

STAGE ONE REPORT ON THE 2nd APRIL 1966, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA, OBSERVATION AND PHOTOGRAPH OF JAMES JOHNSON KIBEL

Compiled by Keith Basterfield and Paul Dean.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this stage one report on the 2nd April 1966, visual and photographic observation, by James Johnson Kibel, of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, is to bring together as much of the primary and secondary material as possible.

1.2 There is much about this observation and photograph, out there on the Internet. However, most is second, third hand or worse. We wished to locate and make available as much first and second hand material as possible, to allow readers to decide for themselves what the observation and photograph tells us about the UFO phenomenon.

2. Primary sources from 1966

2.1 There are several primary sources of information about this observation and photograph. We define a primary source as one which directly involved the witnesses themselves.

- A Polaroid photograph, taken on 2 April 1966
- A National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) report form completed, and dated 19 April 1966 by James Kibel
- An interview of James Kibel, undertaken by Professor James E McDonald on the 28 June 1967 in Melbourne
- A statement by Mr David English who was a witness to the developing of the Polaroid photograph, dated 2 May 1966
- A sketch of house and garden drawn by James Kibel.

3. Secondary sources

3.1 There are a number of other sources of information about the event, dated 1966. These are not items directly generated by the witnesses.

- *The Herald* newspaper, Melbourne, dated 12 April 1966. (Uncredited author)
- The May-June 1966 issue of the *'Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO) Bulletin.'* (Uncredited author)
- The July 1966 issue of the *'Victorian Flying Saucer Research Society (VFSRS) Australian Flying Saucer Review'* (AFSR.) (Uncredited author)
- The July-August 1966 issue of the English *'Flying Saucer Review.'* (Peter Norris is the credited author)
- The Sep-Oct 1966 issues of the *'APRO Bulletin.'* (Uncredited author)
- The Dec 1966 issue of the VFSRS *'Australian Flying Saucer Review.'* (Uncredited author).

3.2 The text of those articles is provided below.

4. The primary sources

4.1 A colour Polaroid photograph

Black and white copies of the colour Polaroid photograph feature in both the VFSRS AFSR, and the APRO Bulletin.

A “best” colour copy of this photograph was supplied by James Kibel to Australian researcher Bill Chalker and appeared on Bill’s blog site on 19 January 2009.

See <http://theozfiles.blogspot.com.au/2009/01/westall-ufo-black-swan.html>

4.2 NICAP report form

The following is the text from this form:

1. Name: James Kibel.
 Address: 22 Austin Street, Balwyn, E8, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.
 Place of employment: Melbourne, Vic.
 Occupation: Company director.
 Education: Primary and secondary school and technical school.
 Special training: Administration, civil defence.
 Military service: Radiation expert, Headquarters instructor, civil defence (also see letters).
 Telephone: 802280.

2. Date of observation: April 2nd 1966.
 Time 2.21pm EST.

3. Locality of observation: Garden of house, Balwyn.

How long did you see the object? 6 seconds approx.

5. Weather: Bright daylight. Very light cloud.

6. Position of sun or moon: Sun above and behind the object.
East to west at first – towards sun – temp about 81 deg F.

7. N/a

8. More than 1 object? No.

9. Describe object:

Was solid – slowly turning - noticed turning when object faced its flat side towards me.

10. Was the object brighter than the background of the sky?

Good contrast.

11. N/a.

12. Did the object:

a. Appear to stand still at any time: Yes, very briefly after turning on edge.

b. Suddenly speed up and rush away: Yes, after turning on edge, turning flat side towards me. It moved off very rapidly in a northerly direction.

c. Break up into parts or explode: No.

d. Give off smoke: No.

e. Leave any visible trail: No.

f. Drop anything: No.

g. Change brightness: No only when reflecting sun.

h. Change shape: No.

i. Change colour: No.

13. Did the object at any time pass in front of, or behind of anything?

When moving off to north was lost from view from garden.

14. Was there any wind? Yes.

Direction and speed: North westerly gusty about 20-25 mph.

15. Did you observe the object through optical instrument?

No. Did not even see it through view finder.

16. Did the object have any sound?

Not at first, but after moving off to the north a loud boom was heard by me and witness.

17. Please tick if the object was:

a. Fuzzy or blurred.

b. Like a bright star.

c. Sharply outlined: Appeared well outlined against sky.

Handwritten on the form:

Camera used – Polaroid Model 800 – Quite old.

Set on infinity Ev II on ev scale.

Using Polacolour film type 48 – 2 years out of date.

18. Was the object:

a. Self-luminous.

b. Dull finish.

c. Reflecting? Very – seemed to be made of polished metal.

19. Did the object rise and fall while in motion?

At first drifted down in level flight. Then tipped on edge. At which time I took photograph – it appeared to falter when turn 90 deg on its axis to face flat surface towards me- at this time I saw rotation of object – it then moved off to north – very fast.

20. Apparent size:

½” to 1” at arm’s length.

21. How did you happen to notice the object?

Very bright reflection off sun on garden made me look up.

22. Where were you and what were you doing?

In garden intending to take photographs of house and garden.

23. How did the object disappear from view?

Very quickly to north – could not see due to trees etc.

24. Compare the speed of object with aircraft.

Much slower than aircraft at first then much faster than aircraft when moving off to north.

