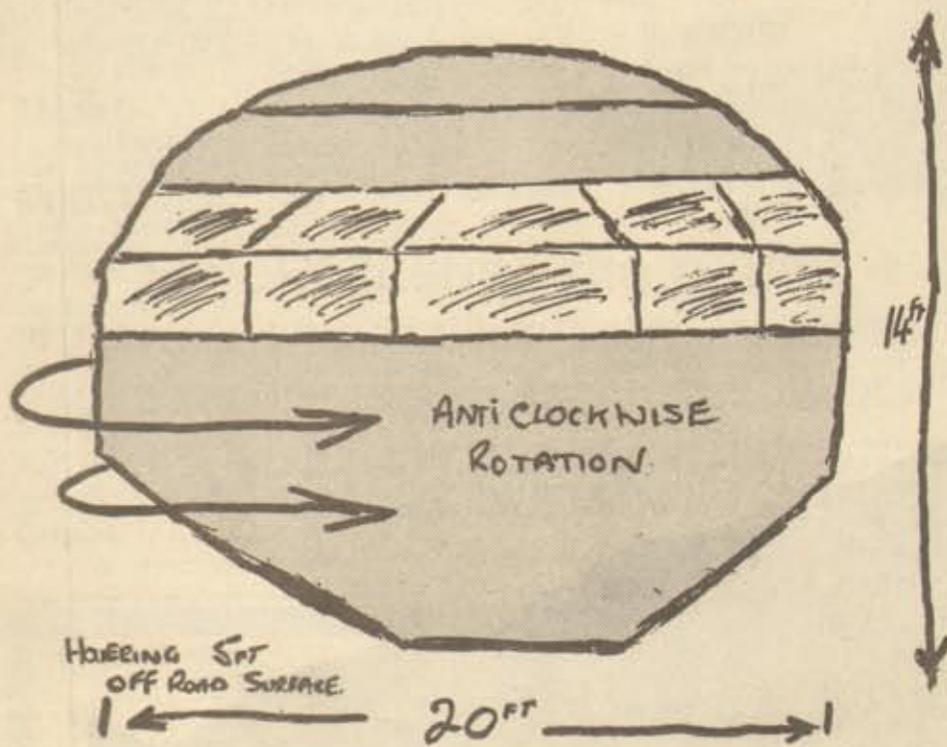


A SUNDAY EXPRESS INVESTIGATION INTO CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

over a country lane, suspicious object that baffled a policeman



A policeman's amazing evidence (left) ... the sketch Alan Godfrey made in 1980 after observing a metallic, diamond-shaped U.F.O.

blue ball of light to the north. The time was 04.49. Pulsing in a slow rhythmic throb, it had grown in size and moved in arcs and zig-zags across the sky. It had eventually disappeared in the direction of ... Todmorden.

Alan Godfrey reckoned he had first sighted it hovering over the Burnley Road, soon after 05.10.

The cows—they were bullocks—were found next morning across the road in Centre Vale Park. Animal distress, Godfrey was to discover, was typical of the U.F.O. phenomenon.

"Amazing encounter in Calder Valley," was the headline in the local paper a week after the sighting. Godfrey had been encouraged by his superiors to tell his story to the Press. If the intention was to end speculation, it only achieved the opposite.

His brief period of fame was succeeded by years of notoriety. The kindest thing the West Yorkshire force did for him was to grant him an invalid's

pension in 1984, for his injuries in that assault seven years before.

"When you've had an encounter such as I had," says Godfrey, "it changes your whole outlook on life. Not in a religious sense, but you're completely and utterly changed."

"Things happen to you that you wouldn't believe could happen beforehand. The whole structure of your life is undermined. All because of an incident, faithfully reported, which lasted in my case no more than two or three minutes, so far as my conscious memory recalls."

VIVID

What of his subconscious? Efforts to regress under hypnosis have aggravated rather than eliminated his confusion. His conscious memory, however, the moment when he changed his mind about turning right into Ferney Lee Road and drove on to investigate, stopping short of the object and sketching it, remains as vivid as ever.

"All I can say," he says today, happily installed in a congenial job in Todmorden, "is that I know what I saw."

reckoned it was about 20 feet wide and 14 feet high. It had chosen a spot where a drive-in to the car park of the old Mons Mill—a massive seven-storey structure standing back from the road—provided an extended hardstanding.

If what he was looking at was some kind of hovercraft, it must have been manoeuvred over the mill and the engine-room chimney that towered above it, avoiding the hills and the trees, with extraordinary skill. All this in darkness apart from the street lights, on a night when it had been raining. The more he thought about it, the more mind-boggling it became.

MISSING

His incredulity turned to alarm when he suddenly realised that somehow, his car was now a hundred yards further down the road, way past where the object had hovered. And when he got out and looked back ... it was gone.

How had he got where he was? Had he been dreaming? He did not believe it. And there was his sketch-board to prove it. He drove back to the station, impatient to report what he'd seen.

He was surprised when he got there to find that the time was 05.30. He didn't realise he had been away so long. He began to wonder what had happened to the missing minutes. Had

he suffered some sort of time-lapse, for which his memory was blank?

He expected his colleagues to be sceptical, but he was unprepared for their scoffing. Even when he took two of them back to the spot, and showed them how leaves and twigs under the object had swirled into a circle, they regarded him quizzically.

They were no more impressed when he pointed out that whereas the road either side was still glistening wet, the site itself was patchily dry. They looked up at the trees and attributed dry patches to them.

He did not resent their ribbing—he knew he would have reacted the same, and he laughed. But rather than attract further ridicule, he went off duty without making a report.

When he took off his nearly-new boots he noticed that the left one was split open across the ball of the foot. On his left instep was a small burn, which the doctor later diagnosed as a skin infection, possibly brought on by shock. He had never had such an infection before. He was to learn that such marks were characteristic of U.F.O. encounters.

Back on duty that night,

he was chuffed by the off-going shift. He was not sorry when he was called in to see the inspector.

"Tell me what you saw," said the man.

Godfrey told him, and the Inspector's reaction surprised him. He didn't laugh.

STOLEN

"I want you to get on to Bradford," he said, "and make an abbreviated report. They'll telex it to the Ministry of Defence." This was the routine with U.F.O. sightings.

Godfrey went back to the outer office and rang Bradford. "I want to report an unidentified flying object I encountered in Todmorden last night."

"This isn't the one at Halifax then."

"Halifax? Was there one at Halifax?"

"We sent a telex last night from three police officers based at Halifax who'd had an encounter. Is this something different?"

"This was at Todmorden." He was beginning to see why the inspector hadn't laughed.

Three Halifax officers, scouring the moors north-east of Todmorden looking for stolen goods after a tip-off, had seen a steel-



NEXT WEEK: WITNESSES TO A U.F.O. LANDING