

LEEDS DAILY EXAMINER
APR 98

Shedding light on the Pennine UFOs

By DENIS KILCOMMONS

TWO Unidentified Flying Objects followed the route of the M62 over the Pennines.

It happened on February 2 this year and the incident has been investigated by *UFO Magazine*, an international publication based at Otley.

Dozens of people reported sightings of two unusual and very bright lights over Manchester, Bradford and Leeds.

Ken Fields, who lives on the edge of an air route to Leeds-Bradford Airport and is familiar with passing aircraft, saw them moving very slowly overhead at 5.30pm.

He filmed them with his camcorder and said they were not standard aircraft lights but were similar to aircraft strobes.

George Hickenson, a 42-year-old security guard, turned a security camera on them for 10 minutes as they flew over Leeds at 5.35pm.

Colleague Ken Hague, 52, said: "There was not a sound as they started to move off. They climbed into the night sky and just shot away."

A former RAF pilot, John Summerville, watched the lights as they passed over Cleckheaton as he and his wife took their dogs for a walk at about 5.35pm.

"As they approached, at a steady constant speed, they passed overhead at a 45 degree angle. The lights moved in a straight line, over our village, over the valley and out of sight."

Their altitude, he estimated, was about 700 or 1,000 ft.

Simon Nicholls was waiting for a bus in Leeds when he saw them.

"Every night at around 5.30 or 5.40pm, either a 737 or 757 airliner flies into Leeds-Bradford. This par-



How today's issue of *UFO Magazine* is billing its feature on unidentified lights seen by hundreds in West Yorkshire

ticular night it was off by about 10 degrees.

About one minute later, he said, the two objects appeared.

They flew straight over my head. Both had one navigation light at the back, which was white, and two very bright spotlights.

"I don't believe they were extraterrestrial, due to the navigation light on the back, typical of an aircraft or man-made craft."

There were similar sightings in Manchester and Bradford and a team from *UFO Magazine* investigated and met officials at Leeds-Bradford Airport.

Andy Rackham, airport services manager, said their radar tapes showed no unusual or unidentified traffic in the area.

He said: "We looked at all air traffic movements, surrounding flights, transit lights etc. Nothing could account for the lights seen over Leeds at that time. There was nothing to indicate anything unusual was there."

But, Rackham added: "There is nothing supportive to say there was anything out of the ordinary."

Mark Ian Birdsall of *UFO Magazine* said: "The lights were seen in Manchester around 5pm. It took all of 40 minutes for them to appear over the centre of Leeds, a distance of no more than 40 miles.

"Thus they had to be travelling at an approximate speed of 60 mph."

He added, they appeared to have followed the general direction of the M62, which might provide a clue as to their identity.

"It has been suggested that the lights were carried by two micro-light aircraft.

"While not impossible, if true, their pilots were playing a very dangerous game using major air corridors between and above three heavily populated cities."

The *UFO Magazine* is never afraid to be rational in its investigations, but it also reports bizarre, intriguing and unusual events.

There are reports and photographs from around the world in the latest issue for May/June (in the shops today price £2.25).

The most fascinating is the first hand evidence of an incident involving the 1,300 men of a US Army infantry battalion at Fort Benning in Georgia in 1977.

Was this alien abduction... or the illegal testing of a secret weapon designed to create mass disorientation?

Whatever the answer, this is a riveting and believable account of a frightening and unexplained event that the US military are, apparently, attempting to keep secret.

The witnesses speculated that it could not have been an electrical arcing due to the masts or ball lightning and went home from where they continued to see white flashes in the field until 10.14pm.

Police in Llangollen say they received no reports of the incident. The Ministry of Defence were unavailable for comment. Anyone with information can contact Mr Lalek on 01244 537058.

X-Files-style drama unfolded: "At about 9.15pm the first witness drove up Gwernant Road to the apparent site of the ball of light, which from below seemed well to the right of two radio masts on the hill.

"They searched the area for half an hour and saw three coloured sparks and many white lights which shot into the air over a hedge just 10m in front of them. This happened twice."

grateful if someone could offer a reasonable explanation."

The witnesses were apparently alerted to the odd happenings when interference appeared on their television sets as they watched in their home early that evening.

The flickering repeated itself and, on seeing it, they rushed to a window from where they claim to have seen the mysterious illuminations. Mr Lalek described how the

Pengwern, above Llangollen, on March 4 at 7.45pm.

Balls of electric blue light were apparently spotted by locals who claim the entire Pengwern valley was lit up in an incident now being probed by UFO experts.

Ufologist Ron Lalek of Broughton is investigating the case. He said: "I would be very grateful if further witnesses could come forward and equally

By DAN EVANS
FLICKERING lights?
Mysterious flashes in the sky? Did you see anything unusual over Llangollen one evening last month?

The *Evening Leader* has been asked to appeal for witnesses to some alleged strange aerial happenings

Appeal over lights' incident

IS ANYONE OUT THERE?

I will prove UFOs exist

FROM IVOR KEY
IN NEW YORK

A COMPUTER tycoon has abandoned his £1.2 billion business to search for UFOs, it was revealed yesterday.

Joe Firmage - dubbed the Fox Mulder of Silicon Valley - is convinced aliens have made contact with humans, but that it has been covered up in a government conspiracy.

Now the 28-year-old tycoon has quit his job at the computer consulting firm USWeb/CKS, which he founded a decade ago, to devote his time to proving it.

Calling his search "the most important news event in 2000 years",

Tycoon's £1bn sacrifice to find truth about aliens

Firmage has set out to show that many recent scientific advances including semi-conductors, fibre optics and lasers, can be traced back to technology recovered from an alien spaceship supposed to have crash in Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947.

