

Squaring up to saucers

Kinsale Diary

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GLANCING through the *Daily Express*, I see that my friend John Dodd has solved to his own satisfaction the mystery of those circular declensions that appear in wheat and barley fields about this time of year and have variously been ascribed to the Earth's geomagnetic field, extra-terrestrial space craft, or jokers let loose from the pub after closing time. John, who lives in Wiltshire, subscribes to the latter theory and in order to prove it borrowed Isobel's clothes line and a couple of friends.

The three between them managed a pretty good simulacrum of a flying saucer landing pad in a quarter of an hour.

I am pursuing enquiries into the same phenomenon here in County Cork. I do not think that the declensions in our own wheat and barley fields can be accounted for by mere blackguardism. There is more to it than that.

I was in the pub at Kilmacsimon last week, admiring the Bandon River through the window when the subject came up.

"Do you know them holes in the fields?" one fellow said very carefully. "I seen it on the *Daily Express*," said another, elderly fellow, evenly and slowly. "Your man is wrong," said the first fellow. "I seen one myself only last week and 'twas not done with a rope." "Is that a fact?" said the old fellow. "'Twas not done with a rope because 'twas square," said the other, sipping his pint. "'Twas perfectly square," he added, with great deliberation.

He let this sink in. Of course you could not produce a square declension with a rope. You would need something, well, *square*, to do that, like a square geomagnetic field or a square flying saucer. It could well be that Irish flying saucers are square. Why not?

The old fellow remarked that it was many years since he had seen a proper *sheegwee*, a "fairy wind". These were small whirlwinds which started up on calm hot days in the middle of nowhere.

Such was the force of these winds, he said, that they would take stooks of straw and send them flying over the telegraph poles and into the river. But they were never seen now. More is the pity. We have been abandoned by the fairies.

