

BUFORA

UFO NEWSFILE

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Lift-off for £1m UFO hunt

By DOMINIC MARTIAN
UFO Correspondent

EUROCRATS are set to spend an out-of-this-world £1million of taxpayers' money — to look for UFOs.

The plan has been approved by the EC's Energy Commission.

That means a six-figure sum looks likely to be handed over to boffins at the French Toulouse Space Monitoring Centre.

The idea is the brain-child of Italian MEP Tullio Regge who feels the centre is underfunded.

He wants EC scientists to collate all European sightings of UFOs.

UFO experts at the centre search for spaceships through hi-tech telescopes and investigate sightings.

Mr Norman West, Labour MEP for Yorkshire South, said: "No one is really taking this seriously.

"A lot of crazy things happen across the water but it certainly won't get backing from the British Labour group."

UFO expert Jenny Randles said: "It could be a great idea."

Japan and America already have similar set-ups.

Sunday Mirror 22.06.94

It's not unusual

PEOPLE who think they have seen a UFO are neither potty nor particularly unusual, reports the Journal of Abnormal Psychology. Researchers compared the personality profiles of UFO observers with those without extraterrestrial experience and found that people who are convinced they have seen unidentified flying objects are pretty average without any tendencies towards hallucinations.

Evening News 08.06.94

Hit finances UFO hobby

TROGGS STAR Reg Presley is over the moon after earning £1 million from the soundtrack of the film Four Weddings and a Funeral—and he's spending the cash on investigating UFOs.

"Wild Thing" Reg will use the royalties from Wet Wet Wet's cover version of his song Love Is All Around to examine crop circles he believes are made by alien spacecraft.

Presley heard yesterday that the song he penned in the 1960s was at number one in the pop charts. Reg said, "I want to film the crop circles from the air and it costs money to send up helicopters, so I'll use part of the royalty money on my hobby.

"If the film goes phenomenally—and it's looking that way—I reckon I could earn up to £1 million. I don't necessarily need the money, but I'm very happy to have it."

The hit song has taken America by storm and the film is making leading man Hugh Grant a star.

Reg, who still lives in his home town of Andover, Hants, with wife Brenda, said of his four-year obsession with crop circles, "Most of the crop circles are hoaxes, but 25% of them aren't. There have been airborne phenomena seen above crop circles. There may be other explanations, but I have to say that I think some are due to extraterrestrials making them," said the singer, who has almost finished a book on such circles.

Courier &

Advertiser 22.05.94

Earthling rescue mission launched

By ROSALEEN
MACBRAYNE
in Tauranga

A retired Tauranga man, Mr Harvey Cooke, has formed a four-member support group for those who have been abducted by aliens — and brought back to Earth, often pregnant.

After nearly 40 years studying UFOs and extra-terrestrial matters, Mr Cooke says those who have had otherworldly experiences need counselling and hypnotherapy to get over the trauma.

He estimates that about 3000 New Zealanders have been kidnapped by spacemen who, he reckons, want to breed with Earthlings to create a hybrid race.

Although never having been carried off himself, Mr Cooke is well informed on what happens to those who are and can give graphic descriptions of the ET-like creatures.

He says the alien invaders usually prefer young women. Unbeknown to family and friends, they are spirited off for a couple of hours.

Often, the kidnapers impregnate their victims artificially before returning them to where they were taken from, says Mr Cooke.

Mysterious object helping scientists

It was definitely an object, it was definitely flying, and at first it was unidentified.

But the sight which caused alarm around the country last night was no UFO.

People from Nelson to north of Auckland had to take a second look at a white glowing body which was seen at sunset thousands of metres above the earth.

Air traffic controllers and the *New Zealand Herald* were inundated with calls, but there was no cause for anxiety.

"It is not a UFO, it is not loaded with Martians and, chances are, people will not even see it tomorrow," said the Meteorological Service northern regional forecast manager, Mr Bob McDavitt.

The object was a stratospheric helium balloon launched from New Caledonia last month by the World Meteorological Organisation.

At an altitude of 24km the balloon poses no threat to aircraft, because it is twice as high as most jets are capable of flying.

The balloon, which is 100m high and 30m wide, is expected to orbit the planet during the several months it will stay in the stratosphere.

NZ Herald, Friday, September 24, 1993 SECTION 1

American holidaymakers are heading for the Highlands ... in search of ALIENS.

For they think the wide open spaces could be ET's second home.

And there's no need to go star trekking to Klingon country when you can find out-of-this-world beings in Kingussie.

The 14 spaced-out Yanks are members of the Triad Foundation, a UFO special interest group.



ET ... Is he the alien of the glens?



WOLF ... the alien from Star Trek

They believe the Highlands are a prime site for close encounters and want to speak to locals who have made mysterious sightings.

ADVERTS

The group are paying £1300 a person for the trip in July.

And they have placed adverts in local newspapers in the Highlands, asking locals with any extra-terrestrial experiences to contact them before they leave.

Joyce Murphy, of Above All Travel Inc, in Granbury, Texas, has organised the trip.

She says she has already been contacted by a man from Kingussie who said that a large craft landed in front of him but he was too scared to tell anyone about it.

REMOTE

Tony Dodd, director of investigations for Quest International, the biggest UFO investigating group in Europe, said:

"It is not surprising these people are coming to the Highlands as UFOs usually pick remote areas to visit.

"I am convinced that governments in the western world are covering up a lot of the information they have on UFO sightings."

Still a mystery

ONE of Suffolk's greatest unsolved mysteries - the sightings of a UFO near an air base - has attracted worldwide interest.

People fascinated by the claims that a spaceship landed close to RAF Woodbridge in 1980 are still anxious to uncover the truth.

Americans keep ringing up investigators with information and visits are occasionally made to the site.

The Japanese printed 35,000 copies of a book by Brenda Butler and Dot Street about the mysterious sightings. It quickly sold out and the 39,000 copies of the reprint were also snapped up.

And even now the remote spot in Rendlesham Forest still has an eerie feeling for Ms Butler, of Leiston.

"When I walk along here and think back over all the years, it makes the place feel cold and sad.

"There is also a special feeling and I can not help thinking something definitely did take place.

"There are too many witnesses for all of them to be telling lies."

Sarah Richardson of Ipswich was 12 years old when the dramatic events occurred on two nights in December, 1980.

