

Handwritten: Harold Covington

# WHERE HAVE ALL THE UFOs GONE?

NINETEEN Eighty-Five will go down in history as the year that earthbound statues moved, swayed, smiled, wept bled and generally did everything but organise protest marches to the

Dial about the Family Planning Act.

But for UFO-watchers, 1985 was the bumper of all time. Up in the heavens, nothing was moving except Halley's Comet.

There was a dramatic fall-off in the number of UFO sightings this year, according to Dubliner Owen McQuail, who logs all such manifestations on behalf of an organisation called Spectrum.

And the 44-year-old printing compositor is intrigued by the apparent link between the reduction in flying-saucer sightings and the amazing INCREASE in "paranormal happenings" at ground-level.

"The number of sightings does tend to rise and fall from year to year, but 1985 has been unique in my experience," says Owen.

"Only two sightings have been recorded this year — one in April and one in November — as compared with around eight in 1984 and literally hundreds in each previous year."

Owen, who is married with two children, is intrigued by the apparent connection between this slump and the increase in spooky happenings on earth.

Among these are several reports of ghost-sightings — but he's not quite sure whether to include the moving statue phenomenon.

I still haven't worked out the significance of this link, but at least it's keeping the organisation occupied — we haven't had many UFO's to discuss," he explains.

Only three years ago, in 1982, Owen was able to tell SUNDAY WORLD that UFO sightings had become almost too numerous to list.

In 1985, however, the boring lack of action in the sky has taken its toll on his organisation.

Spectrum, which is linked with the Irish UFO and Psychological Research Organisation, used to have 300 members

Now there are only around 30.

"It's only to be expected," says Owen, who uses his own home as Glasmeen Drive, Glasnevin, as a base for monitoring and investigating UFO reports.

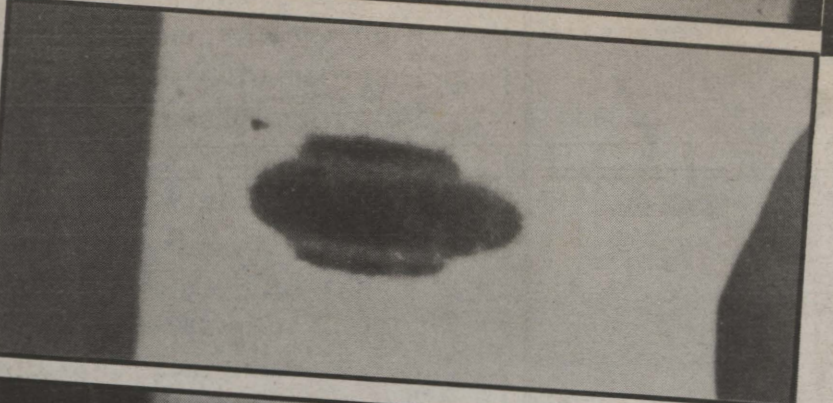
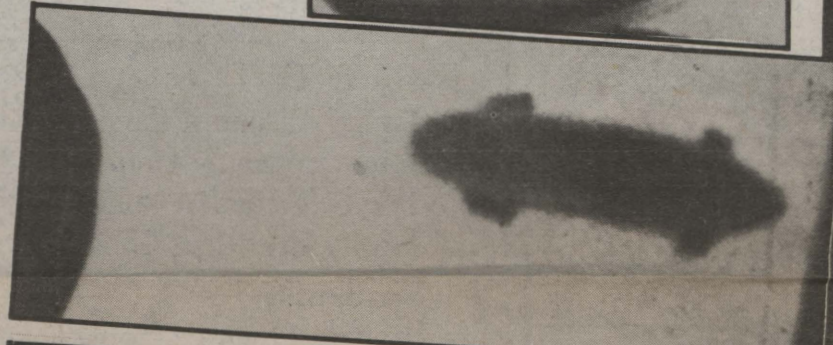
"When there's nothing

## UFO over Ireland?

• ABOVE: This strange object was reportedly photographed by two young women motoring near Cappoquin, Co. Waterford on St. Stephen's Day 1965. It was described as having left a "baloon" of electrified air in its wake as it sped across the horizon.



