

# CE II AT THAXTED-VEHICLE INTERFERENCE REPORTED

*Andrew Collins*

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THIS case came to light when I received a telephone call from Police H.Q. at Chelmsford, Essex, at 05.50 hrs. on Wednesday August 3, 1977. It was stated that a Mr. Stevens had walked into the H.Q. at about 04.00 claiming that he had been witness to the passage of two objects earlier that morning over Thaxted, a small village in the north of Essex, and that he had suffered problems with the car he was driving immediately after the encounter. I contacted the witness the same day and arranged an interview with him that evening.

## The incident

Mr. Mike Stevens, a 24-year-old musician and postman, with a BA in Russian, lives at 63 Fifth Avenue, Chelmsford. On the morning concerned, he had just finished a recording session with his group at Cambridge, and was on his way home, travelling as usual on the A130 road which takes him directly from Cambridge to Chelmsford through the open Essex countryside. As Mike does not possess a car, he usually rents one from the Chelmsford firm Tricentral, which has premises in Rainsford Road. On this occasion he hired a three-month-old Vauxhall Chevette-E, a two door, hatch-back model, registration number TAH 894R, which he had collected from the garage the evening before.

Mike travelled his journey as usual without any trouble until about 03.30 hrs. (this he had estimated from the time he had left the recording studio). He had then just passed through the small village of Thaxted. Beyond the last of the village farms and houses there are several 'S' bends, and it was as he was turning a right-hand bend over a brow of a hill, that he first noticed an odd glow. He said that as he made the turn he caught a glimpse of a reddy-orange or 'peach'-coloured glow through an opening in some bushes to the right hand side of the road; this light seemed quite close by.

Alerted by this, but thinking nevertheless that it was perhaps a light from a building, he carried on along the road looking for another break in the thick bushes. After 100 yards he came to a gap and again the glow could be seen, but this time he was aware that there were two separate glows, and much more detail could be discerned. Realising that they were unusual, he pulled the car over to the left-hand side of the road and studied the lights intently. In fact what he could see were two orangey-red, stationary objects, about 300-400 yards away from him, at an estimated altitude of 50 ft. from the ground. They



From the lay-by: looking over to Thaxted

were hovering above and beyond a small clump of trees, and were over open fields that sloped away from the road, thus making them almost parallel with the horizon. The one on the left-hand side seemed to be farther away than the other, and was described as just a very diffuse oval-shaped light. The one to the right, being nearer, could be more clearly discerned. This object consisted of a circular centre in which the light emitted from it was described as concentrated; on each side of the circular centre was a diffuse glow, the left hand side being shaped like the end of a Christmas cracker, and the right-hand side tapering to a point. Between the diffuse glows and the circular light there was a definite division, as though the sections were not attached. Both objects seemed to cast a great amount of light skyward, although the witness could not remember them casting any towards the ground.