He said: "There is truth to the UFO phenomenon, that is undeniable. The evidence is overwhelming from around the globe. To deny it is to simply stick your head in the sand."

"I'm not praying for a spacecraft to come and pick me up, I'm just saying there is good, rational evidence of things out there." As far as the sceptics are concerned, he said: "It is quite understandable, given decades of government disinformation specifically designed to create a 'big factor' surrounding the subject. But if we can travel to another star, why can't others?"

Mr Firmage's credentials as a UFO buff are overshadowed only by his track record as a computer industry entrepreneur.

A physics student at the University of Utah, Mr Firmage was 18 when he formed his first company, Serius, specialising in writing computer operating system codes. That

company was sold five years ago for £15 million.

In 1995 he formed USWeb, which last month merged with the CKS Group to form a £1.5 billion powerhouse that employs 1,950 people.

Mr Firmage says he decided to leave the company because he feared his views on the UFO issue could hurt the company's reputation.

"The subject matter that I am writing about is inherently controversial," he said. "I do not wish to subject the company to any sort of credibility deficit."

Mr Firmage has published his

views on the Internet in a 600-page manifesto called The Truth (web address www.thewordistruth.org). It contains new documents from a source he calls the Deep Throat of Cyberspace, including supposed

memos on Roswell from President Harry Truman and scientists Albert Einstein and Robert Oppenheimer.

"Ultimately, history will be my judge," Mr Firmage said. "I am making my best effort to help my friends out in the world take a look at the big picture, to look up into the stars tonight and consider the possibility that I might just be right."

A company insider said: "Joe is a visionary and he should be quite proud of what he has accomplished."

THE DAILY ECHO (BOURNEMOUTH EVENING ECHO)

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STRANGE lights in the night sky which spread out like "sparkling jewels" have baffled police officers and residents who spotted them.

Mysterious orange and yellow lights were seen flying in formations across Bournemouth and Poole late on Sunday night and early yesterday morning.

Police officers patrolling near Poole Harbour also saw the lights, which were reported by householders across the conurbation during a three-hour spell.

Bournemouth International Airport, Wych Farm and Portland coastguard were contacted by police but were unable to identify the lights.

reported above Poole Harbour by a number of witnesses including police officers.

"We had a further call from someone reporting lights travelling from Hurn to Upton quickly and no longer in formation. The caller said they looked like gold beads or sparkling jewels."

Barry Knight, of South Park Road, Wallisdown, said he saw the lights on three occasions.

He said: "At first I saw three orange lights in triangular formation travelling east to west below the clouds. Later I saw a big bunch of 15 lights. I live near Hurn airport but these were not planes or helicopters."

By Scott Neil

A police spokesman said: "We had a call from a member of the public who had seen a strange light in the sky drifting towards Poole, then another caller rang saying he had seen 13 lights near Swanage."

"A man with a mobile phone called saying he had seen a yellow light, then someone in Parkstone reported three or four lights in formation. Another caller saw 12."

One caller reported a red and orange pulsating light, another described seeing "very beautiful" silver-yellow lights in the sky. Sheriff after midnight lights were

Woman saw spherical, green UFO

A WOMAN called the police claiming she saw a UFO flying over houses on Scarborough's South Cliff.

The West Street resident said she spotted the object about 1.30am yesterday.

The UFO, described as spherical and fluorescent green, was said to have moved across South Cliff just above the roof-tops of houses.

Sgt Tom Merron said: "The incident has been recorded by police but we received no other reports from anyone else."

FROM TODAY YOU CAN HELP NASA'S WORLDWIDE INTERNET SEARCH FOR ALIEN LIFE

Earth calling ET, if you can hear give us a beep



BY MICHAEL HANLON
SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

PEOPLE worldwide are being invited to join the search for aliens.

Anyone with access to the Internet could be the first to pick up a call from ET.

Seti, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, uses giant radio telescopes to scan the universe for signals from undiscovered civilisations.

But the organisation, set up by Nasa 15 years ago, does not have enough computer power to handle all the data coming from the telescopes, so they are asking home PC owners to become alien hunters.

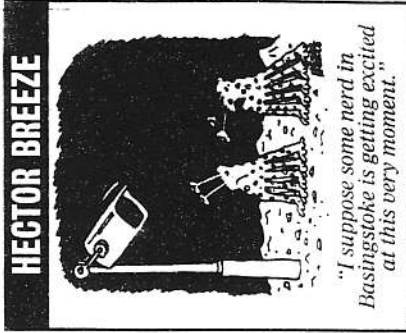
From today, a free screensaver can be downloaded from Seti's website which in turn downloads the information generated by the telescopes, in Cheshire and Puerto Rico.

The "SETI@home"

LONG DISTANCE CALL: In the film *Contact*, Jody Foster, below, tuned in to alien life. You could be next



- 1 Seti scientist scan the sky listening for signs of an intelligent signal using the 1000ft-wide radio telescope at Arecibo in Puerto Rico
- 2 Data is sent by the Seti@Home server, via the internet for people around the world to analyse
- 3 When your computer is idle the screensaver turns itself on. After downloading data it silently analyses the information for signs of alien intelligence
- 4 The screensaver sends the results back and then downloads the next batch of data



although he was convinced life was "common" in the galaxy, he was far from convinced that advanced civilisations would be numerous enough for Seti to have a chance of finding them.

The team plans to search 1,000 of the closest stars by 2006.

To take part in the search for alien life, you need a PC or Apple Macintosh with at least 32 megabytes of RAM and a connection to the Internet.

