

Meet the newest member of Rent-a-Row.

That's yours truly, who is qualified simply by spotting a UFO. And talking about it.

There are few easier ways of starting an argument than admitting to a UFO experience.

"There's no such thing as a UFO," say the sceptics. "It was a plane or a satellite," is their explanation.

So that the only sympathetic hearing UFO believers get is from fellow spotters.

But at least we are a growing number, particularly in the Keighley area. And I am happy to put myself on the opposite side to the believe-you-not brigade. Especially after the ridicule which greeted my recent UFO sighting.

I was waiting for the 8.50 a.m. bus at Eastburn when I saw it. Yes, and someone else saw it too.

It was brilliant white and long, oval, resembling an inverted flame in shape. Appearing from nowhere about 40 yards above Eastburn Moor, it made its speedy journey of descent to the horizon beyond the moor in about ten seconds.

While I watched for the object's reappearance, the other witness, Mrs. Margaret Catlow, of James Avenue, Eastburn, was seeking reassurance of her sanity from her husband and a friend. But there was none of that for the two men had been engrossed in the fascinating sight of the village refuse collection.

I had just stepped in to confirm what she had seen when the bus came. I spent the journey listening to the woman's husband slowly but surely convincing her that what she had "really" seen was the vapour trail, or lights, of a low-flying aircraft.

I had to catch my witness before the brainwashing ceremony was complete.

Bravely, Mrs. Catlow stood by what she had seen: "It was like a big bright light and it dropped down to the ground and

disappeared. I don't know much about UFOs; I don't know if I believe in them or not — my husband doesn't believe in them, he says it was an aeroplane I saw — but I have seen aeroplane lights before and it wasn't that. "I've never seen anything like it before."

That was the end of that. But two days later (although I haven't openly admitted this) I saw another. Same place same time. But there were no other witnesses.

This time the object was longer, very narrow but the same brilliant white.

I watched it make the same trail of descent as its predecessor down on to the village moor — not the sort of journey an aircraft's vapour trail would be likely to make.

It was much more inconspicuous than the previous one and I probably wouldn't have noticed it had I not had my eyes peeled on the spot after the previous day's experience.

Now for the real secrets. I spotted my first UFO three years ago. A brilliant orange saucer-shaped object, it hovered low on the horizon over Riddlesden for about ten minutes before shooting upwards and disappearing.

again it was hovering over Riddlesden, but this time it was early morning.

And on this occasion I was treated to a real space show. The object started off in a vertical position looking like a narrow, glowing line.

It stayed like that for about ten minutes then in the next half hour it gradually altered position until it was horizontal and saucer-shaped. Then suddenly the saucer divided into two and both the identical objects travelled upwards and disappeared.

If you are a regular reader of the Keighley News you will know that I'm by no means the only one in the vicinity tuned in to UFOs.

On New Year's Eve busmen Neil Slater and Maurice Hunnable sighted "a flying saucer" above Keighley Library. Maurice said: "The object was shaped like a tilted saucer and had a number of windows like portholes down the side, plus a dome on top. The portholes were black. It was a frightening experience."

"I thought I was seeing things, so I stopped the car and asked Neil if he could see it as well. He had already noticed it and we sat watching as it moved off slowly towards Skipton. It was huge

and seemed to be giving off a glowing light."

The sighting was at 5 a.m. as the men drove to work. "I first spotted it over the library as we drove up Cavendish Street," said Maurice. "We were both a bit shaken afterwards."

"Neither of us had been drinking the night before and there was no way we could have been fooled by a trick of the light. The object was real enough."

Shipley man Mr. G. Walsh said he had seen the object too. "It appeared as a cluster of blue lights, which were almost stationary except for a side-to-side motion," was how he saw it.

Maurice Hunnable's description of the UFO was similar to that of a sighting in Bradley in September, 1977.

Yvonne Adamson, of Ings Drive, Bradley, and her boyfriend, Philip Quinlan, saw "an upside-down flying saucer" with a central dome and bright lights on top and on the side.

Smaller flashing lights surrounded the object and there were tiny red lights underneath.

It was about the size of a car roof, said Yvonne, and it hovered over her home for about 15 minutes before disappearing.

Bradley folk have not been backward about coming forward.

Jane's mother, Mrs. Greta Adamson, said she had seen a silver object hovering over Cononley earlier in 1977. "All of a sudden the object shot straight up into the sky. It went so fast it wasn't true," she said.

Mr. Horace Walmsley, of Sunny Road, Bradley, saw a "lit-up object" speeding towards Silsden at 4.15 one morning. And still in 1977, Mr. Brian Gawthorpe, of Bradley, noticed a semi-circular path appear in his lawn overnight.

"The whole lawn was coming up a lovely fresh green, then suddenly there appeared this full semi-circle as though it had been worn," he said leaving us to our own conclusions.

Sightings have been reported in other areas. Jane Bastow believes she saw a UFO while looking out of her office window at Haworth.

"It was like a very bright star set low in the sky. It started rising and moving to the right then kept moving up and down, fading and getting brighter."

This was at about 4.30 p.m. one afternoon when no other "stars" were out.

If you've had a close encounter of the third kind, I'd like to hear about it. Telephone me on Keighley 606611.