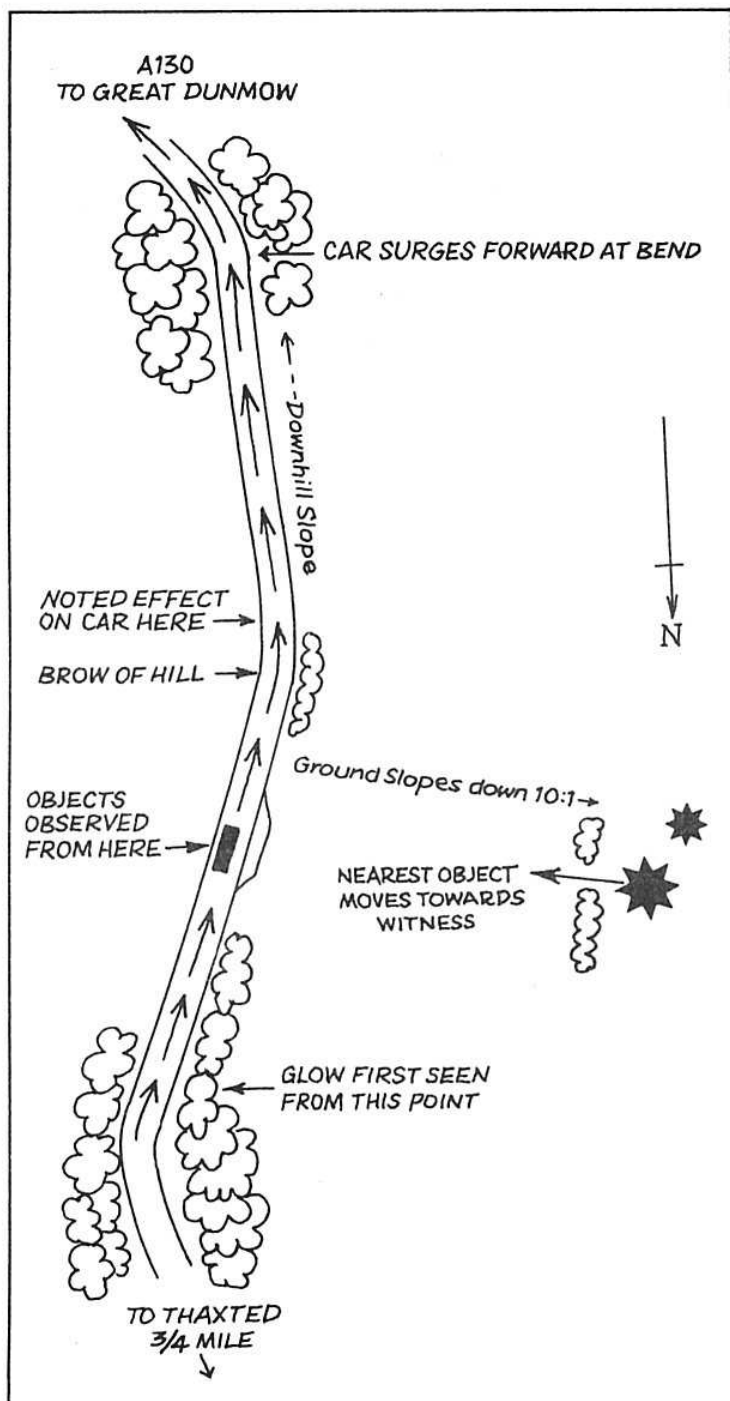
Mike says his first reaction as he pulled the car to the side of the road, was that the lights were low flying aircraft, but when he had stopped, he realised they could not be, for not only were they stationary, but also they were the wrong colour for aircraft lights, and just did not look right. He continued to watch them through the open car window, leaving the car out of gear and engine ticking over. Then, after watching them with puzzlement for a time, he was aware of a sudden increase in brightness from the left-hand object. This was only momentarily, though, and it soon returned to its original degree of brightness. Next the right hand object appeared to move upwards and when doing so increased the deepness of its colour, before resuming its original position. At this point Mike was still only

curious as to what the things were, thinking now that they could be giant lights on tops of poles. Within a couple of seconds of the right-hand object's moving slightly, it started — as the witness put it — to glide towards him at a slow pace, and as it did so appeared to be travelling in an upward arc of a few degrees. Having the car headlamps on full and realising he was probably the only thing of interest for miles, he was certain that the object was moving towards him, and naturally began to get a bit worried and decided to go.

He then looked away from the objects (he had been watching them at an angle of 45° from the car) and selected first gear. He then released the clutch and pressed the accelerator, moving off on a slight incline, and changed up to second and third gears, by which time he was on the brow of the hill. He

then changed into fourth gear and continued over the brow and down the other side. Up to then no effects on the car had been noted at all, but as he was on his way down the hill in fourth gear, he realised that he had his foot on the accelerator right down to the floor, but was only reaching a speed of 35 mph. Although he could only reach this low speed, the car appeared to be running quite normally. This strange effect lasted for perhaps 400 yards, when suddenly the car 'surged' forward in full power rising quickly above 50 mph. The sudden surge was unexpected, and the witness had to jam on his brakes to stop the car from overshooting the left-hand bend he was approaching. After this he carried on quickly to Chelmsford with the car acting normally.

When he reached Chelmsford, Mike went straight to the Police H.Q. at New Street to report what had



From the layby: View had by Mr. Stevens when he saw the two objects

happened. The Police radioed a patrol car in that area to go to the scene of the encounter to see if anything could be seen, but when the patrol reached the spot no trace of the objects could be seen. The Police completed a report and notified the Ministry of Defence, the Civil Aviation Authority, and finally myself. The car was returned to Tricentral after Mr. Stevens had given his statement to the Police.

