

# KILLINGWORTH CLOSE ENCOUNTER

*Carol Tounessen*

Carol originally approached UFOIN in her capacity as a freelance writer, but she became so fascinated by the whole UFO enigma that she decided to become actively involved, and is now investigating cases for UFOIN on Tyneside.

ONE of the problems with classifying UFO reports is the looseness often applied to these classifications. "Close Encounter" can be termed as an object coming within a mile or more by some writers. Yet, in this case, as the photographs and diagrams make quite clear, we are dealing with a close encounter in its truest sense. Indeed one could say the object could hardly have got much closer!

The scene of the encounter is Killingworth, a new town to the north of the city of Newcastle-on-Tyne. It offers magnificent views towards the Cheviot Hills and the Scottish border to the north and the coast around Whitley Bay to the east. Mostly it comprises rather bland housing, rising upwards like 20th century castles, but it also fulfills a dual function as an industrial district. The industries include a gas research station which according to official sources, "leads the world in technical advice on piping north sea gas." Apparently it also "has a section that gas research people refuse to talk about."

and had been most of the week. Since it was full moon on Thursday, February 23, 1978, the incident must be placed at this date or very close to it.

At about 5.00 a.m., when it was still dark, Linda's mother was awoken from her sleep in the lower back bedroom by a loud noise which gradually became deafening. Convinced that an aircraft was about to crash into the house, she was paralysed with fear and, was finally driven to hide under the bedclothes.\*

Linda's bedroom is immediately above and she too heard the noise and was jerked into wakefulness by it. At first, she says, it sounded like a low flying aircraft, but as it drew louder and apparently closer it grew into a sound like thunder except that it was constantly rumbling. As it continued to grow in intensity she too became certain that an aircraft was about to crash and she got out of bed and rushed to the window.

The audio phase of the experience had lasted between 1 and 2 minutes, certainly long enough to convince both witnesses that this was something quite extraordinary. As Linda gazed out of the window, however, the noise changed. It became even louder and turned into a high pitched whirring that seemed to pulsate and exude tremendous power. Then, as she looked out fearfully, the source of the sound cruised into view.

As the photographs show there is a narrow gap between Linda's house and the one next door. It was through this that the object glided, apparently so close that Linda felt had she opened the window she



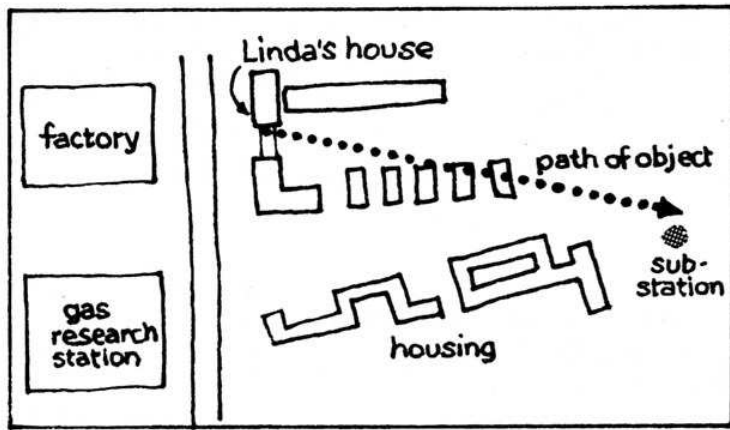
Photo 1: The closeness of the passage through the gap.

The principal witness to this event has requested anonymity so we shall simply refer to her as Linda. She is 21 years old and works as a nurse.

Another problem has been ascertaining the exact date. All that Linda could recall initially was that it was between late February and early March, but then she remembered that the moon was full that night



Photo 2: View as the object passed through. X marks the spot where it was last seen.



would have touched it. It could not have been more than a few feet away. Obviously, she now realised this was no aircraft!

The object was cigar-shaped, and looked exactly like a tin which contains expensive cigars. It was silvery, but not shining. It had more of a metallic lustre to it. There was a string of small lights down each side, not like windows but more like lightbulbs as in the indicator clusters on the backs of cars. There were 20–25 on each side. The fact that she could tell that there was a row of lights on *each* side was evidenced by the fact that the object was rotating along a horizontal axis. This was quite slow and uniform.

