

Daylight Disc Down Under UFO photographic case from Melbourne, Australia

By Philip Mantle

I have been involved with UFO research and investigation for approximately thirty years and during that time I have been fortunate enough to participate in numerous UFO investigations around the UK. On occasion I have also had the opportunity to assist or take part in similar activities in other countries as well. During my time as Director of Investigations for the British UFO Research Association (BUFORA) an extremely large amount of UFO related data passed across my desk, mainly from the UK but not exclusively. In the last few weeks I have been mad enough to look back through some of the material that I have collected and I decided to publish a number of items that have never seen the light of day before. The first of these originates not from the UK but from Melbourne, Australia, and involves the sighting and photographs of a daylight disc. I have changed the names of the witnesses but their real names are on file.

Down the years I have received a mountain of mail through my letter box and one such letter arrived dated 30th September 1995. This was in the days before email became common. It was from a Mr Roy Keane and Mr Ralph Keane from Kilsyth, Victoria, Australia. The letter was to report a UFO sighting and photographs. It began:

“Dear Sirs,

The enclosed photos, which appear to depict a ‘UFO-like’ object, were taken by my son and I from the back garden of our house here in Kilsyth, Melbourne, between 1pm & 1.30 pm, on Tuesday 19th September 1995.

We have taken the liberty of sending these to you in the expectation you can offer some reasonable explanation, concerning that which we have captured on these photos.”

Sure enough there were two colour photographs of what might be described as a ‘daylight disc’ flying over a rooftop with blue sky and clouds in the background and tree branches in the foreground. Both photographs are published here for the first time anywhere. These of course sparked my interest so I read more of the letter.

“The darker picture was hurriedly taken (approx 1pm) using an incorrect light setting during overcast weather conditions. The other photo was taken (approx 1.30pm) after the camera setting had been adjusted to obtain a lighter picture and, by that time (as will be fairly obvious to you) the weather had greatly improved.”

I must admit that at this point I had become a little cautious. In my experience whatever the UFO phenomenon is it is usually here one minute and gone the next. I can't recall, although I may be wrong, where a UFO has hung around for half an hour to have two separate photographs taken. If this has happened before then I am not aware of it.

The Keane's added yet more information:

“Subsequent to taking these photos, my son and I visited our local library looking for books relating stories of other people who claim to have sighted ‘strange airborne objects.’ In the only one of this type that our library had on the shelves titled “Guardians of the Universe” by Ronald Story, we were literally astonished to note the uncanny resemblance to our photos of two of the pictures depicted therein (ref:#72a & #82). This has prompted us to seek your examination and analysis of the photos enclosed herewith.”



Keane 1 photo

The Keanes's added yet more details on a separate page under the heading 'Some relevant observations'

"Each time the 'object' was photographed, it appeared to be moving on a trajectory to our right as we looked up at it. Almost immediately after each picture was taken, the flying object seemed to momentarily 'hover', then 'dip' and move to the left (viz :in the opposite direction) doing so very suddenly, until our view of it became obscured by the tall tree branches which extend over the left hand side of our house roof. Each time this occurred, both my son and I rushed around the right hand side of our house in an attempt to see where the object had moved to. Each time, on arrival at the front of our house, there was no sign of the object anywhere to be seen skyward!"

Reading this account and looking at the photographs in question didn't throw up any immediate discrepancies, so I decided to read on.

"During the excitement of photographing this object, neither my son (age 21) or I (age 68 & bespectacled) gave any thought to how high up, how far away, or how large the object might be, nor were we (at the time of watching it aloft) consciously estimating any speed of movement. Despite much retrospective discussion, we both feel unable to offer any certain impressions concerning the above factors, and are unwilling to individually provide what would, in hindsight, be no more than the speculative assessments of mere laymen in such matters. To avoid any possibility of ridicule therefore, we choose to refrain from making any suggestions as to probable size, distance, height etc, leaving such deductions (we trust) to any 'experts' who might examine these photo."

During my many years of involvement in UFO research and investigation I had heard many similar accounts from other UFO witnesses. They didn't take an awful lot of notice of what was happening around them nor think to consciously take note of the actual UFO sighting itself.

"The photos we have sent to you are 200% enlargement copies of those originally taken with our INSTANT POLAROID camera. These copies were processed for us by "The Camera House" in Croydon, Victoria on Monday September 25th, 1995. The Polaroid film used is a type SX70 (purchased from the above a few days earlier) and the (UFO?) photos were the first two pictures taken with this brand new film. We should further point out that on the day concerned (19 September, 1995) there was virtually no breeze blowing in our neighbourhood. For this reason, the few (known) close by neighbours, to whom we have shown these pictures, all agree that a kite could not have been 'flying' anywhere nearby on that day. There was no engine sound that we could hear emanating from the object, therefore some kind of radio controlled model craft (which we have been told do exist) seems most unlikely in this case. The object's sudden change of 'flight path' did not suggest they were the 'actions' of any balloon."



Keane 2 rs 6wave Gamma

Although not scientific it has been my experience that those who have genuinely witnessed the UGO phenomenon do tend to try and rationalise their sighting. They go through the process of trying to put a conventional explanation forward for their sighting, but in the end they have ticked all the boxes and they are still left puzzling as to what the object was. On some occasions, realising what had possibly happened, the witness's senses kick back in and they start to look around to see if anyone else witnesses these events. The Keane's did this and more.

“Within 30 minutes or so from taking the second (lighter) photo, my son and I combed our street and spoke to all neighbours who were home at that time – none had been outside at the time and none had heard or seen anything strange through the window.”