The whole encounter from when the 'glow' was first seen to when the car returned to normal had lasted for a total of 1½ minutes, and had been in complete silence — other than the noise of the car's engine. The car had performed perfectly before the incident, which was to be expected as it was only three months old.

#### Follow-up investigations

On Saturday, August 6, I visited the site of the alleged incident with Barry and Christopher King. The place is approximately ¾-mile out of Thaxted village on the A130 road towards Great Dunmow. To the right of the road, where the objects are said to have been, there are several large fields, all with vegetable crops. These fields slope down in a 10 in 1 decline to a valley approximately two miles away. There are scattered trees between most fields, and the clump of trees that the objects appeared to be

over were about 30ft. high, so the estimated height of the objects at 50ft. was reasonable. There are also scattered houses in the valley, although none appear to be too close to the position where the objects were stationary. To the extreme right one can see some of the Thaxted houses and buildings. Beyond the sloping fields there is a mostly wooded area that does not appear to be built up. During the night several artificial lights can be seen, but none of these resembled the objects seen by Mike Stevens. To the left of the A130 road is a bank of earth, and beyond this, although they cannot be seen, there are more fields.

We confirmed the position of the bends in the road, and the distances between them, and all seem to be as the witness described them. No trace at all of the incident could be found.

Checking with the authorities proved fruitless. Stanstead airport stated there were no aircraft movements at all between 03.04 and 06.00 on that morning. The RAF base at Wethersfield confirmed no military movements in that area. Neither had they had any sightings reported to them. Eastern Radar, the military radar for the whole of East Anglia did not log any unusual traces on radar around that time. The Ministry of Defence confirmed that they had been notified of the sighting, although they had received no other reports for that day.

The London Weather Centre reported no atmospheric abnormalities. The conditions at 03.22 local time reported from Stansted Airport are as follows:

1/8 of cloud at 12,000 ft. and 4/8 at 25,000 ft.

The wind was calm. The visibility 2400m.

The temperature was 13½°C., and the humidity was 91%.

### The car

A trip was made by Barry King and myself to Tricentral, the rental firm, on Friday August 5th. A complete vehicle examination was made including a road test. For a full analysis of the examination please see report prepared by Barry King.

During the examination, checks were made on the vehicle to see what readings were given when placing a compass on various parts of the outside and inside. These were then compared with that of the Chevette's sister car TAH 893R. Both cars are mech-

anically and electrically identical, although the readings noted differed quite considerably. Both cars were positioned in exactly the same position and direction when the readings were being taken. The following readings are the result of that test:

	TAH 893R — Control Car	TAH 894R — Car under examination
Left wing	290°	108°
Right wing	130°	240°
Bonnet	350°	257°
Roof, left	130°	016°
Roof, right	118°	345°
Rear door	020°	132°
Front seat	118°	130°
Back seat	350°	050°
All readings were taken with north at 000°		

As can be seen, even allowing for the 20% difference between one car and another, the readings differ considerably. Especially at the front of the vehicle around the engine.

### The witness

I found Mr. Stevens to be a very well spoken, sincere person, who conveyed the details of his encounter in a concise and calm way. I believe that the details given are precise and not elaborated in any way. Mr. Stevens is at present working as a postman, although he is a musician and has a degree in Russian. He has never seen anything that he could not explain before, and has never had any psychic experiences. Although he was very shaken up at the time of the encounter, he now wishes 'in the light of day' that he had waited around to see the object at closer range. He now accepts that he has had a UFO experience and is willing to talk freely about it, although he wishes not to have any publicity in local newspapers, which is quite understandable.

### Conclusions

No explanation is readily available to explain this encounter. The height, the shapes, and the colour, all add to the problem as to what the objects were. I think it is clear that Mr. Stevens *was* subject to a frightening experience in the early hours of August 3, 1977. It is also strange that the time should be 03.30. Of late we have been receiving an increasing number of early morning reports. Could it be that the amount of reports for that time is on the increase, or is it that our newly found liaison with the Police is producing reports we would not normally hear about, reports that otherwise would have been lost in the presumed massive files of the C.A.A? (For Vehicle Examination, see Back Cover)



Left: The car involved in the incident, here photographed with Andy Collins, left, and Barry King on the day they examined it

# TALKS WITH BETTY HILL: 3-EXPERIMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

*Berthold Eric Schwarz M.D.\**

DOCUMENTATION of the things that happen to and around Betty Hill were the subject matter of Parts I and II. Herein I will close the chapter of those events, past and present [to July, 1976] and describe some interesting experiments.