She was in her bedroom in Rodney Court, Woodbridge, and could not sleep.

"Looking out of the window she saw: "Lights which I thought were like fireworks."



Flashback to 1983 when Brenda Butler and Dot Street revisited the site of the mystery.

"There were three of them and I will never forget about it."

Sightings of the lights were also recorded by people living in Ipswich, Woodbridge, Leiston, Eastbridge, Belstead and Marlesford.

A shroud of secrecy has been drawn over that December night - but a report was written by the deputy base commander at RAF Woodbridge Lt Col Charles Halt in which he says a "strange glowing object" touched down in the forest.

He told how USAF security patrols from the base were sent out to check on unusual lights and discovered an object which "illuminated the entire forest with a white light."

He said: "The object was hovering on legs. As patrolmen approached it, it manoeuvred through the trees and disappeared.

"At this time the animals on a nearby farm went into a frenzy. The next day three

depressions one and a half inches deep and seven inches in diameter were found where the object had been sited on the ground."

Traces of radiation were found in imprints on the ground and air traffic controllers revealed they had received reports of aerial phenomena over southern England.

Ms Butler still preserves the anonymity of an American serviceman who gave a graphic account of seeing three "entities" with a spacecraft.

Anyone who recalls anything unusual is asked to contact Brenda on 0728 830757 or Sarah on 0473 711061.

East Suffolk Mercury 22.05.94

Daily Record 28.05.94

Strange sightings spark UFO hotline

MORE close encounters of the paranormal kind have been going on in the Scarborough area - prompting the setting up of a UFO hotline.

Experts are already investigating after a spate of strange sightings in and around Scarborough.

The latest was by John Inman, of Pick-

ering, who spotted something bizarre in the sky over Snainton.

His sighting came just days after three colleagues at a Scarborough garage saw a weird white light moving over the town and another man saw a mysterious object hovering near Barrowcliff School.

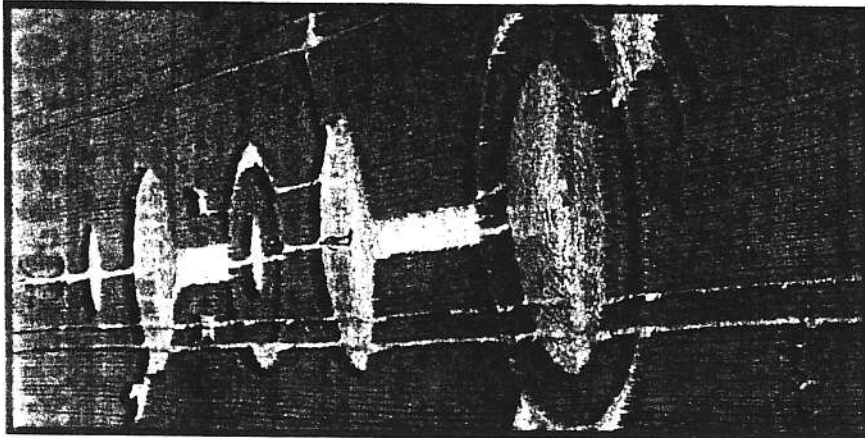
Mr Inman claims that he saw two white

lights and a glowing red orb in the sky on Friday and says that there was no way it was an aircraft.

Mr Inman, who is a paranormal investigator, said that he wants to hear from anybody else who has had any strange sightings in the area recently.

He can be contacted on 0751 475395.