This is not uncommon in UFO investigation. I have spoken to many witnesses down the years who were amazed that no one else had been witness to the events they had observed. The Keane's it would seem were no exception to this rule.

“Wishing to avoid any local ridicule or publicity, and being Englishmen who plan to return home before long, we have elected to seek British (expert) opinion, rather than approach any Australian organizations or groups. I have sent these photographs, in the envelope addressed to you, via my sister in Exeter, England, so that she can see them before mailing them on to you, hence the Exeter postmark We hope you can give some serious study to these photo and that you will advise us here in Melbourne, as to your findings, at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully,

*Roy Keane and Ralph Keane
Address (withheld).”*

The Keane's finished off their letter with a post script typed in red;

PS: It may be relevant to point out that our state of preparedness was sufficiently lacking (who expects this kind of event?) for us to have no flash on our camera!”

An interesting and intriguing account and one that comes complete with photographs as well. Such photographs are uncommon when you consider the amount of UFO sightings that are actually reported. During my thirty years of involvement I cannot recall a great many such alleged UFO photographic cases that I have personally been involved in. There seemed nothing in the written report to contradict the witness testimony and the photographs appear to show exactly what they describe.

In 1995 I had the photographs checked by image processing expert Nick Burton. Mr Burton used a wide variety image processing techniques on the Keane's photographs including contrast stretching and histogram equilisation. Unfortunately Mr Burton's digital image processing was unable to come to any definitive conclusions one way or the other. In 2009, knowing that photographic analysis of this type had significantly improved I decided to have these two photographs checked again. This time it was with Winston Keech. His credentials for such analysis are quite impressive; “He is a Bsc systems design CNA MCI (microelectronics, computing and instrumentation) - this has formal modules in optics, information theory, data and signal processing. Engineering technologist/specialist engineer Rolls Royce advanced mech tech military/civil ... specialist there in stress design and computer modeling. Systems analyst IBM. Audio/Video signal processing system development programmer (CTO) Darknoise Technologies ltd. (cd/dvd protection and A/V recording spoiler technology). “

This time there was no either or when it came to the analysis of these photographs and Keech left no one in any doubt:

“Here is my analysis of the Keane photos.

Both photos are 300 dpi scans of original film contact process photographs. The print from which both were scanned appears to have been enlarged using a photographic enlarger which is shown by the granularity of the images and general lack of sharp focus in the images. As there is no image blurring due to movement, it is also likely that the film used was of a reasonably high speed rating and appears consistent with a moderate enlargement from ASA400 rated general purpose colour film and a high shutter speed. The weaker red and stronger blues, would suggest Fuji fujichrome film rather than the red sensitivity of Kodak - but may be in part due to the relative potency of the developing chemicals used.

Keane 1(first photo) is underexposed suggesting a high shutter speed. The point of best focus is near the roof gutter line. The object is at a similar level of mis-focus as the tree visible behind the roof. Allowing for focal plane compression, this tree would appear to be just beyond the far side of the roof. The roof ridge tiles are 116 pix long and the object is 86 pix wide. As the object is no further than 2 times the camera to roof ridge distance and no less than one times, this would give a size range for the object of approximately 0.75 to 1.5 times the ridge tile length. As similar standard ridgetiles in the UK are 18 inch in length (460 mm) this would indicate an object size of 345 to 690 mm. Lighting is from the left and above image centre. As the sky appears uniformly overcast, light reflected in the object would indicate that the source is weak diffuse sunlight to the left of and slightly above the object centreline. There are no visible shadows.

Keane 2(second photo) is filmed in daylight with the sun almost directly overhead through broken light cloud. The clarity of the cloud contrast definition indicates that this photo is also underexposed. The lack of motion blurring would suggest that this is again due to high shutter speed. The point of best focus in this image is different from Keane 1, in that it is closer to the camera and in fact just beyond the foreground overhead tree branches. The roof is out of focus and the background trees quite badly out of focus. The object is moderately out of focus and seems consistent with a point close to the tree behind the roofline. Again the roof tiles measure 116 pix, which implies the same lens zoom and distance from the roof ridge. Here the object measures 56 pix implying an object size of 333 mm if the tree is 1.5x the roofline to camera distance. This is also consistent with the foreground tree branch to ridgeline light reflection differential. So an object width of roughly 350 mm (14 inches) would seem to be correct. From Keane 1 the object is 38 pix high, giving it an aspect ratio of 0.44 and a height of 154mm or roughly 150 mm (6 inches).

The two files attached are the resampled, 6 dimension polygonal contrast function contrast and focus enhancement with a gamma modification - to help bring out detail and increase clarity. Using extreme gamma adjustments and edge detection algorithms

- no supporting wires or other linear edge features were found ... so the object is not suspended by wire - as the cloud contrast is good, this would have been found. This does appear to be a solid reflective object that is unsupported in mid air. Due to the high shutter speeds used, it may well be moving at reasonable speed without any discernable image blurring."

So according to Keech we have a real object in the sky above the house reflecting the sunlight and it is not suspended by wires. There are those who will still cry foul here and state it could be a model or a Frisbee of some description, and of course they could well be correct. And of course there are those that will point to these photographs as depicting a genuine UFO. Like a lot if not most UFO reports it will come down to what you believe. Personally from the written testimony that I have looked at several times down the years and the two lots of photographic analysis that have been undertaken my opinion is that these photographs could well be the genuine article. I could be wrong of course but all is presented here for you to make up your own mind.

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REFERENCES:

**UFO photographs copyright Roy & Ralph Keane.
Photographic analysis by Winston Keech.
Private correspondence of Philip Mantle**