The SETI site is at: <http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu/>

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program then analyses it for signs of alien life and if it strikes lucky will alert Seti headquarters in California.

Speaking at a conference in London on Friday, Seti team member Dr Ian Morison said:

"There is an awful lot of computing power out there on peo-

ple's home PCs and they are not being used very often, so this is a fantastic way of using this computing power. You never know, some member of the public could detect signs of aliens.

"You would get some sort of recognition for this if you did."

Dr Morison admitted that

Goodness gracious ...

GREAT BALLS OF FIRE

BACK in the 1950s, when the whole subject of UFOs was beginning to be taken seriously by people, literally thousands of witnesses across the world reported seeing glowing fireballs.

These distinctive objects followed a pattern.

They were invariably large, often described as "like a miniature sun" and silent.

They would appear at night, often in clusters and unnervingly people by shooting across the sky at incredible speed.

At other times they would just hang in the air, "bobbing and weaving" like fireflies.

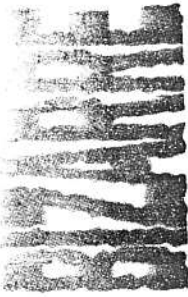
Naturally, many scientists and astronomers claimed that the fireballs were simply meteors burning up in the earth's atmosphere.

Another suggestion, favoured by many in the US military, was that the objects were balls of swamp gas.

This theory suggested that pockets of inflammable gases could build up in swampy or marshy areas before escaping into the atmosphere, where they somehow ignited.

Others suggested that the gases possessed a natural luminescence which made them glow in the dark.

Special report by
GORDON HOST



If the swamp gas theory sounds a little far-fetched to you, then you're in good company.

It didn't convince a lot of people back in the Fifties, either.

Firstly, pockets of gas which suddenly ignited would just disappear in a spectacular, but incredibly brief explosion.

Secondly, even before they ignited, such pockets of gas would be very quickly dispersed by the wind.

Even if the marsh gas theory could explain a small number of cases, it suddenly couldn't explain them all.

During the 1980s, another UFO-related phenomenon caught the public's attention; that of alien abductions.

People were not just seeing lights in the sky, but were actually claiming to have been kidnapped by extra-terrestrials and taken aboard their spacecraft.

Suddenly, glowing balls of fire seemed a little bit boring and sightings became more spasmodic.

Until recently, that is.

Last month, I received several reports over the Internet from the USA in which mysterious, glowing fireballs were once again making their appearance in America, Australia, Europe and several other countries.

They have also arrived in spectacular fashion in the north-east of England. Andy Ellis is a UFO investigator from Leeds and belongs to an organisation called Yorkshire UFO Info.

Andy began hearing reports of mysterious fireballs appearing over Consett and Stanley at the same time as I began getting similar reports from colleagues in the same area. We decided to investigate. While Andy contacted witnesses, I contacted the police.

An inspector who was aware of the fireball sightings told me he'd heard suggestions that the phenomenon may be the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights, but it quickly became obvious that this could not even begin to explain the Consett and Stanley sightings.

One of the witnesses stated that the object she saw one evening was "as large as a din-

ner plate held at arm's length."

Another witness said: "It was like a floodlight at a football ground."

Those who have seen the fireballs say they are usually yellow or orange, but can also appear white, blue, or green.

Several Internet sites are now carrying reports of the North Durham fireballs and the phenomenon shows no signs of abating.

In a situation like this, there's only one thing that the dedicated researcher can do; go out in the wilds of north Durham and see for his or herself.

Over the next few days, Andy and I, along with one or two other investigators, will be camping out under the stars and hoping that the fireballs make an appearance.

We'll be equipped with camcorders, cameras, night-vision binoculars and other equipment, so if they do show up, we should have the hard evidence to prove it.

If we should have any close encounters, Bizarre readers will be the first to know.

Don't forget: you can write to Gordon Host via the Gazette or e-mail him directly at gordonhost@lineone.net



Pilot's close encounter with UFO

BY SIMON BIRD

A BRITISH charter jet has had a close encounter with a UFO said to be "the size of a battleship".

The shocked pilot and crew of a Debonair BAe146 plane reported being buzzed by "a long, cylindrical object" as they flew over the North Sea.

Three other pilots have also independently logged seeing the bright object 58 miles off the coast of Denmark.

Last night the Civil Aviation Authority admitted it had received a report of the sighting. It says the crew first became aware of the object after the plane's underside was immersed in "an incandescent light".

A CAA spokeswoman said: "The captain reported seeing an unnatural bright light below his aircraft while flying at 28,000ft. The area below him was illuminated for about 10 seconds by incandescent light and it was certainly not a light from another plane.

"Three other aircraft saw it moving at a high speed or static. However, air traffic control were informed and confirmed there were no other planes in the vicinity. Then, five minutes later, there was a brief radar return from a spot 75 miles away. We believe there was no danger involved."

The Luton-based 96-seater plane was flying executives from Linköping, Sweden, to Humberside airport. A spokesman for Debonair, which runs cut-price flights throughout Europe, said chief executive Franco Mancassola had been informed that a "great red light in the sky" had been

Battleship-sized craft 'buzzed jet'

spotted near a company plane. At one stage, the report says, the UFO came to an abrupt halt before accelerating past the jet at thousands of miles an hour. A CAA source says the object was tracked by a military radar station in Yorkshire after it entered UK air space.

A spokesman for the 6,000 member British Pilots Association said: "We get reports of this nature from our members but they are few and far between. In the past 10 years or so I would say there have been around six cases of UFO's being sighted.

"Many pilots are reluctant to make such claims because it tends to lay them open to ridicule. So when they do go as far as making a report we do expect it to be given credence."

