

# POLICE ENCOUNTER AT BURY

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ALTHOUGH superficially only a sighting of a light in the sky, this case is of high strangeness for several reasons. The witness is a highly experienced and reliable police officer. The object performed some extraordinary motions, and the sighting almost exactly parallels one from the same area some eight months previously also involving police witnesses.

## The event

The witness is 32-year-old Norman Collinson, from Heywood. He is now Detective Inspector in the Greater Manchester Police force, and at the time was a Detective Sergeant for the CID at Salford. He has had considerable experience of night time observation and has proved a most lucid witness.

On April 2, 1976, he had finished his shift at 1.50 a.m. and was driving home via the M62 and M66 motorway. He had just turned north on to the M66 when to his left (in the west) he saw a white disc of light. It moved very fast, crossing the road ahead of him and flying towards Knoll Hill, to the east of Bury, Greater Manchester. It was a quarter the size of the full moon, and the disc shape was very clear; it was this which immediately made him realise that it was not an ordinary aircraft. He did, however, continue to believe through almost all of the sighting that he was seeing an unusual type of aircraft (possibly a military one) with full lights on.

Detective Sergeant Collinson watched the object as it moved towards the horizon. It then turned at a sharp 90 degrees and slowed down perceptibly, heading now South, South East. He turned off the motorway to the east, heading towards Heywood, and temporarily lost sight of it. He then picked it up once more as it came from the left ahead of him on the road, pursuing the same course as before but very slowly.

Curiosity had now got the better of him and he parked his car and got out. The road was still and silent, and he had indeed passed almost no traffic as this area is commonly very quiet at that time of night. The object approached, moving overhead with relation to the car, and stopped.

One peculiar thing which he did notice was that the size of the disc, which he estimates as that of a one pence coin at arms length, did not vary. *It looked the same size when overhead as it did when in the distance.*

As the object was stationary overhead it pursued a series of 'box' manoeuvres, which lasted thirty seconds. The witness is well aware of optical distortions including movement, but insists that the object clearly moved about, making sudden right angle turns. The length of each side of the box was

roughly six times that of the object itself. Speed remained constant throughout. The object then stopped for several seconds, and then headed east towards Heywood, quite slowly.

The witness now returned to his car and pursued the object, catching it up in about a quarter of a mile. Here it stopped once more and again performed manoeuvres as before. Still believing it to be an aircraft, despite the total lack of sound, Detective Sergeant Collinson frantically searched around for someone to corroborate his observation. There was nobody in sight. It was at this point only that he finally realised that the object was not an aircraft. He had it in full view when it suddenly streaked away eastwards, reaching the horizon in less than two seconds. The acceleration was instantaneous.

The sighting was reported to the Ministry of Defence, who gave a standard non-committal response. Detective Sergeant Collinson also telephoned Manchester Airport and they took down details on to a form, promising to call back if they could identify it. They did not.

The witness is a very puzzled man, because he knows that he saw something which he cannot explain in familiar terms and yet nobody seems to have been trying to find out what it was.

The story only came to light after general publicity for the phenomenon in the *Manchester Evening News*, although the witness had earlier tried to get in

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