

Transcript of Col. Halt's tape

Transcribed by
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ON OTHER PAGES This is a transcript of the cassette tape recording made by Lt. Col. Charles Halt on the night of the second sighting of the Rendlesham Forest UFO, i.e. the early hours of 1980 December 28. (The first sighting had been in the early hours of December 26, in which Halt was not involved.) Halt made the recording on a hand-held Lanier micro-cassette recorder which he carried for note-taking. There are many gaps and jumps in the recording as he switched the machine on and off.

- ▶ Read my step-by-step analysis of Col. Halt's tape As Halt explained in an episode of The UFO Hunters first broadcast in 2008: "The tapes are 20 minutes in duration, so there's no way I could have kept the tape running the whole time. I must have stopped that tape a hundred times. I was going click-click-click-click the whole time we were out there because I didn't want to run out of tape."

- ▶ Col Halt's affidavit of 2010 - a disastrous attempt to rewrite history Although the tape itself lasts just over 18 minutes it covers activities spanning a period of hours. Those familiar with the case will recognize certain differences between the descriptions on the tape and Col. Halt's more recent recollections from memory.

- ▶ Was the flashing light really the lighthouse? **To set the scene:** On the night of Saturday, 1980 December 27 Lt Col Halt was at an officers' dinner at RAF Woodbridge when Lt Bruce Englund came in and said: "The UFO is back". A group of men had reportedly seen unexplained lights in the forest, although we have no first-hand accounts from these witnesses, unlike with the witnesses on the first night. Halt returned to his quarters at RAF Bentwaters to change and joined the group out in the forest some time after midnight on December 28. The investigation initially focused on the supposed landing marks that had been found on the morning of December 26. Not until two-thirds of the way through the tape is an unidentified flashing light sighted (bottom of page 2 of this transcript).
- ▶ What were the other lights seen by Col. Halt?
- ▶ Were the radiation readings significant?
- ▶ Where was the landing site?
- ▶ What were the landing marks?

- ▶ Why did the airmen think that something had landed in the forest? **Who is heard on the tape?** Throughout the events recorded on the tape, it is Bruce Englund who is guiding Halt around the site and he is also the person who first points out the flashing light. Englund himself has never gone on record about the events of that night. As well as Halt and Englund, the main character heard on the tape is Sergeant Monroe Nevels, who was operating the geiger counter. Nevels was a Chemical Defense Instructor in Disaster Preparedness, not a nuclear specialist, and his unfamiliarity with the equipment he is using becomes apparent on the tape. One other airman referred to by name is "Bob" (Sergeant Bobby Ball).

- ▶ Was it a hoax that got out of hand?
- ▶ Was the UFO detected on radar? Col Halt has helped clarify certain exchanges and identify the voices for me, so this is the nearest we are likely to get to an "authorized" version, and I am grateful to him for his assistance. However, I should add that Col Halt does not subscribe to my overall interpretation of the case.

HOW AND WHEN WAS THE HALT TAPE RELEASED?

Copies of Halt's tape recording were first released to UFO researchers in 1984 by Col Sam Morgan, who was successor to Col Ted Conrad as base commander and Halt's superior. However, the tape did not enter general circulation until 1985, after I had first published [my explanation of the case](#).

Col Morgan had found the tape in a desk when he took over as base commander in mid 1981. Although he had been on the base at the time of the incident as Assistant Chief of Maintenance for the A-10 aircraft, Morgan had not heard of the events before.

He spoke to Halt and the UK base commander Don Moreland and decided, as he told American researcher Phil Klass in 1984, that it was "just a bunch of guys screwing around in the woods".

That, I think, is a fitting epitaph for the Rendlesham Forest UFO case.

Listen to the tape: You can hear the tape for yourself [here](#) (2.1 MB download, MP3 format). The recording is from a copy of the original tape made by Col Halt who simply placed a microphone in front of a loudspeaker; as a result, various background noises can be heard in the room, including Halt's own voice. This copy was kindly supplied to me by Col Sam Morgan, who succeeded Col Ted Conrad as Halt's superior officer about six months after the event (thanks to Peter Brookesmith for the contact).