A Ministry of Defence spokesman insisted there were no military aircraft in the area adding: "We saw nothing."

● A councillor in the Stirlingshire village of Bonnybridge has recorded a CD about the thousands of UFO sightings witnessed there in the past decade.

Billy Buchanan plans to send his songs to Roswell in America, scene of the world's most famous UFO incident in 1947.

His accompanying message says: "I believe our two areas have an affinity and I give you greetings from my area to your area. My quest for the truth goes on."

AN INTERNATIONAL UFO magazine opened the IW X Files in its latest issue.

A brief summary of two-and-a-half years of research by Newport resident Richard Cattle was featured as a two-page spread in the May/June issue of *UFO Magazine*.

It features statements from Islanders recounting their UFO experiences from July 1950 up to November 1997.

"I gather newsworthy sightings that have been seen by two or three independent witnesses," said Mr Cattle.

He said the most bizarre account came from two people who saw several UFOs heading from Newport to Godhill in September, 1976.

"The two witnesses saw five discs flying at high speed over the Pan Estate making a noise like heavy thunder. They hovered over Godhill for a little while before heading out to sea very quickly," he said.

His interest in UFOs started after his own sighting on the morning of Sunday, October 13, 1996, at the top of Hunnyhill, Newport.

He saw a bright white light travelling at a medium altitude that appeared to be shrinking and expanding.

Mr Cattle, of St James's Street, said the light then rose to avoid two planes manoeuvring over the Solent, before it disappeared in a westerly direction.

A report of his sighting appeared in the *County Press*, which led him corresponding with other witnesses who saw the object in Ryde and Shanklin.

He does not believe any of the UFO sightings are extra terrestrials, but is unsure exactly what they are.

"I believe the people have seen these UFOs and I just document what they have seen."

"For such a small island there have been a large number of sightings but it does not compare to other areas in this country such as Warrminster and Glastonbury," he said.

Mr Cattle is trying to put together a book on IW UFO sightings and would like anyone with details of recent sightings to call him on 07775 841538.

BY MICHAEL HANLON

Scientist Jill Tarter is certain that her team will soon be making Contact with aliens

IN A LABORATORY high in the rainforest of Puerto Rico is a refrigerator — empty, save for a bottle of champagne which has been there for more than two decades. The only event that will see it uncorked will be earth-shattering. It will be the day humankind learns that we are not alone.

A rather embarrassed Nasa coughed up the funds for SETI — the project to Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence — leaving a dedicated band of scientists to go it alone in their quest to detect a radio signal produced by aliens. But SETI has had a string of recent discoveries which, says its chief scientist, Jill Tarter, indicate the champagne may well be opened rather sooner than anyone had expected.

Jill is the real-life model for Ellie Arroway, the alien-chasing boffin played by Jodie Foster in *Contact*, a recent movie based on the late Carl Sagan's novel; the two were good friends. At a conference in Washington last week on the origins of the universe, she spoke exclusively to *The Express*.

Jill, 55, is as glamorous as her Hollywood counterpart — tall ("Jodie, who I got to know really well, comes up to my shoulder") blonde and very elegant. She got into the "bug-eyed monster" business by accident.

"I was approached back in the Seventies — I was the only person who knew how to program the old computers they were using," she says. "I got hooked on the idea that astronomers and engineers could do experiments that would answer questions that, up to then, had only been tackled by philosophers."

She adds: "My eight-year-old daughter, asked in school what her mother did, said: 'Look for little green men!'" But SETI is not about searching for alien visitors or UFOs. Two huge radio telescopes, at Arecibo in Puerto Rico, and Jodrell Bank, in Cheshire, scan the skies searching for a "narrow band" radio signal.

So far, SETI has searched about 400 nearby stars for intelligent signals. It works on the assumption that aliens would put a message in "code" understandable by

any intelligent life-form — say a "language" based on the atomic spectrum of hydrogen — the most common element in the universe.

We cannot guess what aliens might want to say to us but it is possible that we would feel compelled to reply. But we may not want to broadcast our presence to possibly predatory species. Strict international protocol is in place to govern the nature and timing of any reply.

Jill says that several dozen interesting signals have so far been discovered, though none have been confirmed as alien signals. They could be radio blasts from natural objects such as pulsars or black holes, or possibly from satellites.

Many scientists outside SETI have been sceptical but a string of exciting discoveries show that the chances of us being alone are very small. Many researchers now believe there is a good chance that life evolved on Mars. Even if Martians turn out to be bugs, the fact is that a kind of life has turned up on the first planet where we went looking for it. As Jill says: "Finding a second gene-

sis in our solar system will greatly increase the chances of life being ubiquitous in the universe."

Indeed, last Thursday, it was revealed that another entire solar system had been found, 44 light years away. Three planets orbit a sun-like star called Upsilon Andromedae.

Finding a solar system so close, after so little searching, shows that planets orbiting stars must be the norm — and many astronomers believe that planets around most stars in the galaxy equals billions of potential homes for life. Even if only one per cent have living beings and even if only one per cent of *those* have intelligence, and one per cent of *those* have advanced technology, that is still 100,000 advanced civilisations in the Milky Way alone.

JILL TARTER believes that computers will finally make SETI pay off. "Our new system is five times as good as the old one. In six years we will be able to search 100,000 stars." With similar technology, an alien civilisation 10 light years away could detect our radio broadcasts with ease. But these advances, impressive as they are, used current telescopes; what SETI wants is its own dishes in the California desert that could listen in to a million stars a decade.

"Bill Gates said no to helping us, for the time being," says Jill, although she is confident that with the fast-improving technology at her disposal (the current search is a trillion times more sensitive than when SETI began) champagne corks may be popping long before she retires.

