

Yorkshire has been identified as a hotspot for the UFO. SUSAN MITCHELL investigates

Pie in the sky . . . or real visitors from space?

A WOMAN from Wakefield who stood and watched as a saucer shaped object carrying three silver suited spacemen landed in her garden may not have been imagining things, according to UFO researchers.

In fact they say Yorkshire has become a hotspot for UFOs and experts are so keen to investigate sightings that they have launched a 24-hour UFO hotline for the region.

One Yorkshire family contacted the UFO enthusiasts after seeing a dazzling blue and white spacecraft above the A1 near Grantham. When they pulled into a lay-by to investigate the object disappeared.

It is claimed that the first flying saucer in modern times was identified on June 24, 40 years ago, when Mr Kenneth Arnold, a pilot, spotted nine bizarre objects zig-zagging over the mountains on America's west coast.

He described them as: "a chain of saucer-like things" and they became dubbed "flying saucers." In an attempt to solve the mystery

he later wrote a book called "The Coming of the Saucers".

Since then there have been thousands of sightings of objects ranging from flying saucers to cigars, triangles, rectangles, spheres, blimps, tops and lights.

And reports have not just come from people walking dogs at closing time — doctors, business executives, police, servicemen and even the former United States President, Mr Jimmy Carter, claimed to have spotted UFOs.

The co-ordinator of the UFO hotline, Mr Phillip Mantle, of Batley, a member of the British

UFO Research Organisation, believes that thousands of people have experienced Encounters of the Third Kind — actual contact between people and alleged alien craft.

"The 24-hour hotline, which covers Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Lancashire, should encourage people to come forward and tell us what they have seen. We can then begin the process of investigation," he said.

Yorkshire, he says, is particularly renowned for its UFO sightings: "We have had reports of startling lights coming from the

sky in South Yorkshire and of circular objects spotted in Leeds: North Yorkshire is also very good for sightings."

Past mysteries include bright shapes seen over Carleton Moor, near Skipton; three large white glowing balls of light seen mid-way between Skipton and Grassington and reports of white lights moving from a valley in Halifax.

In Leeds two 14-year-old girls reported seeing a large cluster of lights as they played in Meanwood Valley. A grey low-flying object landed on the grass and then, with

a low humming noise, took off again.

"Yorkshire is known as something of a hotspot for UFO's and we have been amazed by the response we have had from people — we are busy investigating all reports," said Mr Mantle.

Some reports turn out to be clouds, meteors, aircraft, ball lightning, lighthouses, tricks of the light, reflections, the planet Venus, alcohol, hallucinations, and even badgers.

Others are harder to explain away — in 1976 a fighter pilot

chased a UFO the size of a Boeing 707 across the skies above Tehran.

He described it as an intensely brilliant object with flashing lights. Suddenly a smaller bright object descended from it and rushed towards him at unbelievable speed.

He attempted to fire a missile, but all his weapons and communication systems suddenly failed.

The smaller object rejoined the mother ship which landed on the ground casting a glow up to two miles around it.

This comes not from a science fiction movie but straight from the pages of a CIA report which was kept secret until the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act.

According to Mr Mantle this is just one of many sightings which are kept from the public's attention: "We have set up the hotline so that people can come straight to us."

The hotline number is 0924-444049.

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