Scarborough Evening News 03.02.94

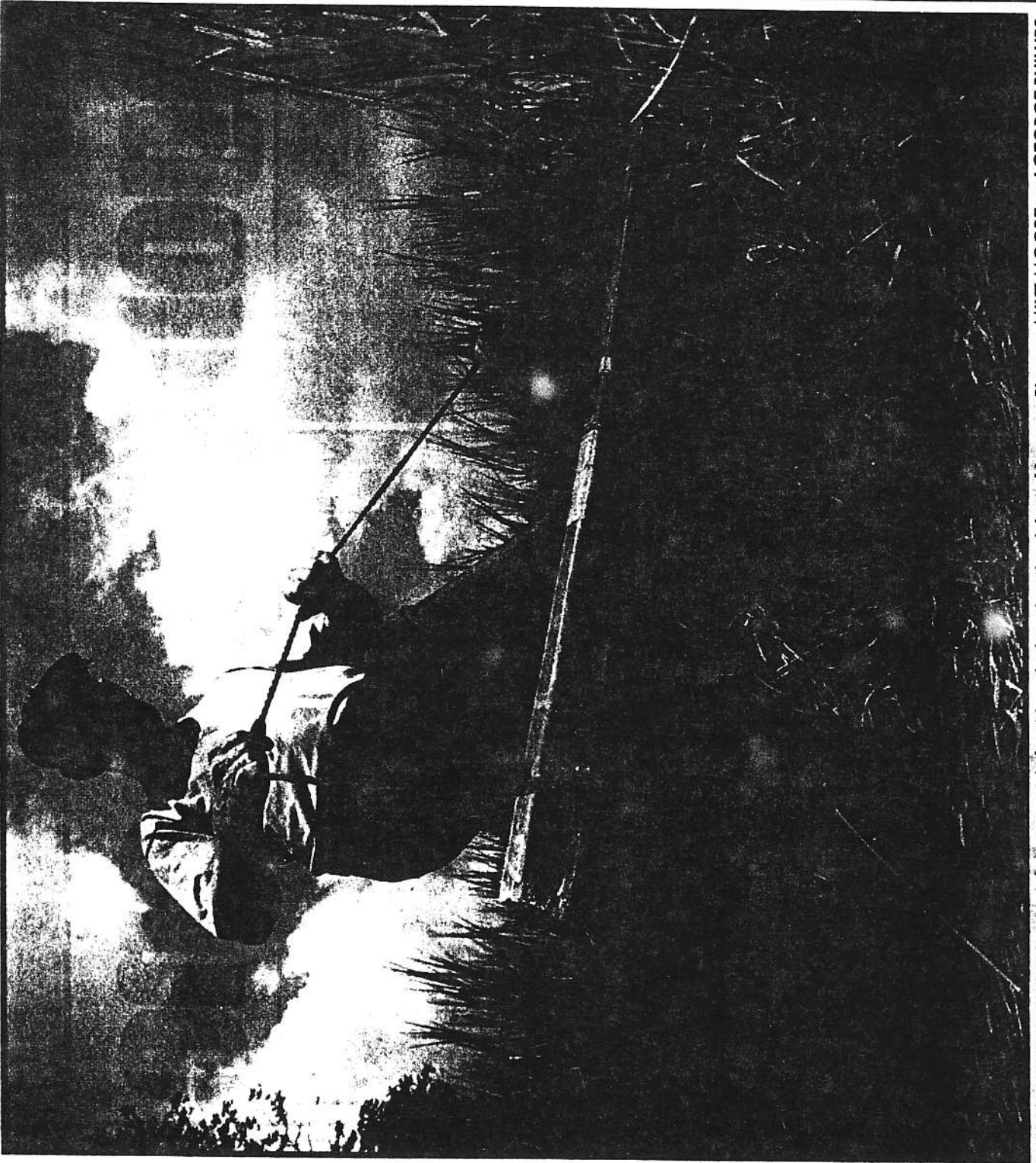


CEREAL THRILLER: Doug's designs grew more intricate to attract media interest

Crop circle maker mourns end of fields of dreams

IT IS midsummer. A time of long shadows and hazy days. Of busy bees and cuckoos.

But none so busy, nor so cuckoo, as those who frolic in the fields in search of extra terrestrial doo-



STAMPING THE CIRCLES: Doug creates a corn circle with a plank and a wire tight on his arm. Picturings: MIKE MOORE and GEORGE PHILLIPS

Miss my daily diet of corn flakes

Yes, it's crop circle time again. The season of corn fakes and cereal chillers. Of hills alive with the sound of experts and "cerealogists" voicing their theories and fantasies into the wide, blue yonder.

For one elderly gent, the call of the corn fields will go unheeded. Never again will he tread those familiar ways.

Doug Bower, self-confessed corn circle faker, has hung up his cap, put away his plank and called it a day.

"Well, I'll do it once so you can take some pictures. But that's it. It got beyond a joke," he says. "Whatever I did, wherever I went, there was always someone, somewhere, ready to give an explanation for the circles I made.

"In the end I was even signing the patterns. But it made no difference. If people want to believe in alien beings rather than a 69-year-old man from Southampton, that's their look-out.

"I wasn't put on this earth to stop potty people acting daft."

There is a gleam in his eye but bitterness in his voice. His tale is one of innocent beginnings soured by experience.

"It all began over a couple of pints at the Percy Hobbs pub in Alresford, Hampshire, one Friday evening in 1978," he says. "Little did I know then what seeds I planted."

Huddled

There was Doug and his mate Dave, huddled over their beer, chatting idly about landscape painting.

"Then it came to me," says Doug. "I'd lived in Australia and remembered reading about a circle which appeared in a reed bed. There was all sorts of speculation that aliens may have caused it.

"I said: 'Dave, I have an idea!'"

So the pair took their

By ANTON ANTONOWICZ

cheese rolls and bottles of ale and set forth where no men had boldly gone before.

"It became an obsession," says Doug.

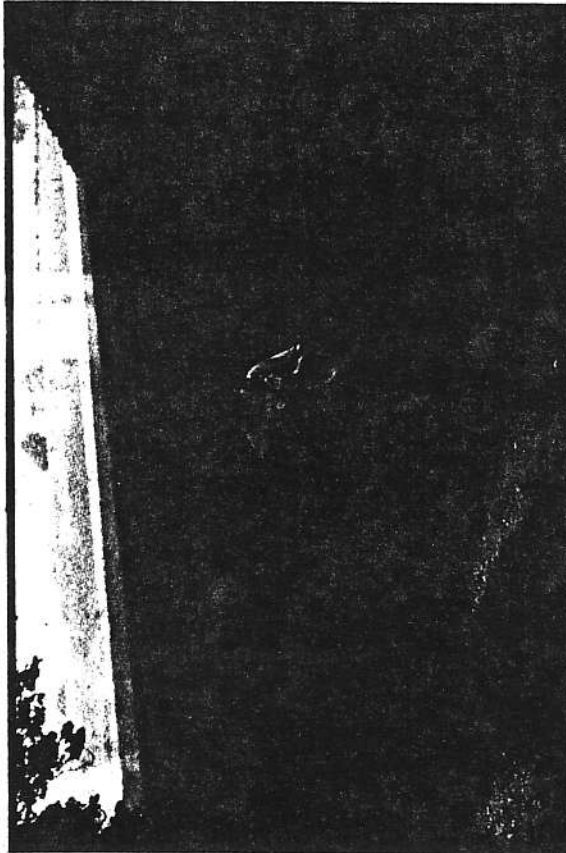
"For 13 years we trod the fields. First we did simple circles. Then I started designing more complicated patterns and the world went mad.

"As a child I marvelled at the possibility of beings from another planet. But I gradually realised there was no one out there.

"That's when I decided I would make the dream come true. And there was no shortage of experts to prove me right."

But fame was slow a-coming. "It was two years before the Press really got hold of the circles.

"The main problem was that the places where we made our early circles weren't visible enough. We were using



LANDING SITE: In the old days Doug would have a field day with this crop

four-foot planks at Westbury and Warminster in Wiltshire and all over Hampshire, but nobody was getting excited."

Then, in 1981, the Devil's Punchbowl at Cheesefoot Head near Winchester was planted with cereal crop for the

first time. It was a natural canvas — one offering breathtaking views to passing motorists.

Doug's big break had arrived.

By the end of the week every newspaper and TV

station had carried stories about the weird corn circle. Circlemania was

cap — to align his wondrous shapes. But as fast as the pair trod the corn, the experts found an explanation. Chief among them was Dr Terence Meaden, an Oxford physicist and meteorologist.

He said that the circles were caused by "vortices" — mini-whirlwinds which could flatten the corn.

"It really annoyed me," says Doug.

Weird

"I didn't want anyone coming up with a natural explanation. I wanted people to believe these patterns were caused by aliens. That's when we started concentrating on our 'pictograms'."

The weird shapes, full of boxes and ladders, boosted the True Believers' faith. Doug says: "We'd watch the experts measuring our designs and try to keep straight faces as people lay down in our circles to 'absorb the cosmic energy'."

Doug pauses. "It was seven years before I told

my wife what I was up to. She got suspicious about the miles I was doing in my car at the weekend.

"So I went to my workshop and returned with a pile of Press cuttings. She still didn't believe me, so I took her out and showed her how it was all done.