• RIGHT: A UFO alleged to have been snapped by Cedric Allingham published in his book 'Flying Saucer from Mars.' The top picture purports to show the saucer on the ground; the lower one, how it touched down.



• ABOVE: What Joan Oldfield 'photographed' from the window of a plane over Cannock, Staffordshire.

## right spooky

happening, people get bored and drop out for a while. When UFO activity picks up, membership will probably increase again.

"At the moment we're down to a hard core of dedicated members."

At its peak, Spectrum had pilots, gardai, farmers, teachers and housewives in its organisation. Even now, its 30 members include people from all

walks of life — among them are a hypohist, a telephone technician and a store detective.

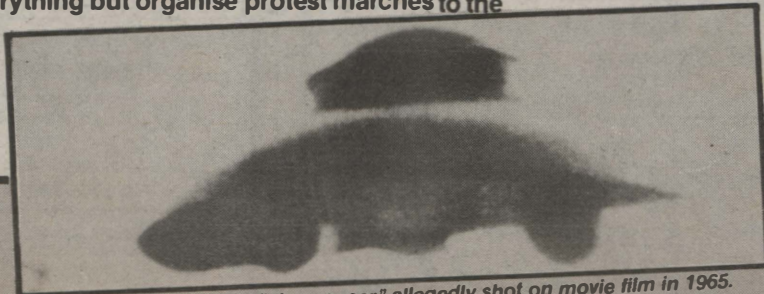
It's not an association for hippies and dopeheads. It's members are level-headed individuals who happen to believe that there are other beings in the universe, and that they are capable of visiting earth.

"We're not talking about little green men in sardine

cans," says Owen, firmly. "But it would be naive and parochial to assume that we are the only intelligent beings in the universe."

He's not sure how these other beings manifest themselves. "If they come from other planets, they must use some means of travel we do not understand."

"Even to journey from



• George Adamski's "flying saucer," allegedly shot on movie film in 1965.

## It's a bird, it's a plane...

OVER the years, there have been many reports of UFOs over Ireland. They include:

**CABINTEELY 1968:** Timothy Costello was looking at the stars through a telescope when he saw an object that came as low as tree level, where it remained stationary for about 30 seconds before moving off. There was no noise. Its shape was oval.

The same object was seen independently by Aer Lingus employee Conal O'Rafferty, who said he thought at first it was a low-flying plane, "but it was travelling too slow, and although the night was quiet, there was no noise at all".

**NEWBRIDGE, 1975:** Majella O'Rourke, a publican's daughter then aged 13, saw a large, luminous egg-shaped object hovering over the back garden of her home. As she called for her mother, the UFO began to spin rapidly, making a loud humming sound. Before it vanished a matter of minutes later, her mother saw the craft revolving at high speed with green and red lights flashing from it.

**KERRY, 1975:** Roger Burke, a commercial pilot, was flying from Kerry to Dublin when he spotted five glittering objects in a V-formation flying across the top of Magillicuddy Reeks. Shannon Airport had nothing on its monitor. Five passengers in the aircraft also witnessed the UFOs.

**NEWBRIDGE, 1976:** Two teenagers, Christopher Hannon and Michael McDermott, were walking through a field near their home early one evening when a circular object about four meters in diameter began hovering over them.

Michael had an Instamatic with him, and he took at least 12 pictures which were authenticated by experts.

**CLONTARF, 1979:** AA patrolmen reported seeing a brilliant red ball travelling very rapidly in a north-northwest direction from Dun Laoghaire direction, across Coolock towards north County Dublin. The object emitted a small, very bright white light under itself; the redness diffused and left only the white light travelling northwards. Patrolmen had experience of marine flares and were adamant this was not the explanation, although they were open to the possibility that the object could have been a meteorite.

