

THE UFO PHENOMENON TAKES TO THE ROADS

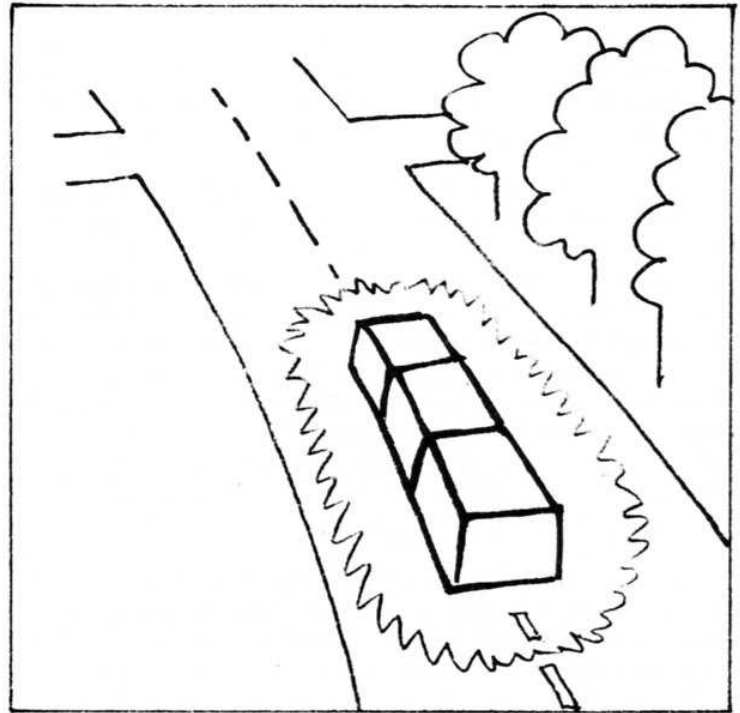
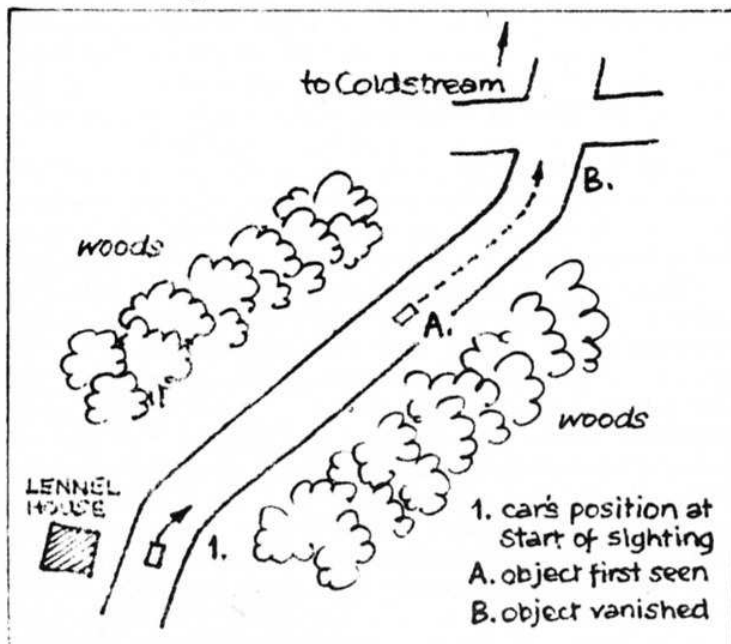
A compilation from UFOIN members' reports made by Jenny Randles, Secretary of the network.

IT has often been noted that there is an unexplained relationship between sightings of UFOs and motor transport. A typical example was the car-stop case at Nelson, Lancashire (see FSR Vol.23, No.2). This occurred on March 9, 1977, at the prelude of the great British wave of that Spring. It seems that, for some unknown reason, the phenomenon was unduly "interested" in motor vehicles at that particular time, as illustrated by the following incidents (brought to our notice by the publicity surrounding the film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*).

Coldstream

The first case took place at the beginning of February 1977 and was investigated for UFOIN by Alan & Trisha Price. It occurred late one evening on the Lennel Road, about half a mile outside Coldstream, Berwickshire, in the South East of Scotland. Like so many close encounters, it is just one of a series of incidents which may be interlinked in some way.

It was a clear, cold winter's evening as Stan (69) and Edith (61) (a married couple) were driving from Swinton. During previous months they had seen several white lights moving erratically in the sky, and had been puzzled since they always seemed to be over a local farm. The nearby RAF base denied responsibility for anything in the area and a solution was never forthcoming, although their inherent degree of strangeness was always low. However, on this occasion they were confronted by a much more remarkable sight.



The "Square-windowed" box car

Stan had just driven around a bend past Lennel House when, 150 yards ahead of them, he and Edith simultaneously spotted an object about the size of an average car. It was soon quite clear, however, that this was no car. It had the appearance of an oblong box, slightly narrower and a bit lower than a car, and completely covered by square windows. These extended to the "roof" as well, and the whole object radiated an intense light that brightly lit up the ground beneath it.

The object was straddling the white lines in the middle of the road, and seemingly "flying" about six inches above them. It moved quite slowly, heading towards a small crossroads.