"But eventually it got beyond a joke. People took to sleeping in the fields waiting for the aliens to arrive. The farmers and police were getting fed up.

"By 1991 we decided to go public."

Their story produced a furor. Here were Doug and Dave, two sprightly pensioners, announcing the A-cropalypse.

Corn-spracy theories were developed, accusing the duo of being agents in a Government cover-up.

"People needed something to believe in and we gave it to them," says Doug.

"When we told them the truth, it was like attacking a religion.

He sighs: "I only wish there were aliens from another planet — rather than some of the cerealogists who just act like they are from another planet."

If people want to believe in alien beings, then that's their look-out

'JOE'S CLOSE ENCOUNTER TO BE SEEN ON TV SHOW'

Film footage of a UFO taken by a local man is to be featured in a TV programme.

Joe Callan of Fyfe road, Corby used his camcorder to film the flying saucer-shaped object, which hovered above his home for about five minutes.

Mr Callan, his wife Margaret and children Sean, Serena and Ebony, were in the garden when they spotted the UFO just before 7.45pm on Saturday, May 7th.

Mr Callan a Co-operative insurance agent, rushed into his house to get the camcorder, while Mrs Callan and three-year-old Sean looked through binoculars.

The video recording, lasting more than four minutes, will be shown on the new LWT programme Schofields Quest on Sunday June 26.

Mr Callan said: 'I noticed something in the sky and assumed it was a microlight. It came from the north-west and flew into the wind. It was going very slowly. It had a silver top, which was round with bubbles. Underneath it was black and circular. There was no noise.'

'It bobbed about and curved round as it moved. It then went on its side and shot off. It was a fantastic experience!'

Mr Callan said the experience did not worry him. He said: 'I half expected to see something one day. It didn't worry me at all. Nothing happened to the garden and the birds were still twittering away! I am a very sceptical person, but I am not arrogant enough to believe we are the only intelligence in the universe.'

Mr Callan called Corby man Ernie Still, who helped found NUFORC - the Northamptonshire UFO Research Centre. Mr Still informed the British UFO Research Association, which examined the film.

Mr Still said: 'This is the first on film I've seen. I was very impressed, there's certainly something there'

NIGHT sightings of UFOs across the county sky can now be reported to a new investigation team.

And they hope the public will not be embarrassed by calling them with information.

"A lot of people are frightened of being laughed at if they have genuinely seen something they cannot explain," said Richard Millen, self-appointed UFO investigator for Lincoln and Newark.

"We are here to respond to people's calls, to explain what we can and to record what really is unidentifiable," he added.

Callers will not be identified if they are afraid of being labelled cranks and informa-

Flying saucers: 'Call us if you spot one'

tion passed on can be handled confidentially.

Ministry of Defence records have shown that more than 500 of the unidentified flying object sightings in 1993 are still unexplained.

None of these is believed to have been over Lincolnshire - but there have been calls from Norfolk of a triangular light formation which could have been seen from Lincolnshire late last year.

Police in Lincoln have been asked by Mr Millen and the UFO group based in Mansfield to pass on any calls to them.

"Newark police have been very co-operative and we are

sure that police in Lincoln will be as helpful," Mr Millen added.

Five per cent of all sightings remain mysteries and the most easily explained sightings are of weather balloons and meteorites.

Mr Millen, a 39-year-old Newark-based computer salesman, has just been appointed the UFO investigator for Lincoln and can be contacted on (0636) 72587.

Meetings of the Mansfield UFO group are held on the first and third Mondays of each month in room 3 of Mansfield Library, Westgate, Mansfield from 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

AN Unidentified Flying Object was reported hovering over the M6 last night.

A passing motorist noticed a brightly-lit object hovering in the sky between junctions 13 and 14 as he drove home to Alsager at around 9.15pm.

Today a police spokesman said: "He telephoned us to report a UFO over the motorway. He said it was brightly-lit with red and blue lights underneath.

"We do not believe it could have been a plane or our police helicopter so at this stage we are unable to account for it."

Officers who investigated the sighting did not see anything out of the ordinary.

The spokesman added: "We have not had any other sightings at this stage but we would be interested to hear from anybody who saw anything unusual."

The good, the bad

How alien are aliens? From the films of the 1950s to the space operas of the 1990s, extra-terrestrials have embodied our prejudices and political fears: the alien is us, says PAT KANE

It's life, Jim," runs the immortal Star Trek line, "but not as we know it." So how do we know The Alien? For most hack science fiction — the adventures of Captain Kirk and Dr McCoy included — the obvious signs of alienness are bug-eyes, tortuous syntax and a set of deeply unfathomable motives. Theoretically, there is nothing more *disturbing* our minds could imagine than a plausible alien — a creature determined by a radically different environment than our own, the details of its evolution and intelligence unpredictable: a profoundly "unnatural" entity. So what kind of alien do we usually conjure up from the infinite possibilities of the universe? An upright biped with binocular vision and clever hands, Or, to put it less technically, a third-rate actor in a rubber suit.

The current clutch of space operas on television (Deep Space Nine, Star Trek: The Next Generation) feature hordes of latexed extras and lead characters — every alien amazingly fluent in standard Anglo-American, with offices in all the right places. In Channel 4's forthcoming sci-fi serial, Babylon 5 (Mondays, from May 16), one reptilian alien even offers to have vigorous sex with a beautiful human telepath — "depending on your pleasure threshold, of course." Nice to see that Captain Kirk's libidinous zeal for human-alien relations is being sustained in mainstream 1990s sci-fi.

The alien also taps into the less predictable, more polarised parts of our psyche. Whether it's Spielberg's saintly extra-terrestrial, stretching out a glowing fingertip to brush a child's forehead, or Ridley Scott's slime-covered killer, swooping down to eviscerate another crew member, the way we "make contact" with the alien can be as extreme and contradictory as the unconscious itself. (And where else are we more "alien" to ourselves than there?) The seminal 1956 sci-fi film *Forbidden Planet* featured "The Monster From the Id", and a line from the hero can stand as the psychological core of all our alien encounters: "That thing out there — is you!"

If the alien "is us", in the fullest sense, then it must express our conscious as well as our unconscious concerns, speak for the citizen as well as the case study. The classic era of the mass-culture alien — 1950s America — ordered its interstellar cast list of blobs, ants, robots and messiahs on strictly ideological lines: the paranoias and insecurities of the cold war extended mercilessly to Alpha Centauri, and back again.