25. Any aircraft in area?

A Department of Civil Aviation aircraft flown over 10 minutes later.

26. Please estimate the distance of the object.

About 350 -400 feet from me and about 150 feet up.

27. Elevation.

(Sketch drawn)

28. Names and addresses of witnesses:

Witness does not want to be involved so cannot give name at this time.

29. Draw map.

30. Airport, military items in area?

Yes. Airforce Radio School about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile away.

31. Previous UFOs?

Once during 1957 from position A see above – 3 witnesses at that time.

32. Enclose photos etc.

33. Were you interviewed by Air Force investigators?

No, not yet.

Federal, state, county or local officials. No.

One newspaper. Peter Norris of VFSRS looked at picture.

Were you asked not to reveal or discuss incident? No, not yet.

34. Can we use your name?

Please do not use my name at this time.

Dated 19 April 1966 Signed James Kibel.

4.3 Interview between Kibel and the late Professor James E McDonald

We have been fortunate enough to secure a copy of the audio recording of that interview, from the James E McDonald collection, held at the University of Arizona in the USA.

The following is a transcript prepared by Keith Basterfield and Paul Dean. It should be noted that where there is a (...) symbol the words are not decipherable, due to background noise such as a dog barking.

The interview:

Kibel. I don't want my name to be used.

McDonald. This is Wednesday June 28th of 1967, it's about 4.20 in the afternoon. We are in a Melbourne suburb, and going over some of the details of the Balwyn photograph, with the person in Melbourne who took the photograph. His name will not be identified here, but we are going over some of the circumstances of the photograph. So, I don't recall the date, why don't you, (...) I'll make some notes here too.

K. The only thing is, I haven't got the file with me at the moment with the report that I wrote out in it, so

Mc. You don't know the date off hand?

K. April the second 1966, I'm pretty sure of that. 21 minutes past two pm.

Mc. I think have the date here (...) ...if I'm not mistaken. Balwyn April 2nd 1966.

(There is then a discussion of the pronunciation of the name “Balwyn.”)

Mc. April 22nd, 2nd 1966 at 1421. Balwyn is a Melbourne

K. Suburb yes suburb of Melbourne.

M. Which side?

K. Eastern suburb.

Mc. This was at your mother’s home?

K. Yes 1 Palm Grove Deepdene. (...)

(Discussion about whether or not to record the address. Kibel spells out how the address is spelt.)

Mc. What were you doing, oh lets, let me get the camera type first.

K. Camera was a Polaroid 800. I can show you the camera I think it’s called an 800 it’s an old, old camera.

Mc. And you had color film, do you remember the speed rating?

K. Yes, I had an old Polaroid colour film in it. I have got the details of it to show you (...) which I was only going to use up in the garden there. The reason I was at the house at the time, was that my parents were overseas and I was having the kitchen renovated while they were away so I was down there supervising the alterations. There were a number of men working on the house.

Mc. Ok. And you were out in the garden?

K. Yes I went into the garden just to finish the film.

Mc. Flowers or something?

K. Yes. Two pictures left in the camera. One I took which was, completely unsuccessful because due to the extreme age of the film in the camera I think it had slowed right down. I increased the ev setting to improve on it. This is when this thing turned up. Obviously I did the right thing, because that one came out.

Mc. Ok. You had taken some, of the film. You had exposed some, anything that came out prior to this?

K. No I was taking photographs down in the garden.

Mc. Had you taken anything? Had you produced any films prior to this one?

K. Only a very badly exposed one of the flowers. Taken it and threw it away.

Mc. And that's why you adjusted the speed?

K. Yes. That's right.

Mc. How did you first notice it?

K. Well the first thing, which would be almost due south, in part of the garden, at the western side of the house and, I noticed a terrific flash on the garden as if, similar to the flash produced by a mirror in a heliograph type flash on the ground. It was, sort of, enveloped half the garden, and gave me a fright.

Mc. Quite an area then?

K. Oh yes. I jumped. I turned my head to the left, which would be facing east then, and saw this object descending, apparently almost vertically in a sort of bouncing motion, like a, rather like a yo-yo. Of course, I had the camera in my hand and I spun around and the first thing I thought of, was I must get a photograph of this. I brought the camera up, and as I brought the camera up, the thing pivoted up, on its edge, and I took the photograph and then dropped the camera down

Mc. Let me get, back up. It came in with the stalk down as I recall.

K. Yes right. That flat area on it was.

Mc. (...) to help to get the orientation.

K. Towards the ground yes.

Mc. Stalk down. Picking up the mushroom analogy.

K. Yes.

Mc. Stalk down, and it was bouncing along.

K. It was bouncing down, it was dropping I would think, vertically downwards although it may have been approaching me. I'm not sure, but it was descending in a bouncing fashion. It was, sort of behaving like a yo-yo. It was dropping down and then returning through about quarter of the distance it had dropped.

Mc. (...)

Mc. You were conscious of advance at the same time, during?

K. No, no. Apparently not. It looked about the same size.

Mc. Ok. And no noise?

K. No, no noise at all. Just the noise of the wind which was blowing fairly hard, it was a northerly breeze, very warm day it was about 80 degrees.

Mc. And. A good breeze, northerly breeze.

K. Yes. Northerly.

Mc. Northerly. And scattered cirrus.

