

Close encounters of the Wiltshire kind

THE WHITE HOLES of Westbury — mysterious patterns in a Wiltshire cornfield revealed in the Express as a possible UFO landing site—baffled most of Britain yesterday.

But the eighth Earl of Clancarty was far from surprised.

Said the peer who chairs the House of Lords all-party UFO Study Group:

"The marks are fascinating, suggesting something has landed there, and perhaps this does accord with the theory of the ley lines.

Ley lines are claimed to be lines of electro-magnetic energy, reckoned to be the courses by which UFOs steer, in much the same way as a jet pilot works from beacon to beacon.

Ley lines

"Lots of ancient churches are on ley lines," says Lord Clancarty, "and so, of course, is Warminster."

Warminster, heart of the Warminster Triangle and a few miles south of Westbury, is famed for UFO sightings and encounters with the supernatural.

It is a reputation which survives despite the cynics who point out that army exercises on Salisbury Plain are just around the corner.

The legend was born one evening in 1964 when troops at Knook, four miles from the town, were awakened by a thunderclap followed by a pounding, and villagers nearby



Lord Clancarty:
Not surprised

later heard clatterings and hummings.

The "Warminster Thing" was really born in 1965. Pigeons fell from the air, dead mice were found with tiny holes in their corpses, and high pitched droning in the night sky left pets cowering in fear.

More than 430 unexplained "sightings" have been recorded in the area, many by people with binoculars on Cradle Hill, outside the town.

But has the UFO link now become so strong in the area that many people now imagine they are seeing the

supernatural, even though there may be a perfectly rational explanation?

Jenny Randles, director of investigations at the British Unidentified Flying Object Research Association, is unconvinced that this area of Wiltshire is where the little green men will eventually make their entrance.

She said: "I believe the Westbury markings are not mysterious, but another example of circles which have been noted in cornfields in July and August, especially since the 1960s.

"We believe they are caused by whirlwinds or tornadoes.

Real puzzle

"But because they are in Wiltshire everybody is convinced they are flying saucer nests."

One real puzzle is a sharp recent drop in UFO sightings—down from 500 in 1978 to around 100 today. But where barely one in 10 cases used to be deemed "interesting," now 20 or 30 are examined closely.

Says Mrs. Randles: "We get reports of 'close encounters' where people claim some contact with the extra-terrestrial; seeing a spaceship, or aliens.

"We also get UAP — Unidentified Atmospheric Phenomena. These can be physical in appearance, leaving marks on the ground or burns on the skin.

"Some geophysical process is taking place producing an increase in radio-activity which can damage people's health or cause radiation sickness."

AN OUT OF THIS
WORLD EXCLUSIVE

Is this
where a
UFO
landed?

From yesterday's Express