"A signal would make us realise that the difference between us and this other species was vast. I would hope that this knowledge would trivialise the difference between us humans."



SKY'S THE LIMIT: Jill Tarter thinks we will find alien life

58 per cent
of males
believe
in aliens

BY MICHAEL HANLON
SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

FOX MULDER'S suspicion that the truth is out there is shared by the public, it seems.

More than half of us believe that alien intelligence exists - with more men than women showing their gullibility over little green visitors from far-off galaxies.

And nearly everyone thinks that if extra-terrestrials were visiting us our Government would do everything in its power to cover it up, according to a new survey.

Unsurprisingly, sci-fi fans, particularly enthusiasts of the TV series *The X-Files*, are most likely to assume a conspiracy, with 86 per cent expecting the Government to lie.

"Even people who do not believe in UFOs believe the Government wouldn't tell the truth if they knew there was alien life," said Paul Simpson, editor of *Focus* magazine, which polled more than 1,000 people.

Overall, more than 50 per cent of the UK population believes there is intelligent life on other worlds, while 14 per cent don't know. And while 58 per cent of men believe there is alien intelligence, the figure for women is just 43 per cent. "This was a finding we could not explain. Men tend to be slightly more cynical, so this is a bit contradictory," said Mr Simpson.

There were also marked differences in belief in aliens, by age, and geographically. The biggest believers in alien intelligence live in the South West, where more than two-thirds think that we are not alone, while Londoners are the most sceptical. Pensioners were the least likely to accept the idea of extra-terrestrials. "A lot of scientists are coming to the view that alien life is out there," said Mr Simpson. "Our poll shows that

Pilot's close encounter

UFO was 'size of a battleship'

by John Kesby

THE pilot of a Luton-based aircraft who claims to have spotted a UFO "the size of a battleship" was last night said to be on holiday.

The unidentified flying object, said to be a long cylindrical object with windows along the side, was spotted by the startled crew of the Luton-based airline Debonair as they flew over the North Sea.

Firm officials would not name the pilot, but admitted that he had made a report of seeing the bright object 58 miles off the coast of Denmark.

A spokesman said: "He has made a report, but he is on holiday at the moment. The incident happened in February.

"I cannot imagine why it has taken until now to become public."

The Ministry of Defence has insisted that there were no military aircraft in the region at the time.



SAUCER CONCERN:

The poster hanging up in TV's X-Files office. Debonair's pilot's tale suggests the truth might well be out there.

The 96-seater Debonair BAe146, was flying executives from Linköping, Sweden, when the pilot made his astonishing close encounter.

The Civil Aviation Authority has received a report of the sighting, and said the crew became aware of the object after the plane's underside was immersed in "an incandescent light."

Debonair's boss, Franco Mancassola, whose airline operates cut-price flights throughout Europe, has been told of the sighting.

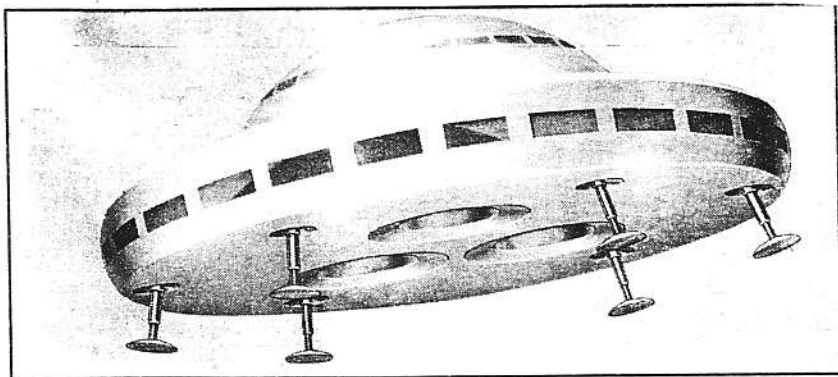
But the firm's spokesman said: "He has got far more important things on his mind at the moment.

"He is opening up a new destination for Debonair at the moment to Perugia in Italy, where he comes from."

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belief in alien life is no longer only the preserve of the lunatic fringe."

Britain's own Fox Mulder is Nick Pope, a Ministry of Defence civil servant who investigated UFO sightings from 1991 to 1994. He says that in about "90 to 95 per cent of cases" he could explain away the alleged UFO sighting. But a small number of

sightings "were really interesting, as far as I was concerned there was definitely an intelligence at work".

However, unlike agent Mulder, Mr Pope never had anyone trying to suppress his findings. "I never got anyone trying to shut me up. Never once did anyone have a quiet word with me to cover up a mysterious sighting.

never once did a witness say that mysterious men in black had turned up at their house after a sighting. There's a lot of paranoia out there.

"Of course, I have been accused of being part of the conspiracy myself, but you just can't win with these people."

Most scientists accept that alien life is almost a certainty, but point out that sending crewed spacecraft across interstellar space is so difficult, time-consuming and expensive that it is much more likely that aliens will choose to communicate with us using radio signals.

Meanwhile, American computer tycoon Joe Firmage has abandoned his £1.2billion business to search for UFOs.

He believes that recent advances in technology, from silicon chips, fibre optics and lasers can be traced back to alien hardware recovered from a spacecraft which allegedly crashed near Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947.

Why the CIA tried to gag me

SEVERAL of my good friends, many with contacts in the American intelligence services, warned me to keep a low profile. Although I knew these warnings were genuine, they were remote and I did not feel intimidated. But there was nothing remote about an encounter my wife Pauline and I had when we flew to Arizona for the World UFO Conference in 1991.

