

Close encounters of the blurred kind . . .

HAVE you been abducted by aliens, recently?

According to "flying saucer" investigator Jenny Randles, you might have been whisked into a spacecraft and never remembered the experience.

If it was a spacecraft. If it was a real experience.

Let's begin at the beginning, which is what Jenny Randles hardly ever does in her usually sensible but irritatingly rambling book *The Pennine UFO Mystery* (Granada £1.50).

As readers of the *Telegraph* & *Argus* will be only too well aware the Pennines area (including Bradford) had been fertile ground for recent UFO sightings, especially, for some reason during November 1980 and the summer and autumn of 1981.

Silent lights explained

A pulsating white ball was seen to rise above the trees at Wyke Woods; above Woodside estate a whole string of lights moved in a jerky fashion across the sky than vanished in a blinding flash of light; a golden triangle with a dark centre appeared to descend behind powerlines at Hipperholme; at Scammonden Dam a brilliant white light moved across the sky, halted, pulsating, then shot off across the sky to disappear in seconds.

"It was strange, I felt so calm and so peaceful," reported the observer.

Jenny Randles seizes upon this feeling of other-worldliness or unaccountable time-lapses which crop up again and again in reports of UFOs. Is it a vital clue to the mystery?

It needs to be said that Jenny Randles is no UFO-nut. She is Director of Investigations of the British UFO Research Association whose Manchester branch went to a great deal of trouble to prove (at least to their own satisfaction) that reports of silent multiple lights in the sky were in fact aircraft which were gliding in against all the rules with their navigation lights switched off.

So her account of the puzzling case of Todmorden policeman Alan Godfrey carries more weight. On November 28, 1980, PC Godfrey was nearing the end of his night duty at 5.5 a.m. when he saw what at first he thought was a well-lit bus.

He drove his Panda car to within 100ft. of the thing and stopped, amazed. It was dome shaped, 20ft. across, 14ft. high and hovering 5ft. above the road. Two thirds of the way up was a line of five windows contrasting darkly with the bright fluorescence of the object. Though frightened, he made a sketch. The next thing he knew, the object was gone and he was 100 yards further down the road.

Later he recalled hearing a voice in his head which had said: "You should not be seeing this. This is not for your eyes".

A pain in the head

The UFO investigators persuaded him to be hypnotised by two highly-regarded experts, neither of whom were told anything in advance of the nature of the incident.

Under hypnosis, PC Godfr-

recalled that he was carried into a room, presumably inside the "flying saucer". He was met by a bearded man wearing a skullcap and a white sheet, whom he referred to as Joseph, who was accompanied by what seemed to be eight three/four-foot-high robots.

He was placed on a bed-like table of black leather and examined. When he tried to look at one of the machines there was a sudden pain in his head. Bracelets were attached to his right arm and left leg and plugged in, and he was asked questions. He then awoke in his car.

His story is so banal, it is incredible, and yet he clearly believes it. The whole hypnotic session could easily be dismissed as a particularly vivid dream, except that it mirrors so closely the accounts of many other people "abducted by aliens."

Is it clear evidence, then, that the aliens have landed and are closely observing us without being too obvious about it?

Jenny Randles, to her credit, isn't as keen as some of her colleagues to opt for science-fiction solutions.

She suggests there are two separate but linked phenomena at work. The bright, ball-shaped lights appear to be true physical objects, often seen in connection with powerlines or reservoirs which suggests an electrical origin.

Perhaps they emit some form of radiation or energy which affects the consciousness of observers, and is picked up by people who are particularly sensitive — or psychic.

It causes them to hallucinate, so that they conjure up little playlets in-

volving aliens and glittering spacecraft, memories which appear totally real, even under hypnosis.

The suggestion has much to commend it. The deeper one explores the puzzle of UFOs, the greater the similarity there is with other so-called psychic phenomenon — ghosts, water divining, precognition, telepathy, spiritualism. It would also explain why several groups of people in Lancashire reported seeing a vast spacecraft flying overhead, while other people at the same time saw absolutely nothing.

Battles in the sky

It may be significant that people in earlier years have reported UFOs in forms which were familiar to them. In medieval times there were fiery crosses and battles in the sky; at the beginning of the century it was cigar-shaped flying ships, in the twenties phantom aeroplanes; now it is "flying saucers" and aliens with pointed chins and almond-shaped eyes.

I am not going to pretend there aren't holes in Jenny Randles' hypothesis. It does not explain why extraordinarily similar reports come in from all parts of the world, from a huge variety of cultures; nor why reports seem to come in waves.

But she clarifies the issue in two ways. She insists, quite rightly, that unidentified aerial objects do exist; that there is a case to answer. And she tries to guide us away from the too-marvellous, too-seductive option of believing in beings from the stars. There could be another answer.