

Goodbye to little green men...

YOU ARE driving with friends in the country when you spot a strange object in the sky. It seems to come closer, then vanishes. Then you find yourself in a semi-dreamlike stage, further along your journey but on an unfamiliar road. Your shoes are unaccountably scuffed, you body hurts, and two hours have sped by.

Later, under hypnosis, you recall the incident. You find yourself on board, an unidentified flying object being medically examined by small, robot-like beings with the aid of a large, eye-shaped device. A tall, humanoid creature oversees them. Telepathetically, you answer their questions and to your surprise they answer yours. After a hazy period you are back in your car.

This is a fictional model of the rarest type of UFO experience, representing a fraction of the few "alien contact" incidents reported each year. Yet, according to **Jenny Randles**, national director of investigations at the British UFO Research Association, it is constructed from the common features found in hundreds of accounts in the UFO literature.

In her view, this is a close encounter of the fourth kind, fitting neither the prevalent atmospheric phenomenon (90-95 per cent) nor the typical UFO encounter (2-3



RANDES — UFO threat. Picture by Martin Argles

per cent). She believes this sort of case to be the province of psychologists and sociologists, reflecting the conclusion in *Science* and the UFOs, which she has written with Peter Warrington, that if Ufo-ology is left in the hands of non-scientists it will never escape the little green men.

Little green men are no longer runners. She says that no convincing photographs have been produced of aliens or UFOs on the ground, whereas atmospheric phenomena frequently mistaken for UFOs do show up on radar and film. This is as disappointing as the conclusion by the president of the Ghost Club that ghosts may

be the product of the collective unconscious.

She does not go as far as Carl Jung, whose book *Flying Saucers* (1959) suggests that UFOs may be psychic projections which throw back a radar echo. But she is keen that scientists study the possibility that the proximity of UAPs (unidentified atmospheric phenomena) exerts a "mind-scrambling" effect on the brain, releasing hallucinations deep in the human psyche.

Many of the cases she deals with involve as many as five witnesses, and she admits that five-person hallucinations are virtually unheard of. Investigating psychologists have found no

pattern of abnormality. "However the alien contact experience is subjective and can be real to one group of people, but a group over the road may have seen nothing," she says. She also suspects a form of "witness selectivity" at work.

She insists that BURA does not run away from little green men. In fact she has spent 4½ years challenging her own scepticism by investigating the bizarre UFO case near a US military base at Rendlesham Forest in 1980, when a "small triangular craft spewing fire" was seen by several witnesses.

Through the US Freedom of Information Act she obtained an MoD document describing the incident as a UFO encounter, and a tape made by US personnel on the spot. She suspects this is misinformation to disguise the testing of a secret military device.

"An MoD scientist told me recently 'You are messing with something so serious you could end up at the bottom of the Thames.' I want to keep pursuing it to the bitter end."

Science and the UFOs is published this week by Basil Blackwell, £12.50.

**People is written
by Stuart Wavell**

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