I was delivering a lecture about my investigations into a South African Air Force fighter plane shooting down a UFO over the Kalahari desert in May 1989. Sources had told me the craft and its occupants had been transported to a USAF base.

Pauline and I were sitting in the lounge of the Holiday Inn with four friends, all UFO experts, when two men asked if they could join us. My US friends immediately left: they knew who these two, dark-suited men were and I guessed they were CIA agents. The nice one did all the talking while the other sat in silence, never taking his eyes off me: "Be extremely careful with what you are doing," I was told. "We can stop you if we want to."

I thanked God for my police training and refused to see their air of menace as anything more than a ploy. Then the nice one offered to show me the desert. Not wanting to show any crack in my defence, I agreed to meet them the next morning.

Pauline insisted on going with me. We were shown to a 4WD vehicle bristling with aerials. Once we were completely clear of civilisation, the nice one spoke: "I want to tell you again, just in case you didn't understand. Things you are telling people are not for public knowledge. We can stop you, wherever you are."

They drove us back to the hotel and as they dropped us off Mr Nice said: "We like you both, you are good people. But please be careful." Then he asked me, rather bizarrely, if I would like detailed survey maps of Venus and Mars. Six weeks later, we received a tubular parcel stamped "US Govern-

ment". Inside were two close-up satellite maps of Mars and Venus. But investigations of incidents like the Kalahari landing account for only some of my work. I have communicated with aliens in my work with abductees. On several occasions when I have questioned abductees under hypnosis, I have found myself talking not to them but, through them, to their abductors. Here is an account of one bizarre question-and-answer session I had with an alien abductor:

My subject was describing her abduction when her voice became high-pitched. I knew I was talking directly to her abductor but the policeman in me made me ask: "How can I be speaking to you now when her last abduction was several weeks ago?"

THE voice replied: "You do not understand the nature of things. Time is only something devised by humanity to create an organised society but, in truth, time does not exist." There was an air of condescension to the voice. I replied: "What gives you the right to take people without their knowledge and do these things to them?"

"We have every right," said the voice. "Do you not do things to your lower animals?"

I asked if they were responsible for the strange machines we saw in our skies. But the voice warned that some belonged to other entities which were not friendly. When the abductee came round from the hypnosis, she had no memory of the conversation.

This direct contact did not surprise me as I had experienced my own telepathic communication. I could still enter into dialogue with aliens today but I no longer feel the need to spend cold nights in my car on the door waiting to see UFOs.

● To buy *Alien Investigator* rrp £16.99), for £12.99 plus 99p p&p, id a cheque/postal order to *The Eress Bookshop, 250 Western Aue, London W3 6EE, or call 0870 901.*

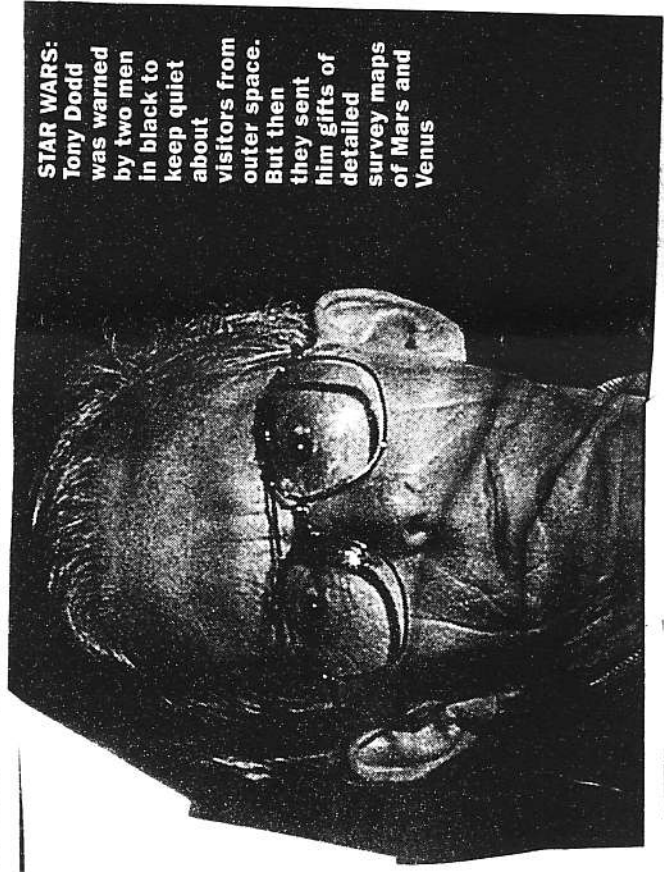
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THE EXPRESS, MONDAY, MARCH 1, 199

STAR WARS: Tony Dodd was warned by two men in black to keep quiet about visitors from outer space. But then they sent him gifts of detailed survey maps of Mars and Venus



Shocked Debonair pilot says: I saw a UFO

A LUTON-based charter jet's close encounter with a UFO is being investigated by aviation experts.

The shocked pilot and crew of the Debonair plane reported seeing an unnatural bright light as they flew over the North Sea.

Three other pilots have also independently logged seeing a long, cylindrical object 58 miles off the coast of Denmark. One described it as "the size of a battleship".

A Civil Aviation Authority spokesman yesterday told *The Luton News* that an official report of the sighting had been submitted.

The pilot of the Debonair BAe146 said an area beneath the 96-seater plane was illuminated for ten seconds by incandescent light which he did not consider to be a landing light. Other witnesses had seen it

ing at high speed or static. The CAA spokesman added: "The captain reported seeing an unnatural bright light below his aircraft while flying at 28,000 feet. It was certainly not a light from another plane."

