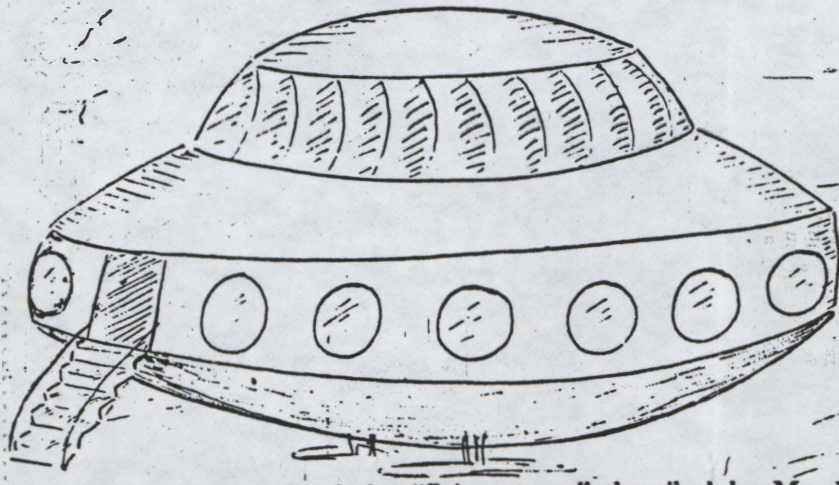


Chris Hall



Mr. Fowler's impression of the "flying saucer" described by Mr. Burtoo.

ALF'S 'CLOSE ENCOUNTER'

by DEBBIE COLLINS

PENSIONER Alfred Burtoo's close encounter with little green men while he was angling on the canal bank at Aldershot is no fisherman's tale.

That is the opinion of UFO experts who are convinced that his amazing story is "absolutely true."

Not only did the beings from outer space speak to 77-year-old Mr. Burtoo, of Pegasus Avenue, Aldershot, but he claims they also took him aboard their flying saucer:

After a thorough investigation of the alleged happening, Mr. Omar Fowler, of the Surrey Investigation Group on Aerial Phenomena, said: "I have been investigating UFO sightings for 16 years, and this is the most sensational thing that has ever happened!"

Mr. Burtoo, accompanied by his dog Tiny, was fishing in the Basingstoke Canal, near the Government Road bridge, when, he says, the flying saucer landed.

"I saw a bright light coming towards me over North Town and it hovered just over the railway line.

Accent

"It then settled down on the bank. I went to have a look and two forms came towards me dressed in pale green suits. They were about 4ft. tall and had dark visors covering their faces.

One of them beckoned me, and I followed them to the steps. I wasn't afraid — I was more curious than anything."

Mr. Burtoo went on: "The object was made of a kind of burnished aluminium and I climbed some steps and went inside.

"I walked across the room and one of them spoke to me in a kind of sing-song voice, with an accent something between Russian and Chinese.

"He asked me to stand under the amber light. I could not see it at first because there was a kind of black tube blocking my view. Then I saw it and went and did as I was told.

"After a few moments they asked me to turn round, which I did. They asked me how old I was and I said 78 next birthday. Then they said I could go because I was too old and infirm for their purpose."

Mr. Burtoo says he then left the spaceship, and was halfway along the towpath when it took off. It went over the military cemetery and then off towards Tongham.

Mr. Burtoo's "close encounter" happened at about 1.15 a.m. on August 12. He told his wife and son and a neighbour about it the next day but did not report it officially because

he did not think people would believe him.

"It was not until last week when an American air force officer revealed he had seen UFOs in Norfolk I decided to speak out. I am now inclined to think that lots of people have seen these things but don't report them because they do not want to be made fools of.

"I did not believe in flying saucers until this happened to me."

His wife Margery said: "I was a bit frightened when he told me, but I did not take any more notice. It has been bothering him ever since and he has been losing sleep over it.

"He obviously believes he saw what he saw and I believe him."

A sceptical Mr. Fowler went to interview Mr. Burtoo at his home on Monday evening this week. But next day, his group issued an official statement, saying it was convinced his story was true.