Detailed analysis: In this transcript I have added notes in a few places to clarify what is being said or to draw attention to points of interest. For my complete analysis of the events on the tape, see [here](#).

HALT: 150 feet or more from the initial, or I should say suspected, impact point. Having a little difficulty; can't get the Light-all to work. Seems to be some kind of mechanical problem. Gonna send back and get another Light-all. Meantime we're gonna take some readings with the geiger counter and chase around the area a little bit waiting for another Light-all to come back in. [IAN's NOTE: For more on the geiger counter and a discussion of the significance of the radiation readings, see [here](#).]

GARBLED SECURITY COMMUNICATION AND BACKGROUND VOICES (includes: "Six... Sergeant Bustinza Security Control... that's mark one of the pod... pod number...")

HALT: OK, we're now approaching the area within about 25, 30 feet. What kind of readings are we getting? Anything?

NEVELS: Just minor clicks.

HALT: Minor clicks.

[BACKGROUND VOICE IN THE ROOM, APPARENTLY HALT'S]

HALT: Where are the impressions? Is that all the bigger they are?

ENGLUND: Well, there's one more well-defined over here.

SECURITY COMMUNICATION: Sergeant Bustinza – Security Control.

HALT: We're still getting clicks.

NEVELS: ...getting clicks...

SECURITY COMMUNICATION (includes "Sergeant Bustinza... We're outta gas...Security-6 boarding...East Gate").

HALT: Can you read that on the scale?

NEVELS: Yes, sir. We're now on the five-tenths scale, and we're reading about third, fourth make [? – perhaps he meant to say "mark"] over...

HALT: OK, we're still comfortably safe here.

RADIO COMMUNICATION (BUSTINZA?): Do you happen to have a Light-all?

GARBLED SECURITY COMMUNICATION (Includes: "East Gate security... Security Six... have a light-all with gas...please.")

HALT: Still minor readings, the second pod indentation...

BACKGROUND SECURITY COMMUNICATION.

NEVELS: Nope.

HALT: This one's dead. Let's go over to the third one over here.

BACKGROUND SECURITY COMMUNICATION: Sergeant Bustinza...

NEVELS: Yes, now I'm getting some residual.

HALT: I can read it now. The meter's definitely giving a little pulse.

ENGLUND: ... about the centre ...

HALT: I was gonna say let's go to the centre of the area next and see what kind of a reading we get out there. You're reading the clicks, I can't hear the clicks. That about the centre, Bruce?

ENGLUND: Yes.

HALT: OK, let's go to the centre.

NEVELS: Yes, I'm getting more...

HALT: That's the best deflection of the needle I've seen yet. OK, can you give me an estimation. We're on the point five scale...we're getting...have trouble reading...

ENGLUND: At approximately 01.25 hours...

NEVELS: We're getting right at a half of a millirem.

[BURST OF PIANO MUSIC – this is actually Col Halt's daughter playing and is an accidental over-recording]

HALT: ...best point. I don't seen it go any higher.

VOICE (BALL?): It's still flying around.

HALT: OK, we'll go out toward the...

NEVELS: Now it's picking up.

HALT: This is out toward the number one indentation where we first got the strongest reading. Yeah, it's similar to what we got in the centre.

NEVELS: ...right in the pod, it's right near the centre.

ENGLUND: This looks like an area here possibly that could be a blast...it's in the centre of the triangle...

HALT: It's hard to tell... Here take this, my fingers [are] about to freeze.

ENGLUND: ...up towards seven...Just jumped up towards seven tenths.

HALT: Seven tenths? Right there in the centre?

ENGLUND: Uh huh. [IAN'S NOTE: this is the second time they have checked the centre; no 'jump' in the readings was mentioned the first time.]