"Air traffic control was informed and confirmed there were no other planes in the vicinity. Then, five minutes later, there was a brief radar return from a spot 75 miles away. We believe there was no danger involved."

The aircraft was flying executives from Linköping, Sweden, to Humberside airport when the sighting was reported.

A spokesman for Debonair, which is based at Prospect Way, Luton airport, said the airline's chief executive, Franco Mancassola, had been informed that "a great red light in the sky" had been spotted near

Bookseller's Eye

Guru-u-like

Michael Knight
on the books to
change mind,
body and spirit

Occasionally while out shopping I get accosted by a cult member. Typically a tense and unhappy looking acolyte tells me of the great joy he found and I could find by reading some shoddily produced pamphlet. I don't buy one mainly because it doesn't look very attractive, but also because I'm secretly afraid it may indeed prove a life-changing revelation and I'll spend the rest of my life standing in suburban shopping centres dressed head to toe in orange, being laughed at by eight-year-olds.

Enlightenment, however, need not be so embarrassing to come by. All you need to do is walk into any bookshop and head for Mind, Body &, Spirit. . . MBS, as it is known, is the fastest growing section in our shop and, as the catch-all name suggests, it covers the full spectrum of spiritual phenomena (astrology, numerology, telepathy, UFOlogy etc) and an equally wide range of quality, from acknowledged classics such as Gibran's *The Prophet* (Vintage, £8.99) and Sogyal Rinpoche's *Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* (Rider, £7.99), to books written by the sort of people William Shatner needs restraining orders against. If they have a unifying characteristic it is an accessibility and informality not found in traditional religion. This is typified by Neale Donald Walsch's *Conversations with God* (Hodder, £7.99), in which God is portrayed as just an ordinary guy you can ring up any time for a chat, although he'll probably keep you on hold for an eternity.

The blockbuster of these quasi-religious tomes is James Redfield's *Celestine Prophecy* (Bantam, £7.99), though for the full Celestine experience you must read the three follow-ups which lead to the latest *Celestine Vision* (Oracle, £7.99), proving that enlightenment is always lucratively elusive.

There has long been a fascination with all things Indian in MBS. Deepak Chopra who beams beatifically at you from a stream of self-improvement guides such as *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success* (Transworld, £9.99) is the archetypal pop guru, but recently attention has moved to China and Lillian Too, whose Feng Shui titles such as *The Little Book of Feng Shui* (Penguin, £1.99) have been cluttering up the bestseller lists.

Feng Shui in turn is being shoved aside by an influx of books on alien visitors to ancient cultures. Graham Hancock's *Heaven's Mirror* (Michael Joseph £20) and Robert Temple's *Sirius Mystery* (Arrow, £7.99) advance variants of the theory first expounded by Erich Von Daniken and *Earth, Wind & Fire that Egyptian, Mayan and Khmer civilisations were guided by aliens*.

Whether or not you believe their arguments, they are at least well researched and coherently argued, which is not always the case in UFOlogy. There are literally hundreds of books on UFO encounters, Boswell and related government cover-ups whose authors boast an impressive array of letters after their names but whose qualifications, on closer inspection, often come from the kind of universities that give their address as a PO box in Alabama and offer BA(Hons) degrees in book learnin'. For libel reasons I can't name them but I can say that Timothy Good's *Alien Base* (Arrow, £6.99) and Mike Dash's *Borderlands* (Arrow, £6.99) are two of the more reputable titles.

All of which shows there's a thin line between an open mind and gullibility, but who am I to judge? In the great free festival of MBS all ideas are welcome and everyone has their place including, over in the lost children's tent, Julian Cope, whose *Modern Antiquarian* (Harper-Collins, £29.99), a meticulously researched and beautifully presented guide to the pagan sites of Britain, is proving to be a modern MBS classic.

Michael Knight is fiction buyer at Waterstone's Islington, London.

Were UFO lights over the town?

COULD flashing lights in the sky have been a UFO over Ashford?

That is the question Michael Clark is hoping townfolk can help him answer.

Mr Clark, from Beckenham, was staying with friends in Godinton Park during the May Day Bank Holiday weekend.

At 12.20am, on May 4, he was smoking a cigarette in their garden, a mile to the east of the M20, when he noticed a bright light high in the sky.

He said: "At first, I thought it was a planet, or an aircraft, but as I watched over the space of two minutes, more lights appeared, until there were 10 in a triangle formation.

"The first one was dark yellow but, as more lights appeared, they changed to bright orange."

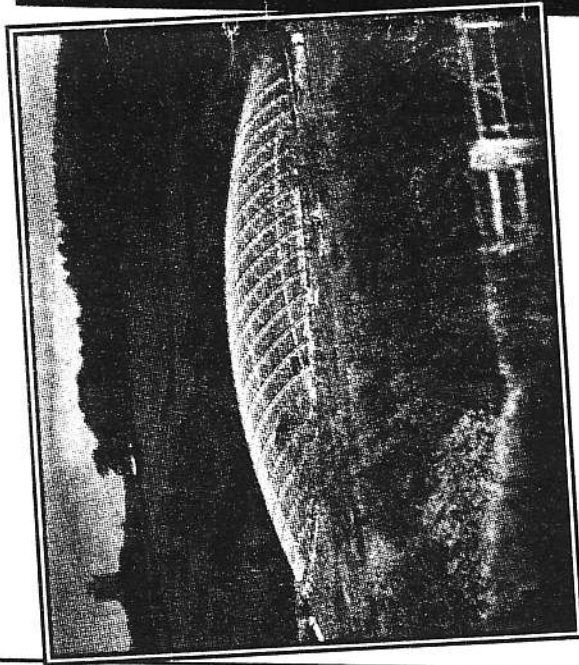
The lights, travelling from east to west, flashed on and off before seeming to merge and disappear.