Said Mr. Fowler: "We can confirm that a number of the incidents he said occurred are consistent with known UFO characteristics."

Unexplained

He added: "I was very sceptical about this when I went to interview Mr. Burtoo and I expected it to be fantasy. But he came out with things he could not possibly have known about unless he had been studying UFOs for years — things about the shape and inside of the object.

"I am convinced his story is absolutely true and this actually happened."

The Surrey branch will now be carrying out a detailed investigation.

Mr. Fowler would like to hear from anyone who has had a similar experience or saw anything on that night.

There have been dozens of unexplained reports of unidentified flying objects in this area over the past 15 years.

In April, 1978, eight people, including a policeman, reported clear sightings of a UFO in the skies above Farnborough and Ash.

UFO SIGHTINGS MAY HERALD MORE 'VISITS' FROM SPACE

Road, Farnborough. She said: "At first I thought it was the moon, but I stood and looked at it for half an hour and don't think it could have been because it was brilliant and there was the noise like electricity charging."

After receiving full details Mr. Fowler's group will evaluate the sightings. The UFO Centre at Illinois University, USA, is notified of substantial encounters. Mr. Fowler has been a UFO watcher for 17 years.

The Aldershot area has been the site of dozens of UFO encounters in the past 15 years. In 1978 eight people — including a policeman — reported clear sightings in the skies above Ash and Farnborough.

Mr. Fowler said this report did not seem like an aircraft and could well be linked with Mr. New's experience. Then on Thursday, pensioner Mrs. Flora Thorpe saw a UFO hovering over the fields near her house in Austen

Another Aldershot family reported a sighting on the same evening. Mrs. Carolyn Coleman (30) was at home in Salerno Crescent when she asked her 11-year-old daughter Victoria to close the curtains. But Victoria saw something which made her call her mother to the window. "At first I thought it was a

"We laughed at the time, but after reading the story in the "News" I wondered whether there was any connection," she added. Mr. Fowler said this report did not seem like an aircraft and could well be linked with Mr. New's experience.

Then on Thursday, pensioner Mrs. Flora Thorpe saw a UFO hovering over the fields near her house in Austen

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A spate of UFO sightings could signal the start of many more "visits," according to Mr. Omar Fowler, chairman of the Surrey Investigation Group on Aerial Phenomena. "I think we are at the beginning of one of these flaps," he said. "I think it could be very interesting indeed."

Mr. Fowler has asked colleagues to keep a special watch on the area. Two weeks ago pensioner Mr. Alfred Burtoo reported boarding a flying saucer on the bank of the Basingstoke Canal.

Couple's new UFO sightings

A CARGO supervisor who has worked with aeroplanes for 25 years spotted a "weird" unidentified flying object hovering over him. The sighting was reported by Mr. Peter New (52) and his wife Patricia (53). Mr. Omar Fowler, of the Surrey Investigation Group on Aerial Phenomena, has issued an appeal for anyone

who saw anything strange in the sky last Wednesday to get in touch with him. Mr. New and his wife, of Lower Newport Road, Aldershot, were travelling home from Guildford along the Aldershot Road when they had their close encounter at Norrandy. He said: "It must have been about 9.10 p.m. when we

came off the dual carriageway section of the road and rounded the bend. I saw this light in the sky and jokingly said to my wife look there's a UFO."

But as they got nearer, the couple realised it was no joke. Mr. New said: "As we got closer I saw banks of light underneath and the thing was not moving at all. It was completely stationary and looked as though it was suspended about 200 feet up."

Mrs. New said: "My husband wanted to stop to get a closer look but I was frightened and would not let him. I could see it very clearly." Both said it was a large dark mass with round porthole-type lights.

Mr. New, who works at Heathrow Airport, said: "I have been working with aeroplanes for 25 years and I have come across nothing in my work that could explain this. It stayed completely stationary and did not hover like a helicopter. It was weird." The couple saw the object again during the early hours of Thursday as they looked out of their bedroom window. Mrs. New said: "The whole thing was a bit uncanny and frightening. I wish we had never seen it. Even members of our own family have laughed at us. We are ordinary people and did not want to sound daft. We just thought we ought to report it."