



*Outlands Lane, Curdrige where the A. A. man saw an oval object in the sky. Fact or fiction?*

again. Its angle of descent gave it the appearance of coming down, but, in fact, it roared on and came down with an almighty crash in the North Sea!

Not so clear cut, though, was the experience of an A.A. Patrolman. He had just finished his shift at 1.00a.m., pulling in to the drive of his home in Outlands Lane, Curdrige near Southampton, when he became aware of a bright glow behind a clump of trees off to his left. Jumping onto the bonnet of his van for a better view, he witnessed a sight that will remain with him for the rest of his life. . .

Very slowly, a brilliant white oval object rose above the trees, hovered momentarily, then, quite deliberately, executed a half turn to the east.

"It definitely appeared to be under some form of control," remembered the Patrolman. "It began to pick up speed as it drew level with my house and suddenly accelerated at a tremendous rate, climbing rapidly as it did so, before finally disappearing out of sight towards Portsmouth." He admitted to being "a little bit scared," at the time and fervently hoped he wasn't the only witness. He wasn't!

The U.F.O. streaked over Portsdown Hill near Portsmouth, where it was seen by a group of friends returning from a late meal, before curving away over the Isle of Wight, where it was seen again. No logical explanation has ever been put forward for this sighting — authorities simply marked it "unidentified".

Over on the Isle of Wight, a nurse and several other resident of the Pan estate at Newport were badly frightened by two huge oval white discs that hovered silently before zooming off at high speed with a sound like thunder. As they roared on, another witness, rushed out of his house to find out what the noise was. He saw a formation of five, silver-grey, oval discs moving away at a phenomenal speed, pausing briefly over Godshill before finally shooting skywards and out of sight.

To say that most U.F.O. reports are greeted with scepticism is a definite understatement, but even the Ministry of Defence were forced to take notice of a report submitted by a Trinity House Pilot concerning a sighting at Ryde on the Isle of Wight.

With his wife, he watched a bright light slowly approach their house and hang suspended at an altitude of 300ft. As it drew closer, it materialised into a rectangular craft, closely resembling a hovercraft without windows. The U.F.O. remained stationary for a few moments before streaking off into space. The results of the Ministry of Defence investigation were never made public! Why?

There's a curious, low-key approach to the U.F.O. phenomenon by most of the World's Governments and ours is no exception. They all seem to have a nonchalant disinterest in the subject, but it's widely believed that all are carrying out serious research.

In 1979 a debate on the subject in the House of Lords was given serious consideration when Lord Clanorby provided proof of the 'cover-up' regarding U.F.O. investigations. He sought to get the Minister of Defence to state publicly his knowledge of U.F.O. activity, as had the French Minister previously. The French Government were the first to admit the existence of U.F.Os and confirmed that serious scientific investigations were under way.

Unfortunately, the official line taken by the Ministry of Defence was not encouraging. They referred to the unlikelihood of spacecraft being able to travel the vast distance between planets, and sought to explain them away as natural phenomena or cases of 'mistaken identity'. In other words, aeroplanes, planets, clouds and that old favourite, ball lightning. So much for the official viewpoint!

It takes courage and self confidence to report a U.F.O. sighting. Witnesses are

usually ridiculed, or worse, misquoted. The A.A. Patrolman from Curdrige, during an interview with an over-enthusiastic investigator, was practically told that he'd seen figures inside the U.F.O. as it flew past. Thanks only to his strong will, an accurate report appeared in the newspapers.

Through this fear of ridicule, a very important encounter in Hampshire nearly went unrecorded. Only a promise not to use the real name of the man involved prompted him to relate the details.

In the early hours of the morning, he was driving along the A32 at Hook, near Basingstoke, when the engine of his van faltered and cut-out. Finding no fault under the bonnet he climbed back into the cab and found, to his relief, that the engine turned over straight away. A few hundred yards further on the van stopped again. This time, as he climbed out, he became aware of a strong smell, similar to burning electricity and noticed a change of pressure on his eardrums. As he walked forward to check the engine again, he saw, motionless in the sky over the road ahead, a dark metallic U.F.O.

As it hovered silently in front of him, the witness took note of its flat, conical shape and estimated its size as approximately 60ft. wide by 30ft. high. For several minutes man and machine remained still, each observing the other, when, without warning, or any noise whatsoever, the U.F.O. began to move off horizontally. Slowly gathering speed, with the moon glinting off its dull surface, it sailed peacefully off towards the west.

Whatever your views on the subject of U.F.Os, there's no denying the possibility of interplanetary travel. Our space exploration programme is moving forward at a tremendous rate, and maybe some startled inhabitant of a distant planet could be filing one of these U.F.O. reports right now as our own 'Voyager' probe sails serenely overhead!