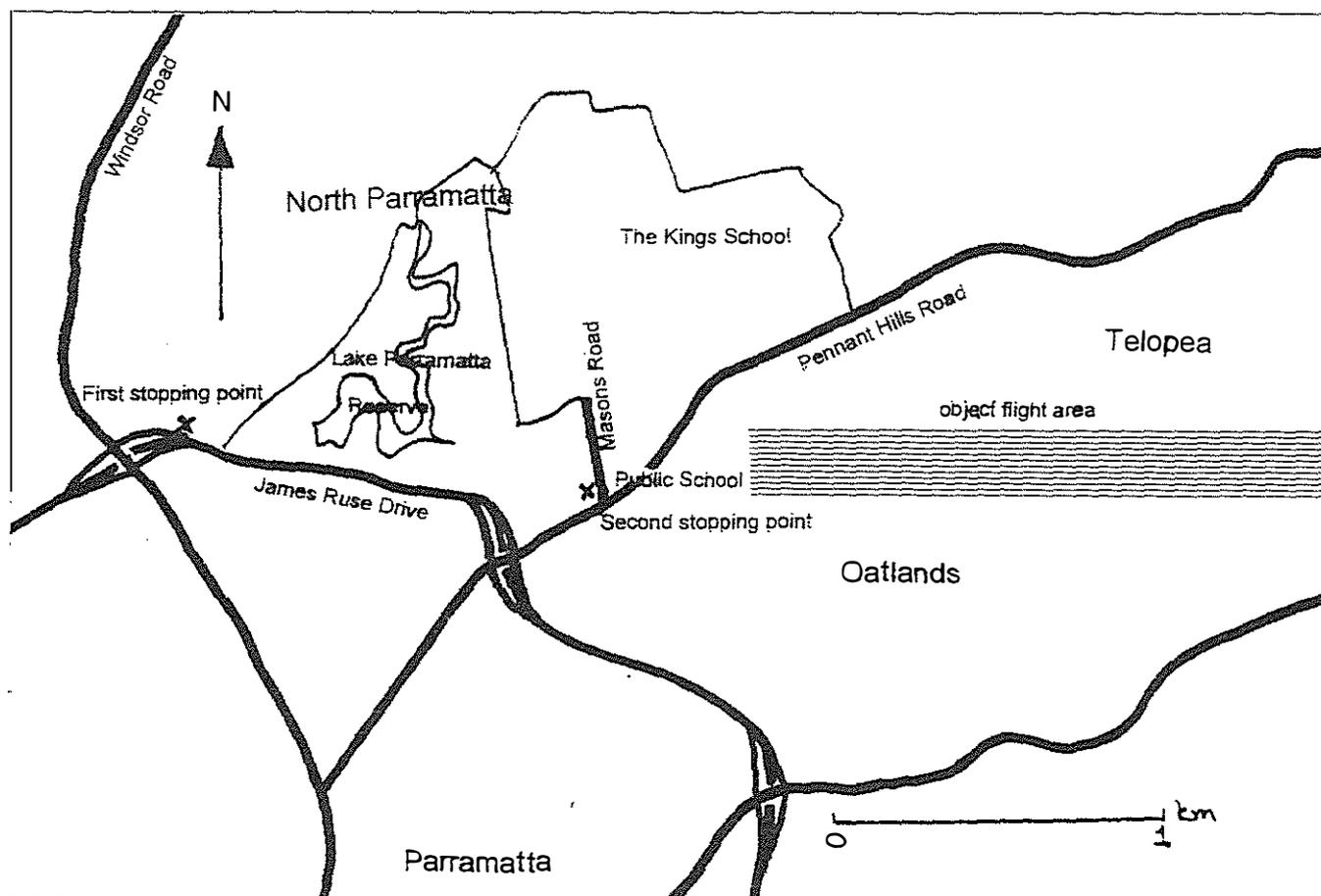




Figure 2: Drawing of Parramatta UFO

school and showing the object flipping) was then enlarged 50 times and some of the background graininess removed to improve the 'look' of the video. The original video material is still intact.

What you then see are some details of the lights themselves. The object is definitely rotating

and the edges of the individual lights are blurred there appears to be a foggy-haze or flaring around each light; perhaps some local condensation of water vapour, or perhaps an exhaust or jet stream effect. A more detailed analysis could tell us more.

The object appears to be more rounded on top and flatter on the bottom — one of your classical UFO disk shapes.

While the enhanced UFO picture looks a lot better than the original, UFO

investigators are more interested in the original material because it shows the tree branches and leaves.

The way the object image moves through this foreground confirms this piece of video would be very difficult to fake.

Since then, S and W have been trying to get TV people interested in the video (and to recoup some of the money spent doing so), but without much success. Local TV channels are not interested because it is 'too old' and no longer news, and most do not even want to view the material.

UFOR(NSW) was contacted mid-1992 and provided a copy for research purposes. Unfortunately, Australia does not yet have the facilities to analyse this video properly.

It should be possible to get a better idea of how far away the object is from the camera, and therefore its probable size using sophisticated computer enhancement techniques. It should also be possible to get confirmation of the actual shape and a better idea of what is creating the haziness seen around the lights.

This one film will provide good information for UFO investigators to argue about for many years to come. □

### UFO Reporter: formatting problems

Over the last few months the editors have been frantically trying to convert the present format for UFO Reporter from the Ventura DTP system over to WordPerfect 6.0a. Previous issues of this publication have relied largely on the 'kindness of strangers' for the final layout work, and this has meant some delays in publication. The new WordPerfect format was meant to bring the formatting process back in-house, and would mean the effort could be shared around a bit more. (Ventura is an excellent product, but users need some training and it does not always transport well from one machine type to another. It takes 10–12 hours to format one issue of UFO Reporter.)

Unfortunately, after more than 80 hours of trying, we still cannot sort out the vagaries of WordPerfect 6.0a (it is incredibly slow, far too inflexible and will drive you crazy!). We have therefore gone back to Ventura in the meantime, and will probably re-vamp the magazine's layout once we complete the 1993 volume. So you might notice a few format changes then.

If anyone out there has any suggestions for an IBM-format based DTP system that really works, drop us a line and let us know as soon as possible. In the meantime, please bear with us.