

# Survey reveals amazing Close public encounters opinion of a shared kind



**A** NATIONWIDE survey has revealed an astonishing fact. That the majority of British people believe an invasion of earth from outer space is imminent. Within five years, in fact.

That's the bottom line, but just in case it should be thought the threat is not taken seriously in high places it's as well to note that Reagan and Gorbachev, when not watching each other, have an eye on the heavens. They agreed at their recent summit meeting to combine forces to fight off any alien attack.

Even the Ministry of Defence has come out of the closet to admit there could be something in so-called unidentified atmospheric phenomenon (UAP) or unidentified flying object (UFO) sightings. As a result of pressure from the House of Lords it released reports to the British UFO Research Association.

Even so the cynics will scoff. For a start the statisticians are on their side when they say that if there are a million other civilizations in the galaxy, and if all the planets are worth looking at, then should each civilization launch a starship annually we on earth could expect a visit every 10,000 years. And cynics pride themselves on being able to spot cranks when they're 10,000 light years distant.

Yet close encounters of a shared kind have been experienced close at hand by people who, until something happened to them, were the first to dub all reports as lunatic.

Elsie Perry ("... UFOs were just hearsay to me until I had two encounters") saw an upside-down ice cream cone-shaped object flying just above the telegraph poles near Bois Hill, Wingerworth. A bus load of people saw something odd at the same time.

In June, 1964, June Skinner witnessed a strange happening in the Staveley sky.

"I'd never seen anything like it before," she said.

"I'm very good at recognizing planes after working in the RAF, but this craft was definitely not a plane and was not on any flight path."

Travelling from Mastin Moor towards Chesterfield, it was semi-circular and had bright lights on the front and underside. It made a quiet hum as it passed overhead.

And an object like a star with blue and red flashing lights was spotted over Shuttlewood last August by Elsie Lee who, until that time, had seen nothing despite an active involvement with the Chesterfield UFO Society.

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*By Tony Cragg*

She said: "I keep an open mind and don't read science fiction books. I don't know if it was a space craft but it was not an object I can identify." And she had a witness. Pe Mark Turner watched the object for about 35 minutes before it moved off in the direction of Dronfield.

It's no use trying to explain to those who have seen the lights that it would take the inhabitants of our nearest star system — Alpha Centauri — nearly 100 years to make the round trip to earth, always assuming their craft could travel at 10 million miles an hour. It's no use pushing statistical improbability down their throats; they just won't swallow it. After all, as everybody knows, there are lies, bloody lies — and statistics.

People do see the unexplainable. Whether it is because of physical reality or because of psychic or metaphysical effect, they will continue to see things. Not that there's anything new in it. Some cave drawings have been interpreted as images of flying saucers.

And there could be a touch of the primeval about reported happenings. A year or so ago, travelling from Buxton to Chesterfield late at night, I heard a terrible screeching coming from the hillside and, at the same time, the car lights went out. The sound stopped, the lights came on again. I didn't see anything — not then anyway — but felt a malevolent presence. I, too, then saw the light.

We can't all be candidates for the funny farm. We can't all be cranks. J. Allen Hynes, consultant to an investigation into UFO activity by the US Air Force, coined the phrase *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. It's been done to death but for those who have experienced something (and recorded events are legion) there's one comfort. The weight of evidence is impressive: encounters have often been of the shared kind.

Unfortunately, however, it's cold comfort — as cold as space itself.