K. Mm. Yes.

Mc. Is that the case, reading it off the photo? Ok and what do you estimate, what was your, what has been your estimate of the range to the location on the, over, which it was apparently coming down, miles, 100 yards, feet?

K. Its vertical range from the ground, sort of underneath it?

Mc. Plan view only at the moment.

K. I thought it was, I don't know. A hundred, it could have been two or three hundred feet, feet this is what struck me.

Mc. I don't mean the distance up. I was trying to get the.

K. Oh, from me.

Mc. You were in the garden and if in fact it was not approaching you, which is your impression, it was yo-yoing down on the spot on the map, you're somewhere else on the map, and we're trying to get this distance at the moment. Do you think it was hundreds of yards, hundreds of feet, tens of feet?

K. I would say it was 2 or 300 yards away.

Mc. 200 to 300 hundred yards, in other words.

K. No, it is very hard to say. I couldn't say exactly how far it was from me, but I had the impressions, its actual distance from me was about 300 feet. That's what I thought. I remember at the time, I thought it was 3, 400 feet away.

Mc. While it was doing the yo-yoing or? Or later on?

K. Yes, because it stopped. One of the last yo-yos. It just stopped as if a switch had been turned off. It sort of flipped up on its edge.

Mc. One of the yo-yo descents?

K. So that one of 2 or 300 yards wouldn't be correct.

Mc. Apparently not, if you thought it was.

K. No. I thought it was feet.

Mc. Cut it by a factor of three. It stopped. (...) It stopped and immediately.

K. It turned up on its edge, as if it had a hinge on the, let's say, facing it in the position with the stalk towards the ground.

Mc. What could we use?

K. On the left hand edge it appeared to have a hinge, swung up.

(Apparently they try and use an ash tray to illustrate the movement.)

Mc. Well, this isn't too bad. We can understand that to be the stalk, if somewhat smaller, and that should be the stalk and we can (...) be sure that isn't full of ash, is it?

K. It sort of, basically came down like that, you know, and then it just went, just like that.

Mc. On the lower, flipped on the lower, and the stalk was then towards pointing towards?

K. Yes. Pointing south.

Mc. Stalk to south. And bell to north?

K. Yes.

Mc. And then did it hover there for a moment?

K. Just for a fraction of a, I would say about half a second, stayed in that position.

Mc. Without any other motion?

K. No. It wasn't vibrating or anything. It was just dead still there for that half a second. Then it turned with the stalk towards me. It pivoted so the stalk appeared towards me.

(They then discuss ordering drinks).

K. These were 90 degree movements around the.

Mc. Vertical axis. 90 degrees, with stalk towards you?

K. Yes.

Mc. And then?

K. By this time I had the camera down again about waist level. I was peering at it because I knew there was no point in worrying about the camera any more.

Mc. Had you shot, had you made, when did you shoot?

K. I took the picture when it was in that sort of vertical position.

Mc. Stalk to south.

K. South, yes.

Mc. Looking east?

K. That's when I took the picture and nearly brained myself with the camera. I should have brought my file with the actual report I wrote out in it. But still, I can still remember.

Mc. Then you shot it here?

K. Yes.

Mc. It turned the axis?

K. Then it swung.

Mc. Stalk towards you?

K. Yes.

Mc. Stalk towards the west?

K. Yes. That's right.

Mc. And you dropped the camera?

K. I dropped the camera by this time because.

Mc. You lowered it?

K. Yes. Down to waist level.

Mc. Because what?

K. Well, I realized that I couldn't take another photograph. The thing takes 60 seconds to come out and I had to draw the film out of the camera before it would start to develop. So I spent, I well thought I'm going to keep my eye on this.

Mc. This is a slow process, 60, (...) got three shots in 45 seconds (Reference to Heflin photos?)

K. I think he was using the type of camera where you would draw the actual picture from the camera. With this one you had to open the door on the back and peel it out, a really old one.

Mc. So (...)

K. Then, it appeared to me to be turning slowly because of sort of flares of light were going across the bottom of it, did give a sensation it was rolling over towards the north.

Mc. Along its stalk axis, rolling along the axis of revolution?

K. Yes. Rolling in the direction it had turned.

Mc. Is this an impression that you are not positive of?

K. No I can't. To be quite honest I can't be absolutely positive. I noticed the changes of light on the base of it, but that could have been due to it altering position rather than turning.

Mc. Ok. It's a very shiny object.

K. Oh, it was. Very.

Mc. Hard, been hard to discern.

K. But you know how on a flat object. The lights you get the sort of triangular, sort of flare across the bottom of it, it sort of had these flares, a couple of them, shot across the bottom of it as it turned towards me.

Mc. Were you conscious at the time of any of this pink reflection of that?

K. No, not until I looked at the photos. I didn't; I wasn't conscious of this at all.

Mc. It looked metallic and shiny to your eye?

K. Very, very shiny. Just like a mirror. I noticed its brilliance you know. It was reflecting the Sun in sort of flashes. Very, very brilliant.

(More discussion on drinks.)

Mc. Now it is moving, rolling. What direction?

K. It appeared to be rolling towards the north.

Mc. Rolling to the north.K. Indicating it was turning. Then it seemed to lose a little bit, a small amount of altitude, it seemed to drop, 15 or 20 feet, this is what it apparently did. When it reached the bottom of this drop, it jerked violently upwards 30 or 40 feet I would say and at the same time accelerated to what I can only describe as an unbelievable speed as it disappeared just almost instantaneously out of sight behind the trees.