HALT: We found a small blast – what looks like a blasted or scuffed-up area here. We're getting very positive readings. Let's see, is that near the centre?

ENGLUND: Yes, it is. This is what we would assume would be the dead centre.

NEVELS: Picking up more as you go along – the whole area here now...

A FEW CLICKS ARE AUDIBLE.

HALT: Up to seven tenths? Or seven units, let's call it, on the point five scale. OK, why don't we do this: why don't we make a sweep – here, I've got my gloves on now – let's make a sweep out around the whole area about ten foot out, make a perimeter run around it, starting right back here at the corner, back at the same first corner where we came in, let's go right back here. I'm gonna have to depend on you counting the clicks.

NEVELS: Right.

HALT: OK, let's...

NEVELS: I'll tell you as it gets louder...

HALT: ...then I can put the light on it and sweep around it.

VOICE: (Unintelligible)

HALT: Put it on the ground every once in a while.

ENGLUND: This looks like an abrasion on the tree...

HALT: OK, we'll catch that on the way back, let's go around. Move back. Hit it, then [there?].

ENGLUND: We're getting interest right over here. It looks like an abrasion pointing into the centre of the...

HALT: It is.

ENGLUND: ...landing area.

HALT: It may be old, though – there's some sap marks or something on it. Let's go on back around. All right?

NEVELS: ...give some extension on it...

HALT: Hey, this is an awkward thing to use isn't it?

NEVELS (indistinct): ...carry...about my ears, but this one broke...

HALT: Are we getting anything further? I'm going to shut the recorder off until we find something.

[IAN'S NOTE: Another remark to suggest that Halt is still not greatly impressed by what they have found so far. Note that there has been no mention of the UFO which Halt was originally called out to investigate.]

NEVELS: Picking up good.

HALT: Picking up? What are we up to? We're up to two, three units deflection, you're getting in close to one pod.

NEVELS: Picking up some here...picking up.

HALT: OK, it's still not going above three or four units.

NEVELS: Picking up more, though – more frequent. Closer together.

HALT: Yes, you're staying steady up around two to three to four units now.

ENGLUND: Colonel Halt?

HALT: Yeah.

ENGLUND: Each one of these trees that face into the blast, what we assume is the landing site, all have an abrasion facing in the same direction, towards the centre, the same...

HALT: That's interesting. Let's go the rest of the way around the circle here. Turn it back down here.

NEVELS: Picking up some...

VOICE (ENGLUND?): ...collection[?]

HALT: Let me see that....that's got a funny...that's... You're right about the abrasion. I've never seen a tree that's er...

VOICE (indistinct): ...small sap marks...

HALT: ... never seen a pine tree that's been damaged react that fast.

NEVELS: ...you got a bottle to put that in.

HALT: You got a sample bottle?

VOICES: (indistinct, includes the word 'soil')

SOUNDS AS THOUGH THEY ARE TAKING SAMPLES

HALT: Here, sit yourself down...

VOICE (BALL?): You'll notice they're all at the same height.

HALT: From now on, let's identify that as point number one – that stake there. So you all know where it is if we have to sketch it. You got that, Sergeant Nevels?

NEVELS: Yessir.

HALT: OK.

VOICE: Closest to the Woodbridge...

HALT: Closest to the Woodbridge base...

VOICE: Be point one?

HALT: Be point one. [WHISTLING OR SCREECHING NOISE IN BACKGROUND.] Let's go clockwise from there.

VOICE: Point two...

HALT: Point two.

BALL: Go ahead, Ed[?]

HALT: So this tree is between point two and point three.

SECURITY COMMUNICATION: "(indistinct) ...Burroughs and two other personnel requesting to ride 'em[?] on a jeep at your location"

BALL: Tell them negative at this time. We'll tell them when they can come out here. We don't want them out here right now.

HALT: The sample...you're going to mark this sample number one...

NEVELS: Yes, sir.

HALT: Have them cut it off, and include some of that sap and all...is between indentation two and three on a pine tree about five feet away, about three and a half feet off the ground.

