

And as part of an information gathering exercise, conference publicity officer, Mr David Barclay, has appealed to any Ilkley people with further UFO-spotting information to contact him.

He says people often see inexplicable objects or lights but do not tell anyone. The aim of the Bradford conference is to encourage more people to come forward.

The Ilkley and North Yorkshire Moors seem to be hot spots for UFO sightings, says Mr Barclay, and he wants to know more about them.

Wharfe Valley Times reporter SEAN STOWELL has spoken to the man who has experienced close encounters himself and who has made a living out of them.

WHEN local ufologist and author, David Barclay, sent the product of years of research into "close encounters" to his publishers, it was returned to him without explanation.

The company had formerly been very enthusiastic about the book, but the Salman Rushdie affair had since hit the headlines and Mr Barclay suspects the storm played a role in his work's rejection.

"A lot of what I said related to religion and could have upset some people. The publisher did not say as much but the agent I use did give clear hints in that direction — that they did not want to go into print following the Salman Rushdie affair," explained the now professional UFO watcher.

"You can't discuss UFOs without relating it to religion," he added.

Mr Barclay's book, entitled Non-Science and the UFO, is an assessment of available information on the subject.

"I could not make sense of all the data, but you can't if you look at it in a 'Dan Dare' frame of mind.

"An American author did once try to assess the data, but he couldn't because it's all so fantastic. It's all to do with the framework within which you examine the available information."

"The phenomenon of UFOs should be interpreted as a game. Once you know what the game is, the phenomenon is then getting the UFOs to make contact with humans," he explained.

"There has to be some reason why people are seeing so many inexplicable things. What are the UFOs getting out of the incursions into earth's space? There



● MR DAVID Barclay, who claims the Salman Rushdie affair prevented the publication of his UFO theories.(S)

must be some reason behind it," he added.

Mr Barclay's book follows an earlier work entitled Fatima — A Close Encounter of the Worst Kind? in which he explains his

theory behind events at a Portuguese olive grove in 1916.

In that year, three young children were gathered behind an olive tree when the ground began to shake.



● JUST visiting? An unidentified flying object spotted off the Brazilian coast in 1958, an event which also forms part of the author's fascination. (S)

Bright lights began to travel towards them in what was eventually known as an encounter with an "angel".

