

16 APR 1988

## Books

## A storm in a saucer

<sup>2374</sup>  
**E**ditors John Spencer and Hilary Evans will certainly make no friends among the obsessive alien trackers who are to be spotted on bright, moonlit nights, with their radio antennae aquiver on top of high hills.

Each section of this book applies scientific methods and rational appraisal to a subject usually given to wild claims and out of this world euphoria.

What are you supposed to make of reports that bracket UFO travellers as tall, saintly, grotesque, with hands, claws, solid, able to levitate or pass through walls?

Not much says John Spencer of these hopelessly conflicting descriptions. John, whose parents live at Raunds, is a very level-headed chap (in fact a chartered accountant) and a director of BUFORA's council of management.

He's skilled in pouring cold water on cranks and close encounters of the dodgy kind. "From the title of the book you can see that it's about people, not UFOs. Over the last 40 years several million people have not only seen something they don't understand but have had to seek out other people

---

**Phenomenon: Edited by John Spencer and Hilary Evans (Futura £3.95)**

---

to talk about them to."

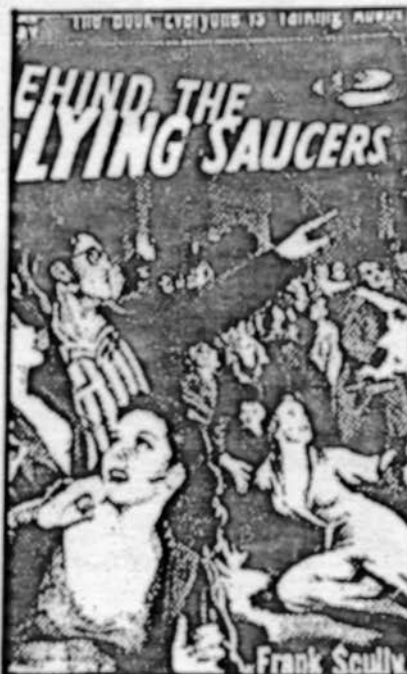
"But things have to be put into perspective. We shouldn't be blinded by extra terrestrial hypotheses. Weather phenomena can account for some of these. Clouds, for instance can in certain conditions take on a saucer shape, but that doesn't happen much in temperate climates.

And despite countless people seriously claiming they have been hoovered up by spacecraft in cosmic kidnappings, John isn't budging in his doubts: "10 million Americans say they have been abducted, but not one had enough sense to lift

something from the spaceship and put himself on the gravy train for life. We are in the business of hard evidence."

There are, he contends, logical possibilities to explain most ETs. It is only by ruthlessly sifting out the valid, from the flights of fancy, that true Ufologists can be taken seriously.

Of the more spaced out UFO spotters, he says, "Without decrying them I wouldn't see them as my colleagues. If you worship aliens who you know are there because you have seen them, you are not in the research business."



■ Behind the Flying Saucers was the earliest sensational book devoted to the phenomenon.