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New group set to investigate UFOs and ghosts

Is there a noisy phantom in your cellar, clanking chains and scaring the Hell out of your family? Is there a poltergeist at large, creating havoc and wrecking your best dinner service?

And talking of crockery, have you ever seen a flying saucer hovering over your back garden? Have you had a close encounter of the first, second or third kind?

If you've experienced any of these, who are you going to call? Ghostbusters? No, but you can try the Borderland Phenomena Research Group, a new Swindon organisation which will seriously and scientifically investigate any unexplained phenomena you may have encountered.

STEPHEN WEBB ventured forth to Penhill for a close encounter with the group's leading light.



Paul Horwood, 23, who has set up a scientific research group to investigate strange phenomena.

Who you gonna call? Ghostbuster Paul

Somewhere in Swindon a terrified woman believes she is being haunted by the ghost of a child.

It hovers at the foot of her stairs, a hazy mist she senses is a young boy or girl.

These details were passed on to Paul Horwood, a 23 year-old ghostbuster who lives at Oaksey Road, Penhill.

Paul has just set up the Borderland Phenomena Research Group, an organisation which investigates UFO and ghost sightings, and the "haunted woman spotted his telephone number in the Evening Advertiser.

"She would not give her name or address but she sounded very distraught," Paul said.

"I could not do a lot about it. She thinks her house is haunted by a child. She claims it appears at the bottom of her stairs, but it might be her thinking she sees something.

"She is very frightened. I told her not to panic and just observe. Hopefully she will get in touch with us again."

It is mysteries like this Paul and his group aim to clear up. But he wants to be taken seriously - he regards the work as serious scientific research, the collation of facts and figures that can be presented to experts when evidence can be produced that unexplained phenomena has been encountered.

The Borderland Phenomena Research Group is Paul's brainchild. He has been fascinated by unidentified flying objects since he was a boy and has been a member of various UFO groups in Swindon over the years.

But, he felt, these groups never put enough time and effort into their research and so he felt the time had come for some serious investigation into UFOs and ghosts.



An artist's impression of the craft spotted over Rodbourne in 1979. See story below. Something strange in the heavens.

Paul himself has plenty of equipment for research into things strange and unexplained. A computer, video equipment, camera, telescope and even a gadget he made himself, a UFO alarm that detects electro-magnetic disturbances in the atmosphere, will all come in handy.

"We are trying to gain as much evidence as possible by doing practical work and research," he said.

"When we get the information through we will be investigating any unusual experiences in the Swindon area and investigating them thoroughly.

"No one has really found out a lot about UFOs. There have been reports from throughout the world but our main interest is to further the scientific knowledge that already exists. The idea is to educate the public.

"We're taking it very seriously. Someone phoned up the other day and asked if we were anything to do with witchcraft. We deal with pure scientific fact. If anyone comes up with speculation we don't want to know. Until we decide what they are we can't decide where they are coming from.

"It's the same with ghosts. People presume they are apparitions of the dead, but who has got the evidence to prove that? Evidence needs to be taken scientifically."

So what would happen if someone contacted the Borderland Phenomena Research Group claiming his or her house was haunted?

In the first instance members of the group specialising in ghosts would visit the caller and have a chat and examine the spot where the apparition was seen. The person would be asked to fill in forms and photographs would be taken.

The group would want to know if the ghost appears regularly and if it does they would return with heat sensing equipment, light sensing equipment, tape recorders, video equipment and cameras.

"If we can pick it up and say it is there, then that is the sort of thing I am interested in. I want pure evidence," said Paul.

In the case of UFOs there is again an interview and form filling. Then, armed with all the information about the sighting, the group contacts RAF Lyne-

ham's meteorological office and air traffic control - from this they should be able to ascertain if the object seen could be explained.

The unidentified object can often be identified by group members from descriptions given by witnesses. The UFO could be a satellite orbiting the Earth, or some astronomical phenomena, such as a meteorite.

Paul is expecting calls from outcasses, but he is confident he can sort the wheat from the chaff.

Paul, a DIY salesman who is married with a baby, keeps an open mind on all unexplained phenomena. He believes in UFOs - and let's face it, we see objects in the sky that we can't identify every day - but he doesn't necessarily believe they are crafts from other planets piloted by extra-terrestrials.

He did see and photograph a UFO in 1978 that he still can't explain. It was a red object seen over Swindon that made a noise like a vacuum cleaner. What the photograph showed was a very blurred ball of light.

He has encountered some poltergeist activity too. While visiting a friend in Swindon objects moved about the room, the cooker turned itself on and off and pages turned in a book by themselves.

"There's no reason to be scared," Paul said. "The only reason people are scared is through watching films on television."

So if you've seen a strange light in the sky or heard strange noises in your attic, call the Borderland Phenomena Research Group - Paul's telephone number is Swindon 727122. Or go along to the meetings, which are held on the second and fourth Monday in the month at Paul's house at 18 Oaksey Road, Penhill.