

1968: Taradale / "Napier"
NZ

CE1
Stalker.

December 23, 1968 HAWKE'S BAY - Auckland University UFO Research Group President AJ Brunt writes to Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice Marshal CA Turner advising a group had been set up to "study on a strictly scientific basis the phenomenon of unidentified flying objects". He notes an earlier letter had been referred by the Air Force public relations division to the Civilian Saucer Investigation in Auckland but which had been disbanded in 1959. In the letter he also makes a "rather demanding request" about a September UFO sighting reported in Taradale. "In this case, two youths, John Dow and Paul Franklin, reported that their car was chased by a UFO and as a result the vehicle smashed into a shop. Consequently Dow appeared in the Napier Magistrate's Court on a charge of careless driving and was discharged." Mr Brunt said he understood the air force had the police file on the case and sought the release of Dow's and Franklin's statements to the police on the incident.

Car Crashes

1968: Napier, NZ

CE1, car chases.



driver crashes.

We had a startling sighting down here recently. At a small country town several hundred miles south-east of Auckland two youths received the greatest shock of their lives. A flap had apparently been occurring in the area of the town and the two boys drove around for a few nights trying to spot something. On the final night they say they spotted some UFOs and one--a small disc--dived down towards the car. The youths panicked and leaped from the vehicle while it was still in motion. It crashed into a telegraph pole and came to rest inches from a shop window--a virtual write-off. The youths apparently lay on the ground terrified as the disc hovered several feet above them for a short time. Residents who heard the crash told a newsman that the boys were almost hysterical when they went outside. The two had to be treated at the local hospital for cuts and scratches received when they made their jump. Apparently the car insurance company accepted their story. Investigation on this sighting is still continuing.

McDonnell archives

T. Brunt. to. JEM

11.10.68

Nov. 12 1968

Youth claims car crash caused by "flying saucer"

A 19-year-old Taradale youth, who alleged his car had been chased by a "flying saucer", resulting in the car crashing into a Gloucester street fruit shop after he and his companion abandoned it, had a charge of dangerous driving dismissed by Mr W. K. L. Dougall, S.M., in the Napier Magistrate's Court yesterday.

The youth, John Dow, an apprentice joiner, pleaded not guilty. Sergeant W. T. Pender prosecuted and Mr A. K. Monagan appeared for the youth.

Mr Dougall dismissed the case on the grounds that Dow's state of mind at the time had made him lose control of the car. Further evidence by the defence was not heard.

Constable Barry Martin-Bus, of the Napier police station, said that about 10 p.m. on September 10 he went to Gloucester street, Taradale, where a car had crashed into the front of a fruit shop. Dow and another youth were at the scene — both in an hysterical condition.

Dow had later told him that just before the collision, his car had been travelling along Gloucester street about 30 m.p.h. when Dow's passenger had begun screaming that the car was being followed by a flying saucer.

KICKED FEET

In jumping out of the car, the passenger kicked Dow's feet, Dow lost control of the car and it crashed into the shop. Dow told him he had seen a "flash of light" but could not say what it was.

"He said that for the past few nights he had been out searching for flying saucers," the constable said. "Apparently he had seen lights in the sky and had taken an interest in these strange lights."

Dow had also told him he had earlier heard a "noise like thunder", had seen red and green flashing lights in the sky — some of which were seen over the Taradale dump — and had seen the lights on other occasions in Meeanee road.

The weather was clear at the time of the collision.

"I didn't see any mysterious lights at all," the constable said.

The passenger, who had seen the flying object later said to him: "You can lock me up — you may not believe me if I tell you I was chased by a flying saucer."

"POURED OUT"

Cross-examined by Mr Monagan, the constable said he obtained all this information at the scene of the accident.

Mr Monagan: Would it be fair to say it all came pouring forth out of these boys?

Witness: Yes.

Mr Monagan: Were they able to tell it in a reasonable and logical way?

Witness: It sounded sensible the way they told it.

Dow had been very excited, but less so than the passenger. "But he was still in an excited state of mind," the constable said.

He accepted that the youths had left the car before it crashed into the shop.