**HOWTH, 1982:** Dublin woman Pat Laffan saw a red cigar-shaped object hanging, as if suspended by a string, in the sky near Lambay Island. It stayed steady for a few moments before dropping into the sea. Howth Lifeboat station said there were no flares fired at sea that night.

## LATEST SIGHTINGS

**APRIL 1985:** Electrical technician from Raheny was watching the night sky outside his home — astronomy is his hobby — when he saw an object that stood out from the other heavenly bodies.

It was fuzzy and stationary, and had none of the flickering "projections" of the typical star.

Witness rushed into the house to get his binocular. Through the glass, he saw it was not one object, but five smaller units that appeared to "dance" around the larger nucleus.

As he watched, the small objects became enveloped in the larger "mother ship", which then took off at incredible speed.

### First sight

**NOVEMBER, 1985:** Meteorologist was looking out to sea from Skerries pier in a north-easterly direction when he saw an object which at first sight looked like an aircraft.

Made curious by its apparent lack of motion, he looked at it through a telescope. It remained motionless for at least 30 seconds as he studied it. The object was cigar shaped, not recognisable as any conventional aircraft, and had a metallic silver appearance accentuated by the sunlight.

It had two protuberances: the one at the "front" emerged horizontally from the side while the other stuck up vertically from the top.

The object, which was also seen by the witness's companion, moved off very rapidly in a northerly direction.

INTERESTING LINK BETWEEN MOVING STATUES AND DECREASED UFOs.

# Since they have

## 'gone to

## ground'

## there's

## been a

## turn-up!

the nearest star system to ours would require a round trip of nearly ten years, assuming the visitors can travel at almost the speed of light.

"Look further afield, and you're talking in terms of a journey of thousands of years.

"It could be possible that they transport themselves over such vast distances either mentally or psychic-

ally by means of thought transference. That's not such a far-fetched idea — that thought is a kinetic force has been established already by our own scientists."

Another theory is that the visitors come from a "parallel universe" existing on another part of the electro-magnetic spectrum, and that the travellers have managed either

deliberately or accidentally to bridge the gap between their universe and ours.

"Whatever the answer," says Owen, "I am convinced there is a link between UFOs and ghosts. They have a lot in common — they appear and disappear, they can change shape, they may or may not make sounds or carry a smell.

"What this link is, I don't know."

His approach to the problem is to log all sightings of UFOs on a special "UFO Sighting Report Form" which requires the witness to file exact details of size, colour, angle, altitude, speed and other characteristics.

Owen is highly sceptical about most sightings. A large proportion are reported by cranks; others are deliberate hoaxes; and many of the remaining "genuine" sightings are mistakes by people who don't have the experience to tell the difference between a UFO and an Aer Lingus Jumbo.

A lot of reported sightings occur at that time, about an hour after sunset, when a plane flying about seven miles up looks just like a lonely little silver fish in the sky. That's a very popular UFO," he says.

"By this time, we have a

pretty good grasp of what's flying around in the sky at any particular time, so we can filter out these mistakes without too much difficulty."

Also easy to spot are the crank calls. "You'd be amazed at how many people have gone for a trip in a spaceship with Jesus Christ," he says.

"Then there are the people who'll phone you up to tell you that a UFO will land at a certain place, at a certain time. Where they get the prior knowledge, I don't know."

The deliberate hoaxes are a bit harder to filter out. Owen is convinced that at least one highly-publicised, expertly-proven "sighting" in Ireland was an elaborate hoax.

"The hoaxes usually give themselves away by being too pat, too neat," he says.

The remaining reports are thoroughly investigated to rule out any possibility of a "natural" explanation.

And there are enough of them to convince Owen that we are being visited by alien beings — even though, for some unknown reason, they didn't think it worthwhile flying to Ireland in 1985.

And with a summer like this year's who can blame them?