Mc. Now it kept to the bottom, jerked violently.

K. It jerked violently.

Mc. 30 or 40 feet and it kept going.

K. No, on an angle, and disappeared in the distance.

Mc. Is this two separate phases of motion, you could follow it this way and then (...)

K. It dropped like that and then just as it came to the bottom it jerked up, and curved over and disappeared. It didn't apparently keep this sort of climbing motion (...) This sort of seemed to be a hop in other words.

Mc. In apparently a straight line and then what?

K. It was sort of that motion, it was a definite hop.

Mc. It then went into a curve, is that it?

K. Yes, sort of. As it disappeared from sight it was sort of curving, apparently curving away, away from me. I lost sight of it when it was about there, sort of.

Mc. And it jumped up at an angle of what, maybe 30- degrees (...)

K. Yes, I'd say about 30 degrees.

Mc. Did it stop at the end of that jump, was there a distinct break in the motion?

K. No.

Mc. Or did it (...) direction?

K. When it came to the bottom, it abruptly changed direction but there was no apparent stopping in between it. It sort of went like that.

Mc. Then what separates the end of the jerk from the beginning of the next stage (...)

K. It sort of jerked and curved over.

Mc. Curved over and accelerated.

K. Yes, and disappeared without a sound.

Mc. How many seconds do you think it took to, you didn't get out of sight in open sky, it went.

K. I couldn't see it. I jumped to see if I could see it but it had gone. I couldn't see it.

Mc. It disappeared behind trees?

K. Yes. It disappeared out of view. I then took off around the house because I knew one of the workmen had been working on the other end of the house, sawing wood. And I was convinced that if he had been looking up he would have seen it, because I thought it must be over about where he was.

Mc. Yes.

K. So, on the way I was running around the house. I pulled the film out of the camera which started the processing working. By the time I got to him and asked if he had seen anything, and he said no he hadn't. Because, obviously he couldn't have seen anything, he was bending over his work and the thing didn't make any sound. So I then withdrew the picture from the camera. He watched me take the picture from the camera, and he was very startled. Evidently he said that while I was in the garden at the other end, he had, while he was looking up he had seen me in the garden during the period of the exposure, but he hadn't taken much notice. He just noticed I was in the garden at the time but unfortunately he didn't look up.

I think Peter took a statement from him. I gave him his name and address and I think Peter went round and took a statement.

Mc. You don't know his name at the moment?

K. Mr D English, his name was.

Mc. Mr D English He's a carpenter?

K. Yes. He is tradesman.

Mc. (...)

K. I hope Peter got a statement. How long he actually had me in view, I'm not quite sure. But you can check that from the statement. I didn't sort of follow it up.

Mc. So he saw you pull the film out?

K. Yes.

Mc. You have a witness to the appearance of the photo. (...) Next best to witness the object. He was startled to look, to see the object?

K. Oh very. When he saw the picture he was very taken aback.

Mc. Ok. Now did you then, is there more, you never saw it again?

K. No.

Mc. Ok. Now did you happen to enquire around the neighborhood?

K. Yes. I asked, asked the people next door, but they hadn't seen anything. One of them had been outside, sweeping, sweeping the garden, but they hadn't looked up, they hadn't seen it.

Mc. You never heard that anyone else had seen it.

K. No I hadn't heard anything else.

Mc. Did that surprise, are you among those witnesses who are thereby surprised, or do you understand that in terms of a mode of activity of people in that neighbourhood.

K. Well, it's quite an exclusive residential area that's mainly populated by older people. It's not really unusual for people not to see these things I'd say but (...) but the other thing is too, that there could have been others that saw it but just wouldn't say anything about it. I think this is a good possibility. I'd feel quite certain someone else must have seen it, but whether they said anything about it is another thing.

Mc. So, times, motions, colours. Did, did Paul ever mention to you a feature of the shadow on the object that. Didn't bother me, it's odd I thought. Did he ever discuss with you?

K. No, I have never discussed it with him.

Mc. He had large prints that you.

K. Yes I have got some as well.

Mc. And see it on a magnifier on this but it's just that the, let me refresh my memory. Here we nominally have a surface of revolution.

K. Yes, yes, I know what you mean.

Mc. And we have views of the upper and lower edges, which if it is a surface of revolution (...) define the shape.

K. Yes, that's right.

Mc. Then the question arises, the shadowing on it (...) in fact in the middle of the shadow, sketch this here, from this, shadow, has a cusp, a (...) cusp which I am going to exaggerate.

K. yes I know, you can see that on my (...)

Mc. I wonder, if it is a surface of revolution, then why should the shadow, should be the shadowing not be some kind of continuous curve. Do you rationalize that, anyway or thought about it. What could have produced that cusp? A notch?

K. Frankly I don't know. Because, there could be; on the enlargement you could probably see it better. There seems to be reversed curves and all manner of things up near the top of this thing, which I call the top, that's the part with the point on it. And arr, such a curve round the lower edge, the edge nearest the stalk could possibly produce that (...) effect.

Mc. If there, if there is a, an irregularity on the surface, and if it is a surface of revolution then the upper and lower limbs must show that. This end and this end.

K. I see yes.

Mc. It may not be a surface of revolution, but that poses a question. Did you think at any time that it was anything other than a revolute?