Both witnesses were naturally quite amazed at this sight and in fact Stan accelerated in an attempt to catch the object. As he did so the object also accelerated, still hugging the centre of the road. They did not close the gap, and after it had been in view for some fifty seconds (the witnesses' estimate) the object suddenly and completely disappeared.

One should bear in mind, of course the possibility that it could have been some unusual reflection on the road surface, but this does not seem to fit the facts entirely (although it could explain the synchronised accelerations). It is to be remembered that the road was straight and the car was not travelling in the centre of the road.

When they reached the spot where the object had

vanished, Stan stopped the car and they both had a look around. The surroundings were quiet, with woodlands on both sides, and a high stone wall to the left. There were no effects at any time on the car or the witnesses, although when they saw the thing they had a strange feeling that it was "not of this world."

Sadly, Stan died on September 24th, 1977 (note the presence, once more, of the "death date" alluded to by John Keel in his writings). Then late on the evening of November 29, 1977, Edith had another experience.

After her husband's death she had moved to Coldstream to live nearer to her daughter. On this occasion she was in a car being driven by her daughter with her grand-daughter as passenger in the back seat. The grand-daughter was looking out of the window for the few seconds that the incident lasted and she was not a witness.

About a mile out of Swinton, on a different road to Coldstream, they were passing a clump of trees in a rural area when a figure either leapt out suddenly, or materialised, directly in front of the car. It was only a few feet away, and both Edith and her daughter saw it very clearly. It seemed to be about seven feet tall and was wearing a "hood or balaclava helmet" (a familiar feature of supposed UFO occupants). No features were visible and the figure appeared black in the headlight beams. The daughter slammed on the brakes instantly, but they were too close to avoid hitting the figure. However, as soon as the brakes were applied the figure vanished before their startled eyes.

Grasby Bottoms

The second incident involves two witnesses whom we shall call Mr M (aged 29) and Miss T (aged 21). The couple are engaged and live in the Cleethorpes area. Nigel Watson investigated their story for UFOIN.

On a date within five days of the beginning of March 1977 they were driving towards Caistor, South Humberside, along a dark country road. They were approaching Grasby Bottoms, about mid-way between Grimsby and Scunthorpe. The time was about 9.20 p.m. The weather was clear and cold, with a bright moonlight illuminating the countryside (the moon was full on March 5th). As the road was icy and ungritted Mr. M was driving his 1973 Lotus sports car at 15 mph.

As they were driving up to a small crossroads they became aware of a pulsating orange light filling the car. It was so intense that the blue bonnet turned orange and the headlight beam was similarly tinted. The glow spanned across the narrow road from verge to verge.

Both witnesses looked out of the windows to see what the cause was, thinking it was perhaps the flashing light on a gritting truck. However, nothing was visible and then they realised that the source was almost directly above the car. Fear began to overtake them when, because of the total lack of noise in the quiet surroundings they had to reject the idea that it might be a helicopter.

Mr M now began to accelerate, irrespective of the road conditions, and after about twenty seconds

came to the crossroads. It was at this point that they were able to see the object clearly. It was resting on the middle of the road a few hundred feet behind them. Both witnesses observed it (Mr M through his rear-view mirror). It was still pulsating, and seemed to be a globe about ten inches in diameter. It was giving out an enormous amount of light. t.

After barely stopping to check whether or not any other traffic was crossing, Mr M quickly drove on, and the object was lost to view (because of the terrain) while still resting on the road surface.

It could have been a sighting of an unusual form of ball lighting but, in view of the weather conditions this appears to be unlikely.

All three incidents were the cause of considerable alarm to the witnesses who requested anonymity. Their names and addresses are on the file with UFOIN. Note also the similarities between the first and third kind: an isolated car on a lonely road, one male and one female witness, the males both eight years older than the females, and both objects radiating unusually large amounts of light. Coincidence?

GIGANTIC UFO OVER REFINERY

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While he could not promise results, he was genuinely helpful, and offered to give all future witnesses the UFOIN telephone number. He was intrigued when it was pointed out that police and ufologists in the Oldham area of the Pennine foothills had been chasing what they called "the mysterey helicopter" for five years. Reports always centred on the Winter, and he noted that there had been almost no verifiable stories of the Partington "phantom helicopter" since March 1978 (i.e. the end of Winter).

This is certainly an intriguing story, and it features many aspects we find in the UFO phenomenon. It is made even more interesting when one considers a remark made to the witness, June, by a neighbour when she moved into the area in 1970:-

"What do you think of the thingys we get around here?" she was asked.

"What thingys?" she replied.

"Those flying UFO thingys — lights and such — we get a lot of them here. But don't go mentioning it around. It only means trouble!"

Of course bear in mind the date of the original incident — before the opening of the film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* in the USA, and before any information about the contents of the film was available over here. The incident was reported to us by the witnesses before the film was released in the United Kingdom, when only a handful of people were aware of the nature of that last dramatic sequence. It seems virtually impossible that the "coincidence" of description was in any way due to to unconscious fabrication by the witnesses.

What was seen, of course, we do not know. Yet it is most interesting to compare this object with that reported by UFOIN member Omar Fowler in his article in FSR Vol. 24, No. 1. There seems more than a little similarity here.