

# Close Encounters of the Wiltshire kind

By JEREMY GATES

IF THE White Holes of Westbury—mysterious patterns in a cornfield revealed in the Express as a possible UFO landing site—baffled most of Britain yesterday, the eighth Earl of Clancarty was far from surprised.

Said the peer, who chairs the House of Lords all-party UFO Study Group: "The marks are fascinating, suggesting something has landed there—and perhaps this does accord with the theory of the ley lines."

"Ley Lines" are claimed to be lines of electro-magnetic energy, reckoned to be the courses by which UFOs steer—in much the same way as the jet pilot works from radio beacon to radio beacon.

"Lots of ancient churches are on ley lines," says Lord Clancarty, "and so, of course, is Warminster."

## Reputation

Warminster, Wiltshire, heart of the "Warminster Triangle" since the mid-sixties and a few miles south of Westbury, is famed for UFO sightings and encounters with the supernatural—a reputation which survives despite the fact that army exercises on Salisbury Plain are just around the corner.

The legend was born one evening in 1964 when troops at Kook, four miles from the town, were awakened by a thunderclap followed by a pounding noise and villagers nearby later heard clatterings and hummings.

The "Warminster Thing"



Clancarty: not surprised

was born in 1965—with flocks of pigeons falling from the air, dead mice found with tiny holes in their corpses, and high pitched droning in the night sky leaving pets cowering in fear.

Over 430 unexplained "sightings" have been recorded in the area—many by those waiting patiently with binoculars on Cradle Hill, outside the town.

But are there perfectly rational explanations?

The Express UFO Bureau in 1978 certainly revealed no special bias towards this area of Wiltshire—and Jenny Randles, director of investigations at the British Unidentified Flying Object Research Association, is unconvinced that this is where the little green men eventually appear.

Mrs Randles says: "Since the 'Warminster Thing' took hold of public imagination, the story has really developed by feeding upon itself.

"People go there from all over the world because they are told they will see a UFO. So many people are watching there that the smallest event is magnified into front page news."

Of the White Holes of Westbury, Mrs Randles says: "For about 20 years, these

mysterious circles have turned up in cornfields in July and August, I believe the marks are caused by whirlwinds and small tornadoes. But it is getting difficult to separate fact from fiction."

She says: "There are basically two different things which have to be explained. 'First, we get reports of 'close encounters' where people claim some contact with the extra-terrestrial; seeing a spaceship, or aliens. We can't dismiss them all as hallucinations, but no photographic evidence exists of either UFO craft or aliens.

## Burns

"Second, we get UAP's—Unidentified Atmospheric Phenomena. These can be physical in appearance, leaving marks on the ground or burns on the skin. Some geophysical process is taking place producing an increase in radio-activity which can damage people's health or cause radiation sickness."

A recent incident involving UAPs include the Cornish couple who spotted a green oval object hovering in their courtyard—subsequently they were treated in hospital for symptoms believed to have been caused by radiation.

Could the White Holes of Westbury be another indication of UAP's?

Jenny Randles believes not—but neither she, or anybody else, will be certain enough to stop the UFO spotters gathering on Cradle Hill in the weeks ahead.

Who knows  
the strange  
secret of  
UFO-land's  
odd circles?

From yesterday's Express