## Old Virginia Dungeon

As far as Betty knew, Barney had no past history for psychic phenomena, either for himself or other members of his family. However, Barney recalled an old house in Virginia which had belonged to a family who owned slaves. "When the slaves were freed, because they were all relatives, the owner wanted them to have his property, since he had never married or had children of his own except the black ones running around.

"Downstairs was a hangout — a carryover from the old slave days. It was like a dungeon. There were straps and chains where the runaway slaves had been taken for punishment. The dungeon was supposed to have been haunted and had clanking, moaning, groaning and things like that. I heard Barney refer to it. He never heard the sound himself, but he said they always talked about it on the old farm in Virginia."

## The wall came tumbling down

On April 25, 1976, Charles Bowen, editor of *Flying Saucer Review*, was a guest in my (BES) home. We phoned Betty Hill, who reported that she had just come back from California and had gone downstairs to her basement, and found "...the whole wall lying out on the floor. She said: "I couldn't believe it. I was just astonished. There was no reason for it (no water leak, work in the street, extraneous vibrations or noises. The house had been all locked up. To get in, a person would have had to set off the burglar alarm. It didn't go off, as far as I know, but here's the wall. It's sturdy, and had been there for 20 years."

## Current events: a letter of May 28, 1976

"I have had many unexplained things happen to me, but these happened when Barney and I were here, or when I was here alone; they have never happened when anyone else was here — until this past week. Just before Hal (pseudonym) arrived, I found under the hood of my car a paint stirrer, with an abstract kind of painting on it, and I placed it under the hood of the car. Then while Jim was here, a clock in my living room, which was not running, starting operating — maybe it does have a

loose wire somewhere, I do not know, however, it started and continues to run.

"Another thing, I have found something that looks like beige plastic. I put it in the trash several times and would find it again somewhere in the house. The last time this happened I had my upstairs tenant and friend Deb watch me put it in the trash then, while Jim was here, I slipped off my shoes and when I went to put them back on, I found the plastic thing in my shoe! We were both there all the time, within three feet of my shoes, when this happened.

"Then, a knife from my set of Towle silver disappeared. I have searched everywhere and it cannot be found. I am hoping it will be returned. Also, my car registration disappeared from my purse at one time, and about 10 days later I found it one morning lying on top of my purse. So I am hoping the knife will come back.

"On May 10 Marianne and I got together at my mother's home in Kingston. We went out to a well-known UFO area, and Marianne and I heard beeping sounds, loud and clear; however, the other two in the car could not hear these. We saw some strange lights in the sky and got out of the car, to get a better look. We were standing in the middle of a dirt road, no houses, sort of scary place, when we heard the most unforgettable snarling and growling of an animal. I was shaking, telling them to get in the car (only two doors and I wanted to get in the driver's seat). Marianne was standing there, calm, fascinated, and saying it was only a big foot. She hears them often in back of her home. I think I would move!

"As for mystery helicopters, Lew Wilson (pseudonym), whom I quoted in my report, saw a helicopter come down over a tree in his yard, so low that it was swirling the branches. He told me that helicopters are not easy to handle, but one thing that must be avoided is close contact with a tree. If a chopper comes too close, a down-draft is created and the chopper crashes. This one was not affected in any way, so he is now questioning the origin of it. He has a friend who has 4 or 5 flying around his home occasionally, at night. Another mystery he told me: a few days before he came to see me a strange woman came into his business — he has a foreign cars franchise — she was small, wearing a long dress and carrying a pink briefcase. She asked directions to another town. She had the most unusual eyes he has ever seen, very large, dark pupils, but it seemed to him that they protruded to such an extent that he wondered if it was possible for her to close her eyes. As a car dealer, he noted the car she was driving — a dark green, 4 door, Dodge Dart, with a dent in the left front fender. He told me that the day he visited

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