Mr Clark is keen to hear from anyone who spotted the lights, or can explain what they might be.

Contact him through the *Kentish Express*, on 01233 623232.

The UFO

(No, not ET's spaceship ... just an Unusual Flower Outhouse)



By AMANDA EVANS

SHIMMERING in the dark, it seems to hover eerily above the valley - an alien in the Welsh hillsides.

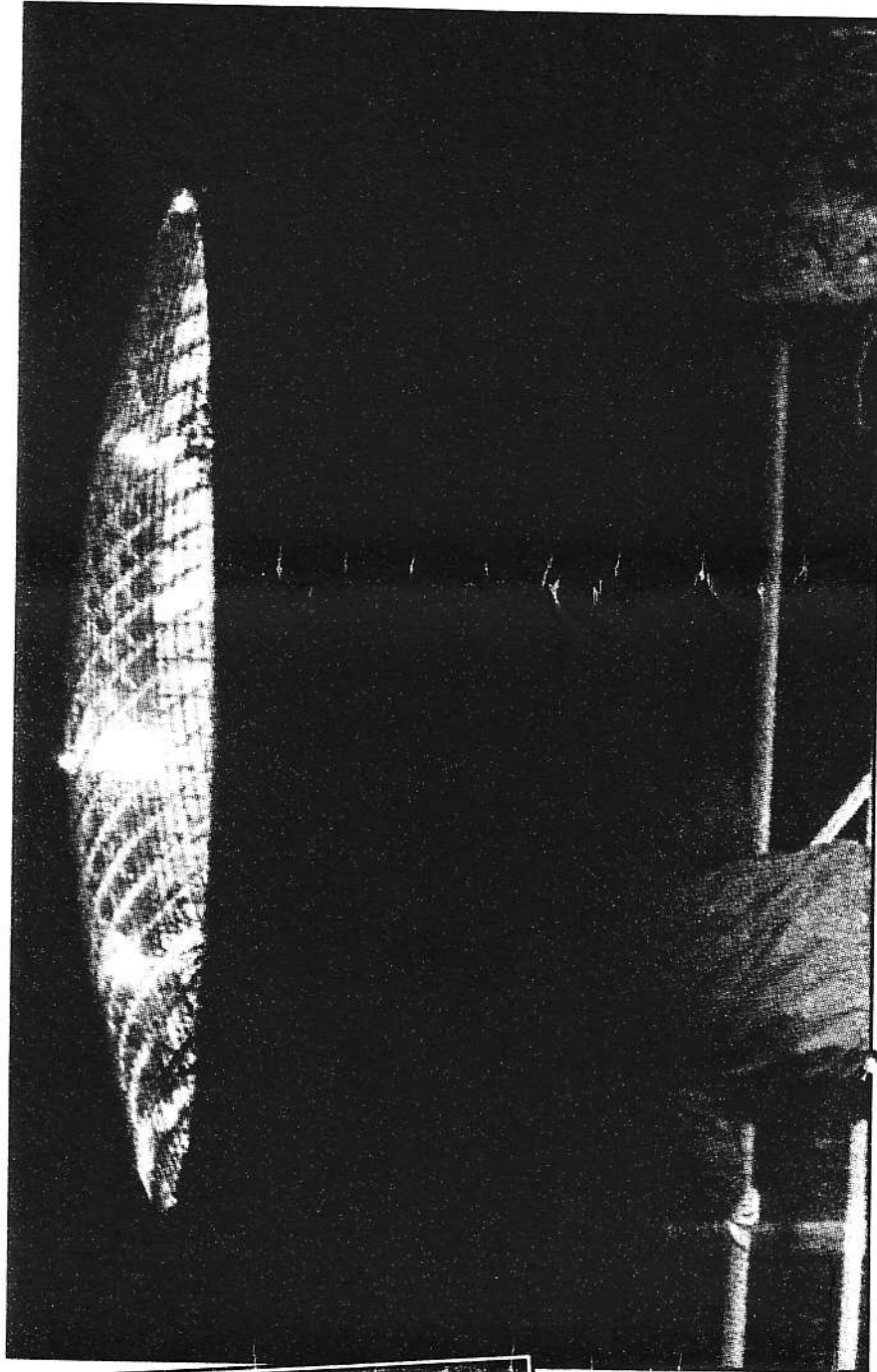
As stunned passers-by stop to get a look at the saucer shape, they could be forgiven for thinking a close encounter with ET is on the cards.

But as dawn breaks, closer inspection reveals not an intergalactic spaceship, but a man-made landmark that's very much down-to-earth - the Great Glasshouse, centre-piece of the £43million National Botanic Garden of Wales. It stands on a hill at the heart of the garden near the hamlet of

Light fantastic: Great Glasshouse by night (right) and by day (above)

Llanarthne in Carmarthenshire, with superb vistas over the surrounding Towy Valley. Designed by architects Sir Norman Foster and Partners, the building is 300ft long and 180ft wide.

When completed, it will be the



world's largest single-span glasshouse. Under its gleaming protective canopy, it will contain a gigantic collection of the world's most spectacular flowers and plants.

Visitors will be taken on an intriguing journey through some

of Earth's most endangered ecosystems - including those of Chile, California, South West Australia, South Africa, the Mediterranean Basin and the Canary Islands.

Although the Great Glasshouse

is not due to open to the public until Easter next year, its spaceship-style illusion is already turning it into a tourist attraction.

During the day, visitors stop to take snaps. At night, drivers halt to make sure it isn't a UFO.