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UFO author details sightings

THE recent claims that alleged flying saucers have once again been spotted in the skies over Burnley came as no surprise to self-styled UFO expert Stephen Brown.

Not that he has yet had time to evaluate the sighting reported by Mr Paul Quinn (Burnley Express, August 13th), but Mr Brown is convinced that extra-terrestrials have been interested in our solar system for some time.

He is the leading light behind the Lancashire Centre for UFO Spotters, and he is not at all worried that many people might scoff at the idea of visitors from outer space. In fact, Mr Brown is the first to tell people that in many cases there is a perfectly logical, material explanation for the strange objects in the sky.

But, as he points out in a detailed document he has just published on the subject, "there are many

explanations, but there is still a large amount that cannot be explained."

SIGHTINGS

Mr Brown, of Queen Victoria Road, Burnley, has spent two years collecting information for his work "UFOs Over Lancashire," and it contains reports of many sightings, going as far back as 1869. It also details the stand taken by the Ministry of Defence on the issue.

Prior to 1962, UFO reports were not even retained by the ministry, and although records are kept, the "sightings," explained or otherwise, are not investigated in case they are considered a matter of concern from a defence standpoint. "This is almost never the case," says Mr Brown.

Despite his interest and work in the field, Mr Brown has never seen anything unexplained himself, although the Burnley and Pendle area would seem to have been "visited" several times.

Among the sightings he reports are:

May 8th, 1869: Several witnesses saw what looked like a "fiery flying goose" with a comet-like trail, flying around the Fence area and alighting in a field.

November/December, 1953: Three separate reports of "silvery objects" hovering in the sky in Burnley and Brierfield. All the descriptions were similar and the object was moving at incredible speed.

November 1958: More than a dozen Burnley people reported two strange objects over Burnley, on the same evening. Every description tallied in that it was silver, cylindrical, and moving silently with no vapour trail.

June, 1977: Perhaps the most bizarre reports came in throughout this month. Two separate sightings were reported over Nelson Cemetery. Both were described in great detail as having inverted portholes, a dome and a blue, flashing light at one end, and the sightings were at exactly the same time — 1 p.m. in the afternoon on a bright, sunny day.

CEASED

A Nelson man also claimed to have followed by a UFO as he and his wife travelled home from Manchester on their motor cycle.

They claimed the silent, silver cigar-shaped object "locked" on to them and chased them from Salford to Bury.

Shortly after this, three Burnley women reported seeing the same object actually in Burnley. One of them tried to follow it in her car as it passed over the Trafalgar area of Burnley, but said it moved off silently at incredible speed.

May/June, 1979: Two reports of "lights" over Pendle Hill and Towneley Park. The "lights" hovered and then streaked across the sky at great speed.

September, 1981: A Burnley housewife described what she first thought was a shooting star at 1-30 a.m. in the morning. She became suspicious when the star suddenly burst into a "blaze of coloured lights" and seemed to take on a horse-shoe shape, before disappearing.

1983: Four sightings over Burnley and Nelson. They varied from sets of lights, pulsating cigar-shaped objects, to a thin, green streak of light passing at speed through the sky.

January, 1984: Two Burnley sightings within days of each other of a bright light moving slowly over rooftops then disappearing vertically and silently into the night.

Mr Brown is certain there are many other reports to be had, and he hopes to publish them in a second volume in the future. His first book contains further reports from all over Lancashire and he wants to collect them together, not only for the interest of the Lancashire UFO spotters group, but because there has never been any publication concentrating just on Lancashire.

For confirmed "ufo-ologists" none of the reported sightings seem surprising, but even the sceptical among the population are being slowly converted to the idea that strange phenomena do occasionally appear in the sky.

In fact, according to Mr Brown, the very reason the Ministry of Defence decided in 1962 to retain reported sightings was: "in response to increasing public interest in the subject."