On one side, there were "conservative" alien movies such as *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers* (1956), *Creature From The Black Lagoon* (1954) and *The Thing* (1951). They invoked the forces of law, order and

stability — the "state authorities", as they were usually known — to defeat the nameless, faceless revolutionaries from outer space; red tentacles swarming under every bed good neighbours permanently susceptible to subversion. On the other side, "radical" alien flicks such as *The Day The Earth Stood Still* (1951) visited a moral plague on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Klaatu, the Christ-like visitor, does not just render immobile the collective nuclear armoureds of Russia and America, but turns starry-eyed patriots against their own country's scheming Establishment, enlisting

them in his defence and escape. Like Japan's *Godzilla* movies of the same era (where Tokyo would be ritually destroyed, in a weird national expiation of the shame of Hiroshima), America's screen aliens of the 1950s allowed an insanely repressive culture to explore its political unconscious, left and right.

Where else could you see extreme acts of insurrection against the powers that be — like the Washington monument snapped in two, or the Capitol building smashed like a melon — other than during *Earth vs The Flying Saucers* (1956)? And how else could you enjoy America applying its nuclear capability in a wholly moral sense, other than to blast the alien ants of *Them!* (1954) to smithereens?

The alien is still being used as ac-

tor in a national morality play. Channel 4's *Babylon 5* reflects its 1990s *Zeitgeist* as slavishly as 1950s cinema — but with a lot more self-conscious irony, of course. The action takes place on a five-mile-long United Nations-style vessel, orbiting space in the year 2257. Its mission is to host critical talks aimed at establishing a lasting peace in the galaxy, after many years of bitter conflict between the five main solar systems.

Naturally, Earth is the leading power in this security council of the planets — and for "Terran" in the 23rd century read "American" at the cusp of the 21st. "This is a dream given form," runs the programme's weekly prologue, "a place where humans and aliens could work out their differences peacefully... Our last best hope for peace." There is no shortage of parallels drawn between the wearsome burdens of imperial power, present and future. As the vessel's valiant commander proposes an Iraq-style space raid, the diplomat from back home barks over the screen: "The Earth Alliance can't go around being the galaxy's policeman!"

When it comes to the aliens themselves, *Babylon 5*'s political allegories are no subtler. One alien ambassador of a declining empire speaks in a thick eastern European accent, dresses in Isarist military costume, and weeps drunkenly about "smashed monuments to past glories — we're just a theme park now." Another swarthy reptilian life-form, G'Kar, endorses the brutal invasion of defenceless planets, and forces bruised captives to give false testimonies to video cameras (Saddam who?). Yet another group, the fine-featured and inscrutable



REVOLVING lights were spied in the sky last week and residents asked the question, "Is there life beyond earth?"

Readers have been calling the *Advertiser* to tell us about flashing lights in the sky coming from an unknown terrestrial source.

But before you could say "Close encounters" we managed to track down the alien life form.

First to alert us was Sarah Roberts, who saw the lights while walking along East End Road, in Finchley, last Tuesday evening.

"I stopped another guy as I was walking along the street and we just stood staring at these lights through the clouds.

"A light was in the middle of the formation with other lights coming from it and occasionally there was a flash.

"It was how I imagined the Northern Lights would be," she said.

The same thing was seen a few miles away in Burtleigh Gardens, Southgate, by Michael Stavri.

"I saw a formation of a dozen lights spinning and then dispersing for about half a minute," he said.

But rest assured, the occupants of interplanetary craft haven't quite come down to earth just yet.

The somewhat disappointing explanation is that the mysterious lights came from the new UCI cinema complex at Edmonton.

Marketing manager Guy Lawrence said: "We were testing our spotlights for our opening weekend.

"They are really powerful and can, apparently, be seen from the City."

SCIENCE BRIEFING

UFO sightings 'an illusion'

PEOPLE who claim to have seen UFOs have simply experienced an optical illusion, claims British science writer Stuart Campbell.

He claims the "sight" of a flying saucer or other alien phenomenon is produced by the distorting effect of the Earth's atmosphere on lightwaves skipping across the universe.

and the ugly

Miniban, are in league with the Earthlings and express a keen interest in their Zen Buddhist gardens: a Pacific alliance, in every sense...

And so on, through all the important contemporary players in Pax Americana, each one marked out by a false nose here and a plastic carapace there. This series is one of an impending stampede of TV space-operas coming from the States over the next few years, joining the re-vamped Star Trek and its offshoot, Deep Space Nine. They confirm the role of sci-fi narratives as the west-erns of the 1990s: providing grand myths to help Americans understand their national crises. Yet these New

Star Trek and Deep Space Nine confirm the role of sci-fi as today's western: grand myths to help Americans understand their crises

Frontiers are never final and closed; and the "Red Injuns" — deeply "alien" in their own day, of course — cannot now be exterminated, are even proliferating wildly. "Babylon", as an image, relates to Senator Daniel Moynihan's vision of current global politics as "Pandemonium": both are symbols for an unstable, multi-polar world that Western power has to learn to live with.

The first Oxford English Dictionary citation of the word "alien", in 1871, reveals the real ideology behind the extra-terrestrial: "An alien is a person who belongs to a

different political society than that in which he resides." To give it some credit, Babylon 5 is attempting to move beyond these reactionary semantics of "the alien". But this meaning structures our classic images of alienness more than we realise. If the alien actively wishes to reside with us, does the terrifying destroyer that stalks through the three Alien movies represent the majority's worst fears about the presence of differing Others in their midst? Lurking under our floors and behind our doors, preying on us mercilessly, using us as passive receptacles for its young; Ridley Scott's creation is truly — to use the language of immigration law — an "undesirable alien". And is Spielberg's ET, by comparison, the "acceptable" alien — because he is a polite and friendly visitor: the tolerated, eccentric stranger who eventually leaves, rather than the permanent immigrant?

We should be keenly aware of the sharply political, even racist resonances of the alien. Yet the term also gained its focus from 19th-century scientific debates about evolution, initiated by Lamarck and then Darwin. The idea that organisms adapt themselves to available environments on this planet implied that unearthly conditions could produce unearthly creatures. No matter how much the figure of the alien has served as a dumping ground for politics and psychology over the past century or so, there is a pulse of genuine wonderment that infuses all our imaginings of blobs and cone-heads and space crustaceans. How alien would a real alien be?