K. No I didn't. (...)

Mc. Left with the impression.

K. I was left with the impression that that was a (...)

Mc. (...) easier to ponder if we had a blown up version.

K. I should have brought that with me. I can perhaps mm. We can have a look at that next week.

Mc. We probably should. I don't have any bright ideas as to anything that would be in the neighborhood that would do it. But that may be. This may be a highly distorted curved mirror type reflection of a building, and it may in fact be identifiable as a building. We should give that some thought..... Sit there and think about the angles. Do you have anything in the way of surveying gear that we can reconstruct the (...) or already been there (...)

K. We already measured it all up, I've got the details of that, anyway.

Mc. We might see if we can think back to what, what object is behind you. Would. Presumably. It looks like it is above the mid-section.

K. Yes.

Mc. of it. That's kind of bad, because your line of sight, then would, be reflected up into the sky. So it's got to be some very tall building if it's going to do that. It's probably not (...)

K. (...) because there's only houses sort of on this side, there's a fence, sort of there, then there's houses, a house, a big house.

Mc. Not particularly tall.

K. No. would it be. If it had been over the house further that way. Could it possibly have been a reflection of a tree here, although it couldn't be because it would mean.

Mc. Well, no, because if it's a revolute, and this is above the mid-section, then and it appears to be, then the specular reflection is of the sky up here.

K. That's right yes.

Mc. It really does look like its well above the middle section.

K. I'm very puzzled with those reflections because I couldn't, also couldn't see how it could be the reflection of the roof of the house. I just couldn't see this. It's this, this interpretation which has been put on it by Peter and his society. I don't think there's enough, you can't get sort of enough information from this photograph to indicate what is being reflected, you know.

Mc. You are looking here, you are looking to the east, right?

K. That's right, almost due east.

Mc. Sun in the north?

K. The Sun was behind me. Ummm. It was just, just above and behind. I think Dr Berson had the, the altitude and everything of the Sun.

Mc. Well, when we have a large photo, then standing out there, let's try to go over that again. That's an interesting point. It may simply be that when you look more carefully at all the angles involved that it I simply the difference between the Sun illuminated part, and the non-illuminated part. It may be that. Is there any possibility of getting print of that? Are there black and white. Do you have any black and white?

K. You haven't got any prints, have you?

Mc. No, no. I do have prints like in the (...)

K. Sure, I'll.

Mc. I don't want to ask you to go to any bother.

K. No. I've got some prints I think, you can have the spare ones I've got, the copies of that. Now you have seen the original you know they're copies too.

Mc. Yes.

K. So, I can let you have those. Yes, sure.

Mc. If I can get one glossy. Ok. So I guess we've gone over the whole incident, just once here, and (...) relevant things we've covered but still we. Is there anything else you can think of, at the moment that needs to be remarked?

K. Not really, apart from the fact I felt I was very lucky. I gave myself a very sore nose hitting it with the camera.

Mc. (...)

K. I nearly knocked myself out. Yes. That's about all really. I can't add anything else. I have my own opinions about what I saw.

Mc. What are those? Are you willing to (...)

K. From a, I had the impression. This was after thinking about the earlier sightings I had which were nothing really conclusive could be deduced from what I had seen and what the witnesses involved with the earlier sightings had seen, because the object seen in these instances were far away although behaved in UFO fashion. In other words, there was nothing you could really discern of the object and this one was the first UFO I had seen really closely, and I've got a good idea, a good knowledge of engineered, engineering generally and it struck me as something that had been manufactured of metal, that appeared to be metal, because it was extremely shiny, looked very much like stainless steel to me, that was the impression I get. It had the same sort of luster as stainless steel. And it just impressed me as something that had definitely been contrived.

Mc. Not a plasma.

K. That's for sure. There was a definite deliberation in this, and, the way it moved left no doubt in my mind at all, that something was manipulating its movements. There were. It was deliberate, and it was definitely mechanical, the way it swung around and did these things, although it didn't agree with any aeronautical behavior that we would, that's common today. Its, was definitely movement of deliberation, something manipulating, something, that is what it appeared to me."

End of transcript.

4.4 Statement of Mr David English

This was dated 2 May 1966 and signed David English.

“On the 2nd April, 1966 I was working inside the house at Balwyn owned by Mr Kibel senior when James Kibel told me he was going into the garden to finish off a film he had in his Polaroid camera.

He went into the garden with the camera and I saw him apparently preparing to take a photograph.

He then came hurrying back and said something to the effect of “I have photographed something peculiar in the air. It may have been a bird but let us see what comes out on the film.”

He then stood shoulder to shoulder until Kibel removed from the camera the photograph which was later published in “The Herald.”

I am positive Kibel was alone at the time of taking the photograph. Mr Kibel Senior was away and I was worried about prowlers and would have noticed any strangers around the grounds.

While waiting to see the photograph, we both heard a boom like a plane breaking the sound barrier.

I gave this statement on the understanding that all personal details will be withheld from publication.”

5. Secondary sources from 1966

5.1. “Herald” Melbourne newspaper dated 12 April 1966

“Blimey! Now it’s a flying mushroom...
All in a Balwyn garden.

Mr Peter Norris, president of the Victorian Flying Saucer Research Society, today released a photograph of an “unidentified flying object” taken from the garden of a Balwyn home.

