

U.F.O. PART 4 OF OUR SPINE-CHILLING SPACE SERIES

WHAT WENT BUMP IN THE NIGHT OVER BURNLEY?

IN THE public eye, many UFO reports stand or fall on the reputation of those making them. What that boils down to is this — even the most *credible* witnesses have seen the most *incredible* sights!

That applies exactly to Jack Stuttard. A respected and hard-working head teacher, he knew he had a lot to lose in credibility if he reported what entered his life one night in January 1985. But report it he did.

"At about quarter past nine in the evening, I was in the kitchen of our Burnley home when I heard a 'thud' on the roof, like snow falling on to the kitchen bay," recalls Mr Stuttard. "Thinking it might be youths throwing snowballs from the lane at the back, I went out to take a look.

Unusual

"As I turned towards the lane I noticed a *very* bright light some distance away over the cottage opposite. It was moving slowly towards our house at a height of about five hundred feet."

Mr Stuttard then did a very sensible thing. He called out his wife and three teenage daughters, who were then able to verify the sighting.

At first they wondered if it was just an unusual type of aircraft. It was almost overhead when the light suddenly blinked out, revealing a much more detailed picture.

"It was kite shaped with a flattish bottom," says Mr Stuttard. "In the centre was a large amber/red light, with a green light at each of the four points of the kite. Around the edge of the craft was a row of twinkling blue/green 'fairy' lights."

Jack Stuttard and his family also described several grey triangular "vaness" or "holes" set around the central light. They were amazed when it

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passed over without making a sound, and Jack added that the road on the south side of the house, which is normally quite busy, had become unusually quiet.

This diminishing of natural sounds, or absence of other people or motor vehicles, has been noted many times at the locations of UFO sightings. Top

British ufologist, Jenny Randles, has termed this the "Oz Factor."

Then came an unexpected sequel.

"One of my school staff told me that about quarter past nine she and her husband also heard a 'thud,'" recalled Jack. "They shouted upstairs to their daughter, thinking something had been knocked over, but she said it had come from the roof.

"They went outside but couldn't see anything amiss, although they were more concerned with the roof than the sky above.

"And, guess what, they live almost at the point where I first saw the object."

On behalf of the Manchester UFO Research Association, I wrote to the Aircraft Movements

Office at West Drayton, summarised the case and asked them if any low-flying aircraft had been in the area at that time. There was no reply.

Long shot

It was a long shot anyway. The object, lit up like a Christmas tree, bore no resemblance at all to a conventional aircraft, and no-one has ever invented an engine *that* quiet.

What can we make of "thuds" — noises loud enough to send at least two families out into the snow to investigate?

Could they be similar to the sonic boom of an aircraft — except that *this* plane which made the Burnley bumps in the night may have taken off from a *different* planet!