Thinking along these lines moves you out of fiction, and into the flaky but gentle world of the alien true believers — from UFO contactees, foaming wildly in the more outrageous tabloids, to serious international scientific research programmes such as SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence). Jim Schnabel's recent study of the UFO sighting craze, Dark White, gives the phenomenon a number of banal causes. Geophysical evidence (where luminescence from tectonic shifts makes for mass witnessing of "flying saucers"). Sexual neurosis (why is it so many Little Green Men experiment with their captives' genitals?). Schnabel also cites the "victimisation syndrome" currently

gripping America, where satanic abuse and alien abduction are both weird indices of a culture of compulsive therapy and self-pity.

But the other alien obsessives — the poor, forked scientists who swing their radio dishes across the night sky, sending messages and receiving nothing — deserve our sympathy, not our smirking contempt. The vapours of hope and yearning that rise from the pages of First Contact: The Search For Extraterrestrial Intelligence (a book of essays edited by Ben Bova) are familiar to every speculative space-cadet. "To think that we are the best the universe could manage — the mediocrity of it all!" says Harvard SETI researcher Paul Horowitz. Yet

their quest is losing its scientific status with every light-year of stellar silence: NASA withdrew its funding for SETI activities in 1993, which now survives mainly on private funds.

First Contact is most affecting when it imagines the ramifications of that "unique moment in human history": An intelligent alien culture could "involve us in a dialogue of centuries", writes Michael Michaud, "bringing an incalculable richness of knowledge, physical instrumentalities and cultural growth, opening the door to a galactic society". These are poignant hopes: our first contact with a real alien might remove our own sense of alienation. How could we be divided against and estranged from our fellow humans any longer, in the face of an absolute, authentic Other?

Let science fiction do one of its better jobs, and puncture such starry-eyed idealism about alien contact. The first episode of Babylon 5 closes with reports of a final result in Earth's general election. The new president's primary aim — apart from "cutting the Budget" (sound familiar?) — is to "protect Earth cultures from growing non-Terran influence". The station's human commander — whose brief is to broker deals between alien species — groans mightily at the xenophobic rhetoric, slumps into bed, orders "lights out". It's life, Jim: exactly as we know it. □



Monster rash: ET, left, and, right, the Creature from the Black Lagoon. Photograph by Kobal

Sunday Times 08.05.94

UFO scare is airship flight

An advertising gimmick prompted dozens of 999 calls last night from residents believing they had seen a UFO in Shropshire.

Callers jammed police switchboards after they glimpsed the flashing object over Telford at about 7pm. But the craft was merely a Virgin-owned advertising airship.

Shropshire Star 18.03.94

"They were singing a song about love and that gave me the idea. I turned the tally down and in 15 minutes had written the whole song."

It reached No 5 when it was released in 1967 — following Trogers' hits like Wild Thing, I Can't Control Myself Anyway That You Want Me, Give It To Me and their chart-topper With A Girl Like You.

But despite the string of hits, the group did not rake in a lot of money — and Reg admitted the million will come in useful.

The ex-brickie, who lives in Andover, Hants, with wife Brenda, said: "We lost out on a lot of money. We didn't have a

good deal at all. "We were very green. We had come up from the country and suddenly we were offered this chance to become pop stars. We just jumped at it without thinking."

"We were on a measly two per cent royalty for our records. These days bands get something like 14 per cent."

"When we performed we got just £125 a night — and we were a huge band."

"These days we get £3,000 for each show. We earn far more money now than we ever did."

Thrilled Reg has sent Wet Wet Wet a telegram: "Thank you, thank you thank you. Congratulations. And by the way, thank you."

He plans to spend his newfound wealth funding his hobby — investigating UFOs and visits by aliens.

Reg, singer with The Trogers, penned Love Is All Around for the group back in 1967. Now the song, recorded by Wet Wet Wet for the hit film Four Weddings And A Funeral, is at No 2 in the charts — and tipped to reach No 1.

Reg, 51 — who still performs with the group — said yesterday: "I can't believe it's happening. It is selling phenomenally well and if it keeps up like this it will make me a millionaire, no doubt about it."

Reg — real name Reg Ball — revealed that the song took just 15 minutes to write.

And far from being a hippy Sixties free love song, it was inspired by watching a Salvation Army pop group called The Joystrings on TV.

HITS

BY RICK SKY and JEREMY ARMSTRONG

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Research centre set to harvest crop of circles

STRANGE lights in the sky, peculiar circles in fields of wheat and other unexplained events are meat and drink to the Centre for Crop Circle Research.

Now the centre's Dorset branch is appealing for help from anyone who may have witnessed odd happenings in the area.

Last year, the branch took around 600 calls about crop formations and associated phenomena.

And photographs of a mysterious 300ft circle in a field in Corfe Castle are now being analysed by experts at NASA, said convenor David Kingston. "We're hoping to set up a couple of night-time vigils this year to try to capture something on film."

"We had about 12 reports last year from pilots, with sightings ranging from Hurn to North Dorset."

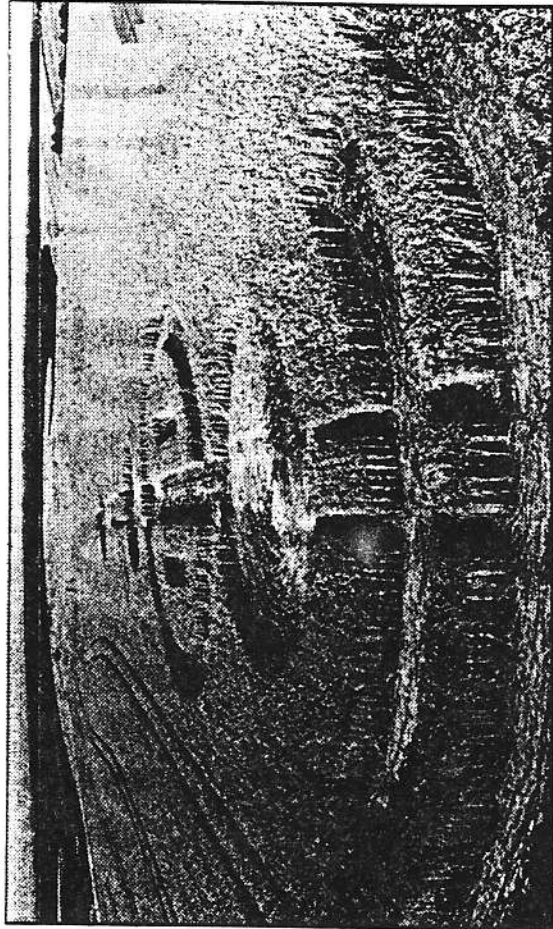
Mr Kingston says his team is particularly interested in investigating unexplained balls of light in the

sky, which he claims have been spotted during the past year.