NEVELS (faint): Put it in here. I've got some more...

HALT: There's a round abrasion on the tree about three and a half, four inches in diameter...it looks like it might be old, but, er...strange, there's a crystalline...pine sap that has come out that fast. You say there was other trees here that are damaged in a similar fashion?

ENGLUND: Yes, all facing in toward the centre of the landing site...

HALT: OK, why don't you take a picture of that and remember your picture, we ain't gonna be writing this down. Oh, it's gonna be on the tape.

ENGLUND: You got a tape measure with you?

HALT: This is the picture, your first picture will be at the first tree, the one between mark two and three. Meantime I'm gonna look at a couple other of these trees over here.

NEVELS: We are getting some...

HALT: You're getting readings on the tree you're taking samples from on the side facing the suspected landing site.

ENGLUND: Four clicks max.

HALT: Up to four. Interesting. That's right where you're taking the sample now. Four? That's the strongest point on the tree?

NEVELS: Yessir. And if you come to the back...there's no clicks whatsoever.

HALT: No clicks at all on the back – it's all on the...

NEVELS: ...maybe one or two...

HALT: ...side facing the...interesting. The indentations look like something twisted as it dropped... you know, as it sat down on them. Looks like someone took something and sat it down and twisted it from side to side. Very strange.

HALT: We're looking at the same tree we took the sample off with this – what d'you call it – Starscope?

ENGLUND: Uh huh, starlight scope.

[IAN'S NOTE: The starlight scope was an image intensifier, or night-vision scope. They were using a first-generation type known as the AN/PVS-2. Credit to John Burroughs for the research.]

HALT: And you're getting...getting a definite heat reflection off the tree about, what, three to four feet off the ground?

ENGLUND: Yes, where the spot is...

HALT: Same place where the spot is, we're getting a heat...

BALL: ...and a spot on the tree directly behind us I picked up the same thing, and one off to your right.

ENGLUND: All right, let me...

HALT: Three trees in the area, immediately adjacent to the site, within ten feet of the suspected landing site, we're picking up heat reflection off the trees.

ENGLUND: Gimme light, Bob.

HALT: What's that again?

ENGLUND: Shine the light on it again, Bob. [Bobby Ball]

HALT: What, are you having trouble...(indistinct)

ENGLUND: (indistinct)...right on the spot, and then when you want...

HALT: OK, turn the light off.

ENGLUND: ...you'll notice the white....

[A high-pitched electronic whine is audible on the tape at this point, presumably emitted by the Starscope]

HALT [apparently now using the Starscope for himself]: Hey! You're right. There is a white streak on the tree.

ENGLUND: Indicates a heat...

HALT: Let me turn around and look at this tree over here now. Just a second – watch, 'cos you're right in front of the tree. I can see it. OK, give me a little side lighting so I can find the tree. OK. Ah...

SECURITY COMMUNICATION: Alpha Two, security.

HALT: Now I've lost the tree. OK. Stop, stop. Light off! Hey this is eerie.

VOICE (BALL?): Why don't you do the pod spots and then the centre?

HALT: This is strange. Here, someone wanna look at the spots on the ground? Whoops, watch you don't step...you're walking all over 'em.

[Background sound like a vehicle hooter]

HALT: OK, let's step back and not walk all over 'em. Come back here and somebody put a beam on 'em. You're gonna have to be back ten or fifteen feet. You see it?

VOICE (BALL?): OK, fine.

HALT: OK, lights off.

[VOICE ON TAPE, OVER-RECORDED: "he took this long to document..."]

HALT: What d'you think about the spot? [LONG PAUSE] Nothing[?] at the first spot? OK, that's what we'd call spot number three. Let's go to the back corner and get spot number one. Spot number one, here's spot number one right here. Spot number one, right here. D'you need some light? There it is, right there. Focused?

VOICE (BALL?): Focused.

HALT: OK. Looking now at spot number one through the Starlight scope.

