

Hotline link for UFO spotters

by PHILIP SHERWELL

THE Tibetians call them pearls in the sky and the Bible talks of chariots of fire. We know them by the somewhat less prosaic name of flying saucers.

The name itself implies a certain degree of scepticism in their existence and it is this attitude that the Aetherius Society is battling to overcome.

The latest move by these flying saucer lobbyists is the installation of a UFO telephone hotline — the number is 01 731 1094.

"For years people reporting sightings to the authorities have been made to feel foolish by

the totally ludicrous explanations they have been given," says Dr. Richard Lawrence, the full-time secretary of the society in Europe.

"The hotline offers these people the chance of being taken seriously."

The Westcountry has always been a good source of sightings and two UFO reports from Devon and Cornwall have already come in since the hotline service was introduced earlier this month.

One couple spotted two UFOs at Seaton. One of the objects was a very bright orange light which appeared immense and hovered low in the sky for about five minutes

before blinking out. Then a red light flew past at an estimated 300-400 mph.

At St. Breock an Essex holidaymaker saw a cigar-shaped UFO shoot past at a "phenomenal" speed before suddenly disappearing. The Aetherians believe the cigar-shaped craft are the mother ships from which the saucers emerge.

It is the ability of extraterrestrial objects to "blink out," travel faster than the speed of light, in flight paths that no known phenomena can repeat, that Dr. Lawrence says makes standard Ministry of Defence explanations ridiculous.

The Aetherians travel

to Devon each year to visit Holdstone Down, near Combe Martin, which they regard as a holy mountain. This annual pilgrimage attracts enthusiasts from all over the world.

Dr. Lawrence, who has had sightings himself at Holdstone Down and Bude, believes flying saucer activity in the region ties in with its history of mysticism.

"Significant magnetic forces are at play in certain parts of the earth and the Westcountry is one of them. These forces are of great importance," he claims.

But that's another story.