The centre is particularly appealing for help from pilots of light aircraft, hang gliders and microlights to call its hotline with information on sightings, including OS grid references, times and witnesses.

Mr Kingston said all information given is treated in strict confidence.

This year's hotline numbers are 0305 775891, 0305 267392 and 0202 723127, or fax 0305 771615.



CREAM OF THE CROP: A mysterious design in a field of corn

UFO fever grips Yorkshire folk

NORTH and East Yorkshire have been gripped by UFO fever.

The region has reported more than 20 sightings this year from people who claim to have seen strange objects in the sky.

UFO experts are even investigating claims that a York couple were abducted by aliens.

This week, a York postman claimed to have seen an onion-shaped object dart over his houseboat on the Ouse.

A student has now reported she believes she saw a UFO hover over a field near Stamford Bridge.

Next week, North Yorkshire UFO experts will lobby Parliament demanding greater Government involvement in scientific research into reported sightings.

Rochford Standard Recorder

26.05.94

6 NZ Herald, Thursday, October 7, 1993 ★ SECTION 1

Memo ET: Don't call us, we'll call you

Reuter Pasadena
If ET phones, the chances are that nobody at Nasa will be listening.

Funding for the American space agency's galactic search for radio signals from alien civilisations has been cut from the federal budget by a House-Senate conference committee. The final Nasa appropriations bill must still be passed by Congress, but scientists hold out little hope for saving the year-old project.

Senator Richard Bryan spear-headed congressional opposition to the search, deriding it as a "great Martian chase" and a waste of taxpayer dollars.

"We've already spent millions

on this project, and no one has landed and said 'take me to your leader' and no flying saucers have appeared for flight clearance," said Mr Jim Mulhall, press secretary for the Nevada Democrat.

Astronomers detected about 25 signals interesting enough to require further analysis, said project scientist Dr Frank Drake, the 65-year-old dean of astronomers searching for extraterrestrials, but they were checked out and ruled not to be transmissions from other worlds.

Such results have helped to encourage Congress to cast a sceptical eye on a project that conjures up images from

"It's upsetting to have the whole thing yanked out from under us and for purely political reasons," said Dr Drake, "What a sad commentary on the state of American government."

The \$US12 million (\$22.2 million) needed to keep the programme alive for the next year would have amounted to less than one-tenth of 1 per cent of the \$US14.6 billion budget being provided to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Nasa's quest for ETs was meant to be the biggest, costliest search ever undertaken to answer one of mankind's most compelling questions: Is there anybody out there?

The planned 10-year, \$US100 million project was launched last October on the 50th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' landing in the New World.

by Simon Ritchie

THIS is what postman John Hunt claims to have seen fly at high-speed over his River Ouse houseboat.

Mr Hunt, 50, gave a detailed description of his sighting to Yorkshire Evening Press graphic artists who superimposed it on a photograph of the city skyline.

He claims to have seen the mystery lemon-coloured onion-shaped object soar over his boat, moored near Skeldergate, at the speed of a fighter jet. The sighting took place at 8.40pm on Wednesday.

Mr Hunt, who was shocked by what he saw, said: "It first appeared as a black blob and as it got closer it I thought it must be a helicopter. But it wasn't. It made no sound at all."

A spokesman for Leeds Weather Centre said it was highly unlikely that the object was a weather balloon.

"There are only two weather stations in the North of England, at Liverpool and Cumbria, which send up balloons. The wind on Wednesday night would have sent them out to sea. The balloons are also cream coloured, not yellow, and they would have floated slowly down to earth, not at high-speed."

Balloon Rides of York said it did not have any hot-air balloons in York that night because it was too windy.

There were no military aircraft, microlites or hang-gliders flying over York that night.

About two weeks earlier Bridlington student Karen Clark, 20, saw what she described as a UFO hover over a field near Stamford Bridge.

"Me and my partner Simon saw an round object with white lights. It was very close to the ground and travelling very fast. It hovered for a while and then left," said Karen.

"I did not report it at the time because I did not think

anyone would believe me. It was only when I saw the piece in the Press that I decided to get in touch."

North Yorkshire is the number one county for spotting UFOs.

Over the past ten years the county has accounted for more than half the national total.

Ripon-based John Holman, of the Alien Acknowledgement Campaign is lobbying Parliament next week as part of a transatlantic campaign to focus attention on UFOs.

● If you think you have seen a UFO contact Mr Mantle on 0924 444049 or Mr Holman on 0765 602898.

UFO experts are investigating claims from a York couple that they were abducted by aliens.

Members of the British UFO Research Association are quizzing the middle-aged couple who contacted the association after their "close encounters".

Phillip Mantle, the association's director of investigations, said: "Because the investigation is still on-going we cannot disclose the name of the couple or the details of the alleged abduction.

"All we can say is that the couple from the York area contacted us a couple of months ago. They claim to have had a series of paranormal and UFO encounters on and off over the past few years.

"One of them bears all the hallmarks of an abduction."

Mr Mantle said researchers were taking down detailed accounts from the couple and a hypnotist may be used to dig out information lost in the subconscious.

He said 167 UFO sightings had been reported to the association this year. Thirty of them were connected with abductions.

