

Close encounters of the Tyke kind

by Jim
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STEVIE Wonder wrote a song about a place ten zillion light years from Earth. One-armed Swiss farmer Eduard Meier says that since the age of five he has been in telepathic communication with aliens from a planet 500 light years away, in a star cluster called Pleiades.

The blind American singer's song might be just a piece of fantasy; but Meier, who has recorded in a diary his chats with a 330-year-old female alien called Semjase, has delighted UFO experts all over the world by showing amazingly clear coloured photographs of flying saucers which he took with a 35mm camera.

Last November, a group of Yorkshire students told the T&A that the sky above Cracoe Fell and Carleton Moor, near Skipton, was a popular haunt of unidentified flying objects. Andy Roberts, of Brighouse, said: "Mostly ball of light phenomena are reported in that area which stretches as far as Grassington and over to Bolton Abbey. A lot of people see things like this but are afraid to mention it in case of being called idiots."

Since the New Year, however, many people haven't been slow in coming forward to give witness to sightings of these nightriders in the sky. Schoolgirl Zena Sfeir, you may remember, brought in the Metropolitan Police after tracking a mysterious "swimming jellyfish" with her powerful telescope. A police constable from the local nick in Kensington was sent, he looked through Zena's telescope and immediately radioed for help.



Perplexing

"In the end there were eight policemen on our doorstep. They were looking at it for about 40 minutes," she said. Zena, 16, said she had been studying the night sky for seven years; she rejected one astronomer's theory that the saucer-shaped object with pink blobs was the planet Jupiter. The Ministry of Defence expressed little interest and no concern: the object, a spokesman told News at Ten, was not a threat to national security.

Intriguing isn't it? Since that night, 54 other people in different parts of the country, have reported strange goings-on in the sky. Mark Birdsall of the Yorkshire UFO Society says: "The observers who reported UFO phenomena all appear reliable, genuine and honest persons.

Basically, unusual occurrences began at around December 30. This continued for some eight days in the Yorkshire region. Some reports are probably easily identifiable, but others are perplexing."

He sent details of these sightings to the T&A. They all occurred between December 26 and January 7. Some of the observations reported make fascinating reading. A man from Rotherham said he saw a brilliant ball of orange-coloured light which paused before moving off. Five minutes later two military jets appeared. On the same night a man in Guiseley reported a pale green light, similar to a laser, heading in a wide arc from Leeds to Ilkley, while over in Blubberhouses a man travelling in a car became aware of a rocket-

shaped object emitting sparks, flames and debris.

Two nights later, another man in Rotherham reported three unidentified objects flying north, apparently being chased by a military jet. The same night someone else in Rotherham saw a red and white cross heading north, while two people in Leeds saw three white lights in a close circular pattern above the sky near Elland Road.

The following night, a woman in London reported a "dumbell shape with strange electricity pylon structure joining domes" to the right of the moon.

Notice that all these sightings were at night. No sound was heard and the objects

appeared to be moving high and fast. The Americans' Strategic Defence Initiative has been offered as one explanation for some of the sightings.

Mark Birdsall comments: "The USA successfully destroyed a missile in space using an SDI laser beam. Debris from this explosion or even a second testing could have resulted, in our opinion, in a number of these sightings actually reported by the witnesses."

Scientific experts of one sort or another can be as sceptical as they like about UFOs. The public, however, have always shown an extraordinary interest in these phenomena, sensing that there are indeed stranger things in Heaven and earth than can be accounted for by rationalistic philosophy.

● A Close Encounter of the Third Kind — but will flying saucers ever land on Yorkshire soil?