BALL(?): Picking up a slight increase in light as I go over it.

HALT: Slight increase in light at spot number one. Let's go look at spot number two. Spot number two's right over here. Right here – see it? OK, get focused on it. Tell me when. OK, lights off, let's see what we get on it.

BALL(?): Slight increase.

HALT: Just a slight increase?

BALL(?): Try the centre.

HALT: The centre spot...well it really isn't the centre, it's slightly off centre. It's right there.

BALL(?): Right here.

ENGLUND(?): Let's mark that as the centre...

HALT: OK. We're gonna get your reading on it right there.

VOICE (BALL?): OK.

HALT: Tell me when you're ready.

BALL(?): Ready.

HALT: OK, lights out. It's the centre spot we're looking at now, or almost the centre.

BALL(?): Slight increase.

HALT: Slight increase there? This is slightly off centre toward the one-two side. It's some type of an abrasion or something in the ground where the pine needles are all pushed back where we get a high radioactive reading... er, a high reading, about, er... deflection of, er, two to three, maybe four, depending on the point of it.

BALL(?): Someone wanna check it?

ENGLUND: Yes.

HALT: You say there is a positive after-effect?

ENGLUND: Yes, there is, definitely. That's on the centre spot. There is an after-effect.

NEVELS: What does that mean?

ENGLUND: It means that when the lights are turned off, once we are focused in and allow time for the eyes to adjust we are getting an indication of a heat source coming out of that centre spot, as er, which will show up on...

HALT: Heat or some form of energy. It's hardly heat at this stage of the game.

HALT: Looking directly overhead one can see an opening in the trees, plus some freshly broken pine branches on the ground underneath. Looks like some of 'em came off about 15 to 20 feet up. Some small branches about an inch or less in diameter.

HALT: 01.48. We're hearing very strange sounds out of the farmer's barnyard animals.

ENGLUND: (Indistinct – sounds like "28...7")

HALT: They're very, very active, making an awful lot of noise.

[IAN'S NOTE: The farm next to the forest is an arable farm, and there were no "barnyard animals". The "strange sounds" Halt mentions, which were also reported by John Burroughs on Night One, probably came from animals in the forest, most likely the small type of deer known as muntjac deer.]

ENGLUND: (indistinct – possibly "wasn't a") ...pigmentation.

HALT: You just saw a light? Where? Wait a minute. Slow down. Where?

ENGLUND: Right on this position here. Straight ahead, in between the trees – there it is again. Watch – straight ahead, off my flashlight there, sir. There it is.

[IAN'S NOTE: The UFO at last! The time interval between "There it is again...there it is" is 5 seconds, the flash rate of the Orford Ness lighthouse. For a video clip of the lighthouse flashing at night as seen from the forest, click [here](#).]

[IAN'S NOTE: The story so far – having been called out to investigate the return of a flashing UFO that was first sighted two nights earlier in Rendlesham Forest, Col Halt has spent all his time up to now examining some supposed "landing marks" left by the craft on its earlier visit. Only now have his men finally drawn attention to the light they had called him out to see in the first place. From here on the pace picks up, but there are longer breaks in the recording.]

HALT: I see it, too. What is it?

ENGLUND: We don't know, sir.

NEVELS: Can I get some of those...(?)

[IAN'S NOTE: It seems that Nevels may have temporarily handed over the geiger counter to someone else at this point, as a different voice, seemingly that of England, calls out the next few meter readings.]

HALT: It's a strange, small red light, looks to be maybe a quarter to a half mile, maybe further out. I'm gonna switch off.

HALT: The light is gone now. It was approximately 120 degrees from the site...

ENGLUND: It's back again.

HALT: Is it back again?

ENGLUND: Yes, sir.

HALT: Well douse flashlights then. Let's go back to the edge of the clearing so we can get a better look at it. See if you can get the Starscope on it. The light's still there and all the barnyard animals have gone quiet now. We're heading about 110, 120 degrees from the site out through to the clearing now, still getting a reading on the meter, about two clicks.

