



Space invaders over Barnsley

Martin Oxley checks up

We are not alone . . . Unidentified Flying Objects have been buzzing Barnsley for years. Local folk have spotted numerous strange objects and lights floating above the Barnsley skyline. A UFO is even alleged to have landed on the fairway of Barnsley Golf Club. Trouble is though, the flying-saucer rush-hour tends to be around midnight. And that's just when us Earthlings are wending our way home from pubs and clubs. This makes alcohol and its Pink Elephant effect the stock excuse trundled out to explain lights in the sky.

This one-over-the-eight theory was used when four local men had a close encounter at the golf club 15 years ago.

Four men turned out of a local pub and were walking by the course at around 11.30 p.m. They saw an object about 20 to 30 feet across come out of the sky and gently land on the course.

On closer observation, it turned out to be of the dome-shaped variety beloved of cartoonists, and after lingering for a while took off and headed for the heavens. The men went to the police, but the bemused sergeant told them they had drunk too much in the pub and said he was not going to fill in a report sheet for anything so "stupid".

Yet the men claim to have been later visited by a group of people whose identity they still don't know. They were interviewed individually and can only presume the police passed on the tip-off.

More recent sightings include:-

*October 1977, Wortley. A bright light seen from Stockbridge heading over Wortley towards Barnsley.

*January 1, 1979, Wath. New Year's Eve revellers out in early hours of morning spot luminous silver cigar-shaped starship hovering over Barnsley Road, Wath. The ship was a little bigger than a hand at arms length (the approved method for gauging size) and was surrounded by a battery of coloured lesser lights. After a while it picked-up the lights and moved off.

*April 1980, 4 a.m., Darton. A bright red light is stationary in the clear night sky for five minutes before describing a circle of two to three miles diameter.

*August 26, 1980, 3 a.m., Kendray. A man taking his alsatian for an early morning stroll to a cigarette machine is confronted by a large dusty red saucer-shaped object hovering 50 feet above houses. His alsatian, normally a fearless beast, bolted and cowered in the distance.

Local sightings are logged by the Aetherius Society whose local H.Q. is in the old police station at Birdwell.

"We believe that some of the things which are seen are in fact craft intelligently-guided which are here to try and help us." said branch organiser Paul White.

"We believe, with quite good evidence, that there has been an official sitting-on of the subject in this country — a cover-up.

Some of the aerospace experts explanations for flying saucers have included:

—Earth's own satellites basking in sunlight above the Earth after the terrestrial dusk; the landing lights of jets; escaped weather balloons; car headlights on low clouds and flocks of geese reflecting the sunlight.

"One of the classic put-downs," says Mr. White, "came after a New Zealand sighting a couple of years ago, when a new-sreel team captured a bright object on film. It was variously explained as Venus, Jupiter and a flock of mutton birds coming in to mate.

"Yet three independent radar sets tracked them at 10,000 miles an hour. They must have been pretty desperate in their mating!"

Watch out when you're down in the pub tonight playing on the space invaders. Glance over your shoulder now and then. We are not alone.

Have you seen a UFO? The Aetherius Society would like to hear from you. They collate sightings in the Barnsley area and will treat all reports in confidence. Contact Barnsley branch organiser Mr. Paul White, 150 Sheffield Road, Birdwell, Barnsley. Telephone Barnsley 744650. The society are also chairing a public debate on UFO's in the Central Library, Shambles Street, Barnsley, on December 9.