

The First Fleet lands from Mars

By PETER TERRY

AUSTRALIA was first settled by little black men; then the little white men came along; and now it looks like the little green men are here.

If what is happening in the centre of the Nullarbor Plain is not just another crazy UFO story, 1968 is about to go down as the year the First Fleet arrived from Mars.

It all began yesterday morning at 5.30, when the Knowles family were driving eastward along the Eyre Highway for a holiday in Victoria.

Suddenly out of the pre-dawn darkness roared a strange unearthly noise that shattered their serenity.

A large square object descended from the sky, clamped itself on to the roof of their car, and hoisted them all into the air.

As Mrs Kay Knowles told police later, she and her three teenage sons were terrified.

The roof was squetzed. The noise got louder and all four began to think their time was up.

Suddenly, The Thing let go.

The car crashed to the ground, bursting a tyre as it hit.

All four jumped out and scrambled into the roadside bushes to hide until The Thing had left.

"They certainly had an encounter with something," said Sergeant Fred Longley, who interviewed the family at Ceduna Police Station.

"It's got us completely baffled. All they saw was an object about three foot square which came down on top of their car.

"We've examined the vehicle and there are definitely dent marks in the roof. The wheels have been damaged too."

The story has been backed up by a truck driver who was driving in front of the Knowles's car.

He did not see the incident, but he did see The Thing.

At first he thought it was the headlights of an on-coming vehicle. But then the lights moved upwards and swooped over his cabin.

In fact weird lights have been reported from all over this section of the Nullarbor.

At Eukia, at Christmas, the local roadhouse is said to have been buzzed by the strange Thing.

It was night time and the staff thought it might have been a lost aircraft.

In fact, they went so far as to switch on the landing lights at the nearby airstrip just in case the pilot wanted to come down.

Apparently something did. It swooped low over the airfield, and then banked sharply and sped off to the west.

Perhaps it was men from Mars.

Or perhaps it was someone who just wanted to attract the tourists.