"They didn't seem certain

of where they came to rest after abandoning the car. They were in such a state of fear they did not take note," he said.

TWO REPORTS

Constable Martin-Bus said the two youths had said they had been to the Taradale police station on two occasions to report unidentified flying objects.

Mr Monagan said although the case might be treated with scepticism, this answer would be dispelled by the evidence.

Dow had either been so terrified of an unidentified flying object chasing the car or had been prompted by the actions of his passenger that he had involuntarily lost control of the car.

"Whatever it was, he went out of the passenger's door — landing on the grass a considerable distance from where the car came to rest," he said.

Mr Monagan said he would call evidence which would show some detail of the sighting of unusual objects in the sky. The youths became so concerned about these mysterious objects that they had camped near the Taradale dump, inquired around the district and even went to the police station on two occasions.

Dow, in evidence, said that on Friday, September 6, he and a friend, Paul Franklin, were out at the Taradale dump about 9.30 p.m. when they both heard a sound like thunder and the ground shook. When they looked up, they saw about 20 or 30 lights which were moving then disappearing in the sky. They watched this for about half an hour.

The next night they went to the dump, where they spent the night, but saw nothing.

On Sunday night, while

they were driving in Meeanee road, Paul had looked back and seen a white light.

"I saw it rising at about 10 p.m. and then a little light shot straight up from it and then disappeared. The big light remained."

"SCARED"

It was at this stage they both started to "think seriously" of flying saucers.

"We were scared and we didn't know what to do about it," he said.

They had then gone to the Taradale police station where they reported the sightings.

On the Monday night, September 9, they went to the police station again. "They more or less laughed at us," Dow said.

After leaving the police station, they drove along Gloucester street and on looking up saw a white light — the same as the one they saw the night before. They returned to the police station where they got a constable to look at it.

"We thought it wasn't going to move, then it went behind the Taradale hills," he said.

"VERY WORRIED"

The two youths had then driven to Napier, then went to Puketapu to ask farmers about the strange lights.

"This was the third night we had seen them, and we were very worried," Dow said.

On the Tuesday night, they went to Puketapu to have another look around. As the car was nearing the Waiohiki golf links, they saw a green light which changed to red. They later saw a pencil of light flash across the sky.

"As we were passing the Taradale motor camp, Paul Franklin who was staring out of the back, suddenly let out a scream

ing at us.

"I saw it in the mirror. Paul dived out of his side . . . and his feet kicked mine," Dow said.

"STAY DOWN"

After losing control of the car, he was pitched head and shoulders through the passenger's door and followed Paul Franklin on to the ground.

"I started to get up and he (Franklin) said, 'For God's sake, stay down—they are after us,'" Dow said.

At this stage, Paul Franklin had his hands over his eyes saying "The light . . . the light."

The car had travelled on until it hit the shop about 100 yards or 200 yards away.

Mr Monagan: Do you believe you saw the lights in the sky and they were upsetting you, or were you imagining them?

Dow: I saw them.

Mr Monagan: Was there any traffic about, apart from the aerial traffic?

Dow: No.

CAMPED BY DUMP

Cross-examined by Sergeant Pender, Dow said he had not seen any lights before the September 6 incident, except stars and satellites.

The light he had seen was bigger than the evening star, but when seen from the back of the car it was about 2ft 6in big.

Sergeant Pender: What do you think it was?

Dow: A flying saucer.

Asked if he watched the television show, "The Invaders," Dow said it had not impressed anything on his mind until he saw the light.

Although frightened when he had camped near the dump, Dow said he and Franklin wanted to make sure they were not "seeing things".

Sergeant Pender: Could the explosion have come from the dump?

Dow: The whole ground shook.

Sergeant Pender: About these coloured lights, could they have come from an explosion in the dump?

Dow: No, we saw them for half an hour.

"NATURAL CAUSE"

Dismissing the case, the magistrate said it was evident Dow had got himself into such a state of mind that he had acted involuntarily when something had distracted him.

"Most of these lights people see have a natural cause and the 'flying saucer in hot pursuit' might have been the lights of a car coming around the corner.

"The sooner he talks to a sensible adult about the matter, the better," Mr Dougall said.