Mr Norris said that the object was snapped by a society member at his home at 2.21pm on Saturday April 2.

The member, whose name is not available, because of business reasons, said today he was using color film in a Polaroid camera.

“It was a warm, clear day and suddenly the whole garden became lit up. It was like a reflection from some huge mirror being shone on the garden” he said.

“I looked up and saw an object, bright and shining, coming towards me. It would have been between 20ft and 25ft in diameter and was about 150ft up in the air.

“It seemed to float down towards me. It resembled a big mushroom with the stalk pointing towards the earth.

Shot off:

“Then it spun through an 180 degree angle on its vertical axis to take up the position in which I photographed it.

“Then it turned slowly through another 180 degrees on its horizontal axis to bring the stalk part facing me.

“From an almost stationary position it took off northwards at terrific speed, accelerating to what seemed to be hundreds of miles an hour in seconds.

“I ran and got a carpenter who was working on the house. Seconds after it took off we heard a boom, similar to the sound jets make when going through the sound barrier.”

Then man said he copied the print from his Polaroid camera and enlarged it to get the photograph shown here.

Mr Norris said the research society would fully investigate the sighting.

“I know the man personally and I am certain this is not in any way a hoax” he said.”

5.2. APRO Bulletin May-Jun 1966 issue, p.1

“Best Photo Yet – In Australia

Peter Norris has forwarded a print of the clear colored photograph taken by a prominent Melbourne businessman on the 2nd of April. Although the photographer asks anonymity, he is a member of the VFSRS and is known and vouched for by Mr Norris.

2.20pm on the 2nd, the man was in his garden using up the remainder of the film in his Polaroid color camera. Suddenly, a bright reflection caught his eye, and he looked up and saw a bell-shaped object hovering, on its side, over the house. The man snapped the photo, whereupon the object accelerated at great speed and took off in a northerly direction. He estimated the object was about 20 to 25 feet in diameter, and at about 150 feet altitude.

If at all possible, the photo will be included with this article [KB – it was.] In the black and white print, the bottom appears black but in actuality, in the color photo, it is pink, reflecting the color of the roof over which the object hovered.”

5.3. Australian Flying Saucer Review (Vic edition) July 1966, front cover & p.2

“VFSRS member snaps a UFO

A Polaroid colour photograph of a UFO is now under investigation by the VFSRS.

The photograph was obtained in Balwyn, Victoria at 2.02pm on Saturday, April 2nd by a society member who has requested that his name be withheld for business reasons.

The member's description of the incident is as follows;

“It was a warm, clear day, and suddenly the whole garden became lit up. It was like a reflection from huge mirror being shone on the garden.

I looked up and saw an object bright and shiny coming towards me. It would have been 20 feet to 25 feet in diameter and was about 120 feet up in the air.

It seemed to float towards me. It resembled a big mushroom with a stalk pointing towards the earth.

Then it spun through an 180 degree angle on its vertical axis to take up the position in which I photographed it.

Then it turned slowly through another 180 degrees on its horizontal axis, to bring the stalk facing me.

From an almost stationary position it shot off northwards at terrific speed, accelerating to what seemed to be hundreds of miles an hour in seconds.

I ran and got a carpenter who was working on the house. Seconds after took off we heard a boom, similar to the sound jets make when going through the sound barrier.”

One interesting aspect of the photograph is a shading of pink directly on the bottom part of the UFO. This appears to be a reflection of the pink tiles of the roof over which the UFO was apparently passing at the time the photograph was taken.

When details of the photographic experts' analyses are to hand they will be published in an issue forthcoming.”

5.4. Flying Saucer Review (UK) July-August 1966 Vol.12. no. 4 pp 3 & 27

“Melbourne man snaps UFO

By Peter Norris, L.L.B.

A member of the Victorian Flying Saucer Research Society has released a color UFO photograph taken by him in the Melbourne suburb of Balwyn at 2.121pm on Saturday April 2, 1966.

The member has requested his name and address be withheld for business reasons, but the writer will call him James brown for purposes of reference.

Brown is well known in Melbourne UFO circles. A student of the UFO subject for more than ten years, he holds qualifications in engineering and is a director of his family's engineering company. He is also an instructor of civil defense.

Brown's report is as follows:

"It was a warm clear day and suddenly the whole garden became lit up. It was like a reflection from some huge mirror being shone on the garden. I looked up and saw an object, bright and shiny, coming towards me. It would have been between 20 feet to 35 feet in diameter and was about 150 feet up in the air.

It seemed to float down towards me. It resembled a big mushroom with the stalk pointing towards earth.

Then it spun through a 180-degree angle on its vertical axis to take up the position in which I photographed it. It then turned slowly through another 180 degrees on its horizontal axis to bring the stalk part facing me.

From an almost stationary position it shot off, northerly at terrific speed, accelerating to what seemed to be hundreds of miles an hour in seconds.

I had run and got a carpenter who was working on the house. Seconds after it took off we heard a boom similar to the sound jets make when going through the sound barrier.

The writer subsequently interviewed the carpenter (name withheld on request) who confirmed Brown's story. In particular he emphasized that he had Brown in his sight when the photograph was taken, and insists Brown was alone all the time.

After photographing the UFO Brown ran back to the carpenter and they stood shoulder to shoulder waiting for the photograph to process. When it was taken from the camera, the image of the UFO on the print was immediately perceived.