HALT: Needle's jumped, three to four clicks, getting stronger.

ENGLUND: Now it's stopped... Now it's coming up... Hold on. There we go... about approximately four foot off the ground, at a compass heading of 110 degrees.

HALT: He's turned the meter off. Gotta say that again. About four feet off the ground, about 110 degrees, getting a reading of about four clicks?

ENGLUND: Yes, sir. (Sneezes). Now it's dying.

HALT: Now it's dying. I think it's something other than the ground. I think it's something that's...something variable[?].

ENGLUND: (indistinct)...tree right over...

HALT: We've just bumped into the first night bird we've seen. We're about 150 or 200 yards from the site.

VOICE (faintly): Another one[?]

HALT: Everything else is just deathly calm.

HALT: There is no doubt about it – there's some type of strange flashing red light ahead.
[IAN'S NOTE: Halt is the only person to describe the light as red.]

ENGLUND: Sir, it's yellow.

HALT: I saw a yellow tinge in it, too. Weird! It appears to be maybe moving a little bit this way? It's brighter than it has been.

VOICE: Yellow[?].

HALT: It's coming this way. It is definitely coming this way.

VOICE: Pieces of it shooting off...

HALT: Pieces of it are shooting off.

VOICE: At eleven o'clock...

HALT: There is no doubt about it. This is weird!

VOICE (NEVELS?): To the left...

HALT: Definitely moving...

VOICE (NEVELS?): Two lights – one light just behind [?] and one light to the left.

HALT: Keep your flashlights off. There's something very, very strange. Get the headset on, see if it gets any stronger.

NEVELS: I have.

HALT: OK. Give us your...

NEVELS: ...make a notation that this is on a beta reading, too...
[IAN'S NOTE: They pronounce it "bayta", the American way.]

HALT: It's on a beta reading?

NEVELS: The beta shield has been removed.

HALT: OK. Pieces are falling off it again.

ENGLUND: Sir, it just moved to the right...

HALT: Yeah!

ENGLUND: ...off to the right.

HALT: Strange! One again left[?] Let's approach to the edge of the woods up there. Do you wanna do it without lights? Let's do it carefully. Come on.

HALT: OK, we're looking at the thing, we're probably about two to three hundred yards away. It looks like an eye winking at you. Still moving from side to side. And when you put the Starscope on it, it sort of has a hollow centre, a dark centre, it's...

ENGLUND(?): Like a pupil...

HALT: Yeah, like a pupil of an eye looking at you, winking. And the flash is so bright to the Starscope that it almost burns your eye.

[IAN'S NOTE: The starscope amplified light by about a thousand times and had a magnification of 4 times, so naturally the light appeared much brighter and larger than to the naked eye.]

GARBLED SECURITY COMMUNICATION

HALT: We've passed the farmer's house and are crossing the next field and now we have multiple sightings of up to five lights with a similar shape and all but they seem to be steady now rather than a pulsating or glow with a red flash.

HALT: We've just crossed a creek...

VOICE: Here we go...

HALT: ...and we're getting what kind of readings now?

VOICE: ...clicks...