The object was about 30–35 feet long and about 8 feet wide. There was no sign of doors, windows or occupants. It cruised through the gap between the houses at about 25 feet above the ground, and glided away towards some of the higher flats at the back of the estate leaving Linda staring in fear and amazement. She lost sight of it after about 30 seconds somewhere in the vicinity of the high-rise flats and this allows a reasonable calculation of speed. It seems that the UFO was travelling relatively slowly, perhaps at less than 60 m.p.h.

After the object was lost to view Linda was still able to hear the noise as it faded into nothingness. Total duration of all phases of the encounter was about three minutes.

Not surprisingly Linda could not get back to sleep, although she suffered no subsequent effects. There were four males in the house that night (mostly in bedrooms to the front of the building). Nobody else even heard the deafening noise. Although extensive checks have been made in the area no further witnesses to the object nor the sound have been uncovered as yet. It seems almost as if some element of selectivity was in force to chose just these witnesses and especially Linda.

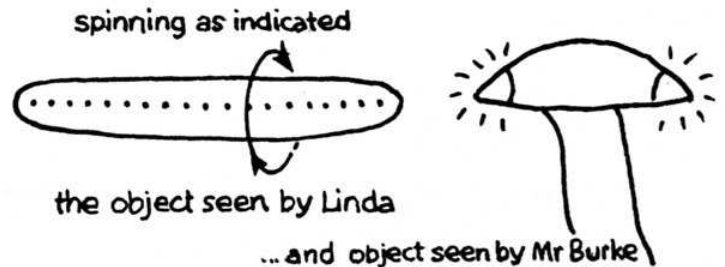
There was also a dog in the house, but it seems he was not disturbed by the noise. When asked whether she recalled any psychic experiences Linda replied that within her knowledge she had had none.

In analysing the route taken by the object it can be seen that it traversed approximately a course from North to South, in other words from the direction of the main industrial centres. Having obtained an architect's large-scale plan of the area it has been possible to trace this route quite precisely. The area

is liberally scattered with electricity sub-stations and transmission lines, and the object was in fact last seen almost directly over one of these. Whether or not this is relevant remains to be seen, but it should be noted that this relationship has often been apparent in the past.

What was seen that night is unidentified but it certainly frightened Linda and her mother.

Here is a postscript. On Saturday June 10, 1978, at 10.00 p.m. several people in the area (not related to Linda and her family) again reported a strange sound. It was heard by a Mrs. Mutch and her sister, and was described as a pulsating, humming sound which seemed to come from their back garden. They went to look but saw nothing. It was eerie and frightening, they said. A Mrs. Burke heard it too, while in her bath. She heard it rise in pitch over the course of a three minute period of droning and pulsating. Going to the back window she opened the curtains and at that instant the noise stopped. At the same time, and independently, her husband



was walking *to* the local pub when he saw a strange object hovering in the sky at about 7000 feet. It was hemispherical in shape and glowed reddish with a strobe light effect at each end. This caused fluctuation in the brilliance. Beneath it were two trailers, or vapour trails. The object remained there until, after several minutes of watching, he lost interest and left the scene. He did not hear a sound.

It was considered possible that the sound was from a jet aircraft going into Newcastle airport, since some of the new big jets have very distinctive noises that could be unfamiliar. The airport said there were no such aircraft in the vicinity at the time.

The other major possibility is that the noise was connected with the gas research building, and the work they do not talk about. That is assuming the two sets of noise were the same. Of course, this explanation does not alter the facts about what Linda *saw*, and this is the real puzzler. One might speculate that the UFO was silent and used the noise as a signal for people to see it – but perhaps that is a little fanciful. Who can say?

\* John Rimmer, editor of MUFOP (Metempirical UFO Bulletin) recently stated in a lecture that to hide under the bedclothes when confronted with an unexplained and frightening noise was irrational, perhaps indicating, in the case to which he was referring, that the witness was asleep and dreaming or semi-dreaming. The difference in that case was that the witness (who thought someone had dropped an atomic bomb) promptly went back to sleep! The reactions of Linda's mother seem to be wholly rational – Jenny Randles.