

# Cathedral zappers!

AN ALIEN spaceship "zapped" York Minster — that's the amazing claim of two drivers who say they saw a glowing zeppelin-shaped UFO swoop over the cathedral on the night of the blaze.

Churchmen yesterday laughed off the theory as out of this world and local RAF bases reported no UFO sightings. But the drivers, Bill Whitehead, of Haxby, and Eddie Acaster, of Huntingdon, are now hoping other witnesses will come forward.

Churchmen yesterday laughed  
DAILY MIRROR 2 JULY 1984 IAN MURRAY

# RAY GUN ZAPPED THE MINSTER SAY UFO MEN

D. Star 19 July 84 AS+BMB

TWO drivers claimed yesterday that York Minster was zapped by an alien spaceship the night of the big blaze.

They say they saw a cigar-shaped UFO over the cathedral just before the £1 million fire.

Taxi driver Bill Whitehead, 44, of Haxby, York, said it sent down orange-coloured rays.

And van driver Eddie Acaster, 55, said independently that the object glowed bright orange and left a white vapour trail.

He made a quick sketch of it from his home in Huntingdon, York.

Both men said they had not come forward sooner for fear of being ridiculed. Now they hoped others who might have seen it may speak out.

Churchmen were not impressed by the UFO theory, though, Minster

## Fainthatted

Sir, — If the Dean of York believes that "God loves this place and . . . the people who work in it," can he explain why the archbishop felt he needed to wear a workman's helmet when he inspected the ruins? Louis Reynolds.  
Monyash, Derbyshire.

Guardian  
July 20 84

### STAR REPORTER

Canon Michael Bowering asked:

"Have these chaps seen opticians lately?"

And a senior North Yorks fire officer added: "We are investigating certain leads about the cause of the blaze — but a UFO attack is not one of them."

### Airfields

Checks with five RAF bases and three civil airfields in the area revealed that no aircraft were seen in the vicinity at the time of the reported sightings — Nor were there any official UFO sightings.

# York Minster 'hit by UFO'

Minor 19 July 84

AN ATTACK by an alien spaceship started the fire which badly damaged York Minster last week, it was claimed yesterday.

Taxi driver Bill Whitehead, 44, of Haxby, York said he saw a cigar-shaped UFO send down a ray while it was over the cathedral at the time.

Van driver Eddie Acaster, 55, of Huntingdon,

# by UFO'

York, claimed a similar sighting and made a sketch of the UFO.

A senior fire officer said: "We have certain leads to the cause of the fire, but a UFO attack is not one of them."

## York Minster fire

SIR—The suggestion that the fire in York Minster was caused by St. Elmo's fire (Aug. 1) is improbable as St. Elmo's fire affords protection in much the same way as a lightning conductor.

St. Elmo's fire is the discharge of static electricity during a period of intense electrical activity. It is generally seen as a ball of blue light hovering at the top of ships masts or on aircraft fuselage when passing through a severe thunderstorm.

Some years ago a friend was out on a small yacht in the English Channel during a severe thunderstorm at night when St. Elmo's fire appeared at the mast head. Shortly afterwards several tremendous flashes of lightning descended into the sea all around the yacht and there is little doubt that the yacht was not struck because of St. Elmo's fire at the mast head.

Had St. Elmo's fire occurred on the lightning conductors on the South Transept roof York Minster would probably have survived the storm.

D. J. BRADBURY  
Sheffield.

VM Telegraph 8 Aug 84

attempted suicide.  
36 July 84 Telegraph  
MINSTER FIRE

'CAUSED BY LIGHTNING'

The fire which devastated part of York Minster earlier this month was probably caused by lightning, North Yorkshire Fire Brigade said last night.

A spokesman said that in a report to the Home Office this week it would be revealed that Meteorological Office satellite photographs taken over the York area at the time showed a cloud formation known to produce lightning bolts.

He denied reports that a "ball of lightning" phenomenon known as St Elmo's Fire was a probable cause. "I don't know where this idea came from, but it certainly plays no part in our preliminary report to the Home Office."

## 'Freak bolt' hit Minster

A FREAK bolt of lightning set York Minster a blaze, fire chiefs revealed yesterday.

And they said the £3 million disaster could have been averted but for a five-metre blind spot in the Cathedral's fire detection system.

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