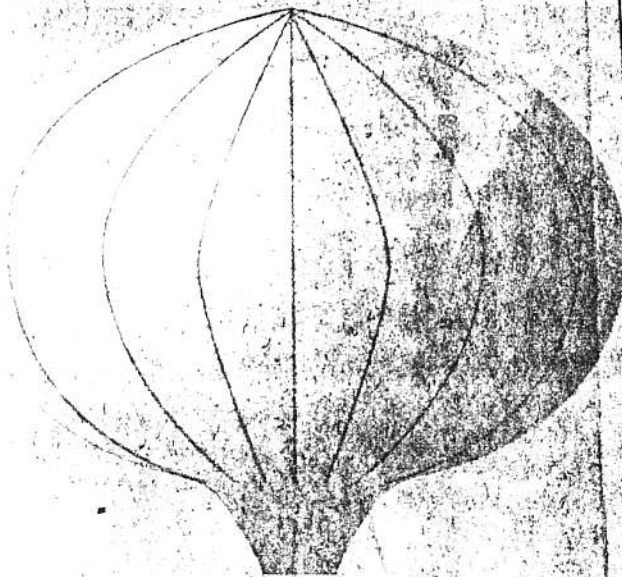
"Last year we had no abduction claims at all. We do not know why there has been a sudden increase this year.

"It could be that more people are willing to share their experiences. In the past they were perhaps wary of being ridiculed."



An artists impression of the UFO (not to scale) as it came in for a close encounter with the York skyline.

John Hunt's description of the UFO



- Lemon-coloured and onion-shaped
- Flew at the speed of a fighter jet
- Made no noise
- Travelled east-west over River Ouse

UFO sightings in North and E

- July 1972 - Object giving off red, green and yellow light seen in Fangfoss
- July 1974 - Yellow-orange flying saucer spotted at Coneysthorpe, near Malton
- July 1980 - Six bright lights seen in the skies above Sutton-on-Derwent
- December 1987 - Large pumpkin shaped object seen over Chapelfields, York
- August 1991 - Mysterious light hovered over Dalby Forest, Pickering
- May 1994 - Onion shaped object seen over York



York postman John Hunt who saw a mystery object on

Close encounters of a psychological kind

JOHN MACK is a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, a faculty member of the Boston Psychoanalytic Society, president of the International Society for Political Psychology, and the author of a prize-winning biography of T.E. Lawrence, *A Prince of Our Disorder*, which I read with admiration. Since many people will find this new book incredible, it is important to emphasise that the author's credentials are impeccable.

Mack claims to have interviewed more than a hundred people who say that they have been abducted by aliens. Of these, 47 females and 29 males, including three boys of eight and under, have convinced Mack that their accounts of being abducted are genuine. In this book, he presents 13 selected cases, eight men and five women.

The usual pattern of an abduction is that the abductee is at home or in a car. He or she sees a bright light, sometimes blue, which emanates from a spacecraft or UFO to which the abductee is taken by "floating" through walls or the roof of a car. Further transportation to a larger spacecraft follows. "Communication between aliens and humans is telepathic, mind to mind or thought to thought, with no specific common learned language being necessary."

Most victims describe aliens as small, grey, and hairless, with large heads and long arms. The captive usually feels unable to move any part of the body except the head. The aliens then conduct experiments on the abductee's body, often using

instruments which remove eggs from females and sperm samples from men. These experiments are usually felt as intrusive, but there are also reports of rewarding sexual intercourse with aliens. Many abductees believe the aliens have an interspecies breeding programme, and say they have seen hybrid infants in spacecraft.

Aliens are generally regarded as "more advanced spiritually and emotionally than we are", which makes it hard to understand why they should want to interbreed with humans, whose misuse of the earth they usually condemn as wicked or stupid. For not all the habits of aliens are nasty: they also issue timely warnings. When in the spacecraft, the captives are given information about the fate of the earth, which may include scenes of devastation following a nuclear explosion, lifeless polluted landscapes and "apocalyptic images of giant earthquakes, firestorms, floods, and even fractures of the planet itself". Some lucky abductees are given

glimpses of their previous incarnations, as, for example, a tomb-painter in ancient Egypt.

Abduction experiences often run in families. Mack states that his subjects are free from psychiatric illness or psychological or emotional conditions which could account for their abductions. Yet examination of his 13 cases reveals that all reported strange experiences, neurotic symptoms or preoccupation with the paranormal from early childhood onward. One subject had been seeing a psychiatrist for seven years. Another had seizures, migraine-like headaches, visual hallucinations and a temporarily abnormal electroencephalogram. Some have been searching for enlightenment in a variety of sects throughout their lives.

Mack used hypnosis to induce regression to childhood and recover memories of abduction experiences. He states that "abductees are peculiarly unsusceptible". If so, one would expect that they would be hard to hypnotise. Yet he also

By Anthony Storr

ABDUCTION: Human Encounters with Aliens by John E. Mack, Simon & Schuster £16.99

Abductees believe there is an interspecies breeding programme

writes that "abductees seem to move readily into trance" and shares with readers his impression "that the reports provided under hypnosis are generally more accurate than those consciously recalled".

Mack's technique of inducing the hypnotic state includes deep, rapid breathing. He reports that, at the end of the session, his subjects often experience cramps in the muscles of the hands. Overbreathing interferes with calcium metabolism and may cause such cramps, which are known as tetany; but Mack does not mention this. Nor does he consider the possibility that his form of therapy is creating a new, crazy sect whose members try to outdo each other's fantasies. We have enough interplanetary societies already.

Mack learned the breathing technique from the work of a psychiatrist called Stanislaw Grof. It is said to facilitate travel through history and the establishment of "transpersonal relationships". Mack told *Esquire* that, when he practised it himself, he found that in one of his past lives he had been a 16th-century Russian who had to watch a band of Mongols decapitate his four-year-old son.

I wonder if aliens are as credulous and gullible as human beings? They could hardly be more so. John Mack, of course, realises that he has put his reputation as a professor of psychiatry on the line. If he is eventually professionally discredited, his \$250,000 American advance will hardly constitute sufficient comfort.

Independent on Sunday 22.05.94

Airship theory fails to get off the ground in Rayleigh UFO riddle

THE riddle of the glow-in-the-sky unidentified object over Essex has deepened.

The mystery appeared to unravel when a spokesman for Hutchison Telecom told of his company's

promotional orange airship drifting over Essex last week.

That was what had alerted Sarah Parham, a 30-year-old shopworker, and her boyfriend, Southend fisherman Manny Friedman, 31, as they

strolled in Rayleigh on Wednesday May 11.

A spokesman behind the aerial advertising campaign said the airship, based at Stapleford near Ongar, had been over the county

for several days and prompted a number of calls.

Scoffing friends flooded the couple with calls. But it turns out that the airship was long grounded by the time Sarah and Manny saw

the strange light in the sky, 11.10pm.

Roy Lake, of the UFO studies group in London, called the sighting typical of what people have reported before.