

This was like a fishbowl

THE FLYING THINGS ARE BACK AGAIN!

SO the Flying Saucer is back with us again.

This time it is reported, primarily, by Captain B. L. Jones, 33-year-old DC3 pilot of Australian National Airways, former flight-lieutenant of the R.A.A.F., and an experienced, highly competent airman with 11 years' flying in his log book.

Captain Jones, airborne south of Mackay, Queensland, reported that at 6.8 p.m. a strange object with an apparently lighted glass dome manoeuvred round his plane and disappeared

plane and disappeared toward the west at high speed.

A few hours afterward, Mr. W. Overell, officer in charge of Mackay control tower, also reported that he had seen the light; nine hours later, Mr. Frank Hines, a radio operator,

turned in a similar report.

In each sighting, it was made clear that no aeroplane (other, of course, than that of Captain Jones, in the first contact) was in the air.

The only difference between this reported "sighting" and those that became relatively common in Australia a few months ago is that Captain Jones describes his strange visitant as a "fishbowl."

Other observers spoke of "saucers." But it doesn't matter what category of airborne crockery these strange and puzzling things are placed in, the fact remains that there have been too many reports of them by serious-minded people to dismiss them lightly.

miss them lightly.

Are there, or aren't there, flying saucers?

There are two schools of thought. There is that which says sternly and dismissively "Pooh, pooh," and let it go at that, and there is the other which, while not committing itself to any acceptance of theories that we are being spied on by visitors from Venus or Mars or the Outer Space, assesses the evidence and keeps its mind open.

"I would not discount all the reports as imagination," said Father D. O'Connell, for 30 years head of Riverview Observatory, and later chief of the Vatican Observatory—the world's oldest—at Castel Gondolfo.

"No doubt many of the reports can be classified as imagination or invention, but many come from reliable witnesses. Their testimony demands thorough investigation."

The operative word there is "thorough"—thorough in its every sense, without prejudice, scorn, or ill-placed humor.

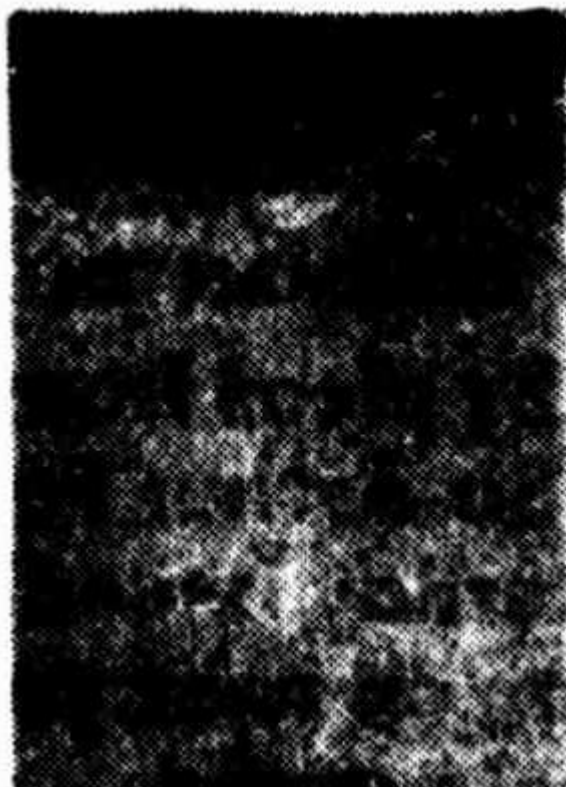
First, take the Australian history of the saucers. In May of last year, an airlines pilot, his first officer, a taxi-driver, three P.M.G. mechanics working in various

chanics working in various parts of Sydney, a farmer and a student at Berowra, and solid citizens of Wollongong, Parkes, and Bellfield reported a New South Wales visitation at the same hour and in identical terms.

Their description tallied. In this case, there was no question of meteorite or any other natural phenomenon.

The mass report (the observers were separated: mass hysteria or conveyed suggestion was ruled out) remains a mystery.

Similar multiple reportings came from Gippsland, north-east Victoria, South Australia. And the objects sighted were, in their turn, dismissed as meteorites, luminous cloud masses, reflected light rays, the shadows of red blood corpuscles pass-





ing before the retina of the eye, skyrocket, meteorological balloons, plain hallucination, and hoaxes.

The explanations became just as confusing as the reports. Of course, it's easy to laugh about flying saucers.

But, scanning the list of those in Australia who claim to have watched these strange appearances, you will find the names of expert observers;

By GORDON WILLIAMS

of men who served in war and peace time aviation, and who were trained in observation, of engineers, of professional men, of scientists, and of clergymen.

Allow, if you like, for a

percentage of jokers, or of the too highly imaginative, and you still have a formidable list of reputable people to laugh off.

As a fact, whether you like it or not, the flying saucer has long passed the joking stage. Maybe they aren't space ships from the planets.

But they are obviously something, and when several people, apart and independent, turn in synchronous reports of the same type, it's rather difficult to believe that they are all suffering from communicated hysteria, blood shadows in the eye, a compulsion to practical joking, or coincident hallucination.

Then, Farmington, New Mexico, a town of 5,000 people, 110 air miles north of the huge Los Alamos atomic installation, reported having seen a complete flight of the discs. (Reports came from more than 3,000 people, and they all came at the same time.)

And within a few minutes of the first Farmington sightings, signals came from Los Angeles, Peru, South Carolina, and even from



TO JUDGE from their expressions, amazed, perturbed, these Brazilians (above) were not inclined to pooh-pooh the photographs of a flying saucer which they were examining. Left: One of the photos taken above a mountain top in Brazil.

cruising units of the Chilean navy; they all related what Farmington had already reported.

Then a leading pilot gave a radio description of his pursuit of a saucer; he crashed. The wreckage of his plane had strange, inexplicable features. Some vestiges

able features. Some vestiges suggested that the machine had entered a field of dissolution.

Well, like some strange magic, flying saucery became a craze. Undoubtedly, many of the sightings were imaginative, or fakes, but some were so impressive that the United States set up Project Flying

States set up Project Flying Saucer to investigate them.

Then strange things began to happen. Scientists who had asserted that they had seen the discs suddenly became silent. The air force sent its own investigation underground. Project Flying Saucer became Project Hush Hush.

"I have talked to many men of science who have told me that they have not only seen flying saucers, but have actually worked on the remains of several," wrote Frank Scully in his interesting book, "Behind the Flying Saucers."

"Scientists do not want to go to war with the Air Force on the issue. Scientists have

to have essential materials for research, and certain branches of the Department of Defence might find it difficult to obtain such essential materials for scientists who will not co-operate. . ."

So discussion ranged up and down—then the U.S. Air Force announced that it had scanned 850 "groundless" reports, but admitted that an additional 150 were "totally inexplicable mysteries."

Well, 150 totally inexplicable mysteries isn't a bad score for the pro-saucerian.

"My own belief is that these things may be traveling on lines of magnetic force," said one eminent physicist. "Certain earth areas have magnetic fault zones, and if space vessels using lines of magnetic force

using lines of magnetic force encountered such faults, it would be only natural for them to investigate. . ."

There it is. And now, Captain Jones, with 8,700 flying hours to his credit, adds to the complexity.

What are flying saucers, if any?

Or flying fishbowls?

Until such time as one crashes, and until its remains can be subjected to actual, earthly search, I should say that your guess is as good as mine.