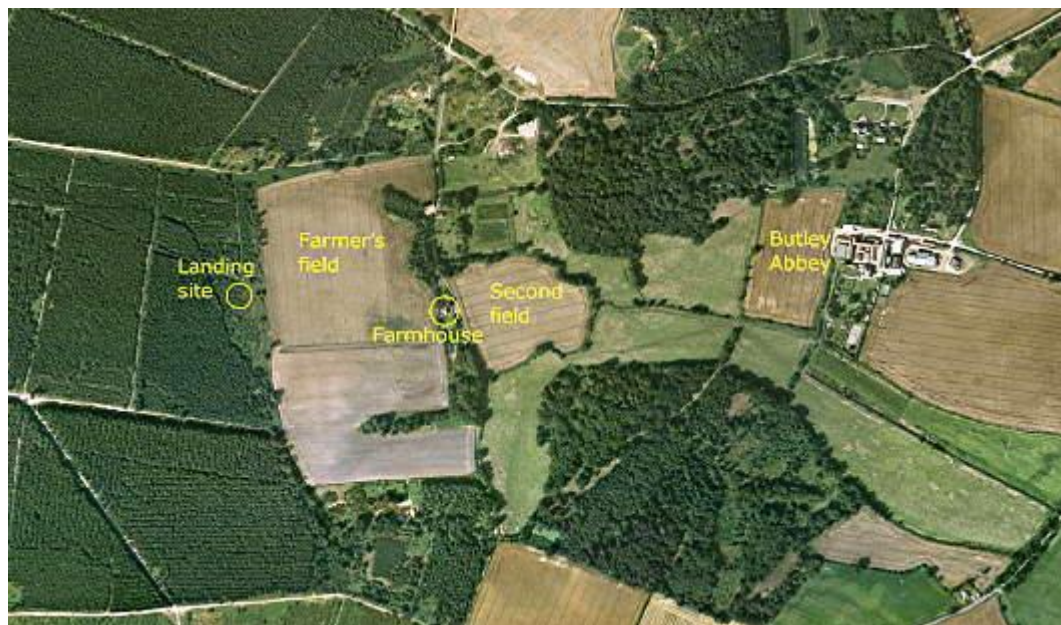
HALT: We're getting three good clicks on the meter and we're seeing strange lights in the sky.

HALT: 2:44. We're at the far side of the farmer's...the second farmer's field and made sighting again about 110 degrees. This looks like it's clear off to the coast. It's right on the horizon. Moves about a bit and flashes from time to time. Still steady or red in colour. Also after negative readings in the centre of the field we're picking up slight readings, four or five clicks now, on the meter.

[IAN'S NOTE: These readings are the same as they reported at the supposed landing site – i.e. normal background.]

Follow Col. Halt's route

Col. Halt's route from the landing site across the field, past the farmhouse and on through the second field can be followed on this aerial view. For a map of the area, click [here](#). The map shows what is apparently the "creek" mentioned by Halt on the eastern side of the second field. The far side of this second field is about half a mile from the supposed landing site.



HALT: 3:05. We see strange strobe-like flashes to the... rather sporadic, but there's definitely something there. Some kind of phenomenon.

HALT: 3:05. At about ten degrees, horizon, directly north, we've got two strange objects, er, half moon shape, dancing about, with coloured lights on 'em. At, er, guess to be about five to ten miles out, maybe less. The half moons have now turned into full circles as though there was an eclipse or something there for a minute or two.

HALT: 03:15. Now we've got an object about 10 degrees directly south, 10 degrees off the horizon.

NEVELS: ... to the left...

HALT: And the ones to the north are moving. One's moving away from us.

BACKGROUND VOICE: (indistinct, but includes "moving")

NEVELS: Moving out fast.

BALL(?): This one on the right's heading away, too.

HALT: They're both heading north. Hey, here he comes from the south, he's coming toward us now.

HALT: Now we're observing what appears to be a beam coming down to the ground.

SHOUT IN BACKGROUND: Colours! [?]

HALT: This is unreal. [Laughs]

[IAN'S NOTE: RAF Watton [logged a call](#) from Bentwaters at 03.25 am on December 28 reporting a UFO. Halt instructed the command post to call them while these sightings were going on, but Watton reported that they saw nothing on radar.]

HALT: 03:30 and the objects are still in the sky, although the one to the south looks like it's losing a little bit of altitude. We're turning around and heading back toward the base.

HALT: The object to the south is still beaming down lights to the ground.

HALT: 04:00 hours. One object still hovering over Woodbridge base at about five to ten degrees off the horizon, still moving erratic and similar lights and beaming down as earlier.

Duration of tape: 18 minutes 12 seconds

Content last updated: 2011 January