Although it is still under analysis by VFSRS photographic advisers it can be said at this stage that the Brown photograph has caused considerable head scratching in skeptical circles. After all, a colour photograph taken on a Polaroid camera is not the easiest of things to fake.

Not the least interesting aspect of the photograph is the pinkish colouring which can be discerned on the underneath part of both the flange and the "stalk" of the UFO, whilst the upper parts of the surface appears to be of a brightly polished reflective material. Is this a reflection of the roof and chimney over which the UFO was apparently travelling when photographed? Can it be established thereby that the UFO must be a large object at some distance from the camera and not a small artifact tossed into the air close to the camera? The answers to these questions will be eagerly awaited.

One other incidental matter arises. RAAF investigators have been relatively quiet during the recent Victorian flap, but are known to have investigated at least one of the sightings.

However, despite the considerable national publicity accorded to the Brown photograph in both press and television mode, it is a surprising fact that official circles have so far completely ignored this vital (perhaps definitive) evidence of UFO existence. One can only guess at the reason, but could it be officialdom is now only interested in the explainable sightings, those which keep down to a negligible figure the percentage of “unknown” cases? Only time will tell.”

5.5. APRO Bulletin Sep-Oct 1966 issue, p.1

“The Balwyn Photo

A complete photo analysis of the photograph of a bell-shaped object hovering over a residential section of Balwyn (Melbourne suburb), Australia, has arrived at headquarters.

Along with the analysis which proves the photo authentic (see page 1, May-Jun issue) was the identity of the photographer, and the office was surprised to find that he is one of our many Australian members.

Mr X has an extremely important position in Melbourne, and it is easy to see why he would hesitate to be identified with a UFO picture, or incident considering the controversial nature of the subject. The full story:

Mr X was in his garden of his home when his attention was attracted by a brilliant flash, as if some huge mirror was reflecting light to the garden. He looked up and saw the object coming in his general direction. It appeared to be between 20 and 25 feet in diameter and about 150 feet altitude. It resembled a big mushroom with its short stalk pointed earthward.

Mr X ran to get a carpenter who was working in the house so that he could watch the object also.

The object spun through a 180-degree angle on its vertical axis ending up with its rim pointing down. Mr X who had been using up film in his Polaroid color camera snapped the photo and waited from the timing process before pulling it out. The object then turned slowly through another 180 degrees on its horizontal axis, whereupon the “stalk” part was facing Mr X.

From this almost stationary position, the object shot off to the north at great speed. Seconds after it took off the two men heard a boom, “similar to the sound jets make when going through the sound barrier.”

Peter Norris, APRO’s Australian representative interviewed both Mr X and the carpenter (who also wished anonymity.”

The carpenter emphasized that he had Mr X in sight when the photograph was taken and that Mr X was alone all the time. The two stood shoulder to shoulder waiting for the photograph to process.”

5.6. December 1966 Volume 6, AFSRS (Victorian edition) pp11-12

“Report on UFO photographed at Balwyn.

A. Data

1. The Polaroid photograph with chimney visible in left bottom will be referred to as photo I in what follows. Enlarged photo showing the UFO only will be referred to as photo II.

2. The UFO was sighted on 2nd April 1966, and photographed at 14:21 EST on that day.

Focal length of camera at infinity 6 ins.

Distance from point at which photograph was taken to peak of chimney (see as on photo I): 81 ft.

Height of chimney from ground level to peak: 26ft 6ins.

Distance of chimney from curb side of road: 56 ft.

Distance from point at which photograph was taken to curb side of road: 54feet

(These data were supplied by the photographer.)

B. Authenticity of the Polaroid photograph.

The Polaroid photograph and its enlarged copies show no sign of multiple exposure, montage or any other tampering. No statement can be made, on the basis of clarity, or lack thereof (see photo II), about movement of the object in the sky, because immovable objects in phot I show signs of movement, ie the picture gives evidence of camera movement.

C. Evaluation of height and size of object in the sky.

1. Data deduced directly from phot I:-

Large (apparent) diameter of UFO: 7mm.

Small diameter: 4mm.

Width of chimney: 4.9mm corresponding to an actual width of 1 foot 6 inches.

2. Calculated from the data in A2: -

Distance from sub point of chimney at ground level to camera: 76ft 6 ins.

3. Evaluation from attached serial photographs and data in A.2 and C.1, 2: -

Azimuth of line projected to curbside of property

a=121 deg (clockwise from due north)

Azimuth of vertical plane through camera and chimney top

a=121 deg 41 mins (see the diagram)

Probable error of latter azimuth +/-2 deg.

The ground projection of the cone in which the UFO is located is shown as two red lines in the serial photographs.

4. Elevation angle of UFO: 28 deg 36mins. This has been calculated from the true height of the chimney top, its apparent position in photo I, the relative apparent height of the UFO above the chimney top, and the horizontal distance between sub point of chimney at ground level to camera, ie 76' 6" (see C.2 above.)

5. On the basis of item C.4 the height of the UFO could be determined for an assumed horizontal distance of its sub point from the camera. Various heights corresponding to various assumed distances are listed in the 2nd column of the table.

Horizontal assumed distance	Height (feet)	Calculated large diameter (metres)	Small diameter
200	109	3.2	1.8
400	218	6.4	3.6
680	371	10.9	6.2
800	436	12.8	7.3
1000	545	16.0	9.1

6. The large and small (actual) diameters of the object could be determined from the assumed distances, the focal length of the camera (see A.2), the apparent diameters on photo I (see C.1), and the angle of elevation (see C.4). Diameters are given in the third and fourth column of the table.

7. At the time the photograph was taken, the UFO appeared to have been near the school and or even closer, not further than the southern portion of the public park southeast 400 feet. Assuming a circular cross section, the circumference of the UFO at its widest cross section would have been at least 10m but possibly as large as 35m (33 to 115 feet).

D. Remarks on light reflections from the surface of the UFO.

“On 2nd April, 1966, the altitude of the sun at 14hr 21mins was 46deg 45 mins and the azimuth 45 deg 59min west of north when observed from Box Hill. This information was supplied by D F Marshall, lecturer at the Observatory, Institute of Applied Science of Victoria.

In the here adopted notation, the azimuth of the sun was therefore 314deg11mins (clockwise from north) and its elevation about 18deg higher than that of the UFO. Providing the sun at the instant of taking the photograph was not obscured by cloud (and from the photograph it appears that there was sunshine at that instant), it would follow that (1) the UFO exposed to the camera, ie not at an angle of 90 deg but at an angle of 75 deg in the plane of viewing; (2) that the light came slightly from above, relative to viewing from the camera position.

The effect mentioned in item (1) is not substantiated by any indication of consistent shadows on photos I or II.

Footnote: The names and addresses of the authors of statements B, C and D may be supplied on request.”

Note: A photograph accompanied the text, plus a diagram of relative distances and angles.

5.7 The book “Firestorm”

There is also a version of the Kibel/McDonald interview, which appeared in 2002, apparently using McDonald’s hand written notes of the 28 June 1967 interview.

(The following text is taken from the book “Firestorm: Dr James E McDonald’s Fight For UFO Science” published in 2002 by Wild Flower press, Columbus, NC. ISBN 0-9-26524-58-5. Kibel was interviewed in mid 1967 by McDonald, when McDonald was in Australia.

“On April 2, 1966 James J Kibel was supervising alterations at his parent’s home in Australia. He decided to use up the film in his Polaroid 800 camera on the beautiful garden.

The film was so old, the witness told McDonald, that it was of altered speed. “Kibel tried one shot, which turned out badly. He adjusted the speed setting.”

Suddenly he noticed a bright flash on the ground. Although it was full daylight, half of the garden lit up. Startled, he looked up and saw a peculiar shiny object, descending downward. The top was shaped like a bell, and a “stalk” projected from the bottom. The object bounced up and down in “yo-yo” fashion. Kibel had difficulty describing how far the object descended. “Two hundred to three hundred feet,” he estimated. “It’s terribly hard to say.”

It was a warm, sunny day with a strong northerly wind, gusting to 30mph, yet the wind seemingly had no effect on the object’s bouncing motion. At one of its descents, the object’s bouncing motion stopped and flipped up on its lower edge. It hovered a half second and Kibel hastily shot a photo. In his haste and excitement, the camera hit his nose so hard that it hurt afterwards.

He lowered his camera, he was unable to shoot again immediately because the color Polaroid film demanded a 60 second wait between pictures. McDonald’s journal continues “Rolling to the north, it then seemed to lose a bit of altitude, maybe 15-20 ft bottom of drop, it jerked violently upwards 30-40 feet at an angle 30 degrees to horizontal. Then curved over and accelerated at very great rate. Disappeared behind trees.

Kibel ran around the house trying to find other witnesses, pulling the film in the Polaroid to start the developing process. A worker, Mr D English, was bending down in the yard; he had seen nothing. Kibel pulled the picture out, startled by the clarity of the photo. He looked for other witnesses, but could find none. It was an exclusive neighbourhood where not many people spend time outside, he explained. He told McDonald that the object, in his opinion, was definitely “manufactured” and that its motion was “mechanical.” He estimated its size as between 15-25 feet diameter.

Jim Kibel had seen two other UFOs from that same garden when he was still living at home. In late afternoon August 1954, at the age of 15, his mother had called him suddenly into the garden to view a disc which was flipping in the sky, showing alternately a shiny side and a dull, dark bottom. Its angular size was equal to an Australian ten cent piece at arm's length, very much larger than the moon.

Mrs Kibel reported the object to the staff of a Melbourne newspaper, who ridiculed her, suggesting she'd been drinking too much!

After a sighting in 1958 which was also witnessed by his fiancée Jim Kibel reported it to Peter Norris of VUFORS, whom he knew personally. Remembering his ridicule his mother had sustained, he didn't report it to anyone else. McDonald wrote in his journal "All Jim Kibel knows is that the objects were definitely there."

6. Source material

The following material is available:

Primary	Format
A copy of a colour Polaroid photograph	JPEG
NICAP report form	JPEG
Kibel/McDonald interview	MP4
Statement by David English	JPEG
Sketch of house and garden by Kibel	JPEG
Secondary	
Herald newspaper 12 Apr 1966	JPEG
APRO Bulletin May/Jun 1966	PDF
VFSRS Magazine Jul 1966	PDF
FSR Jul/Aug 1966	PDF
APRO Bulletin Sep/Oct 1966	PDF
VFSRS Magazine Dec 1966	PDF
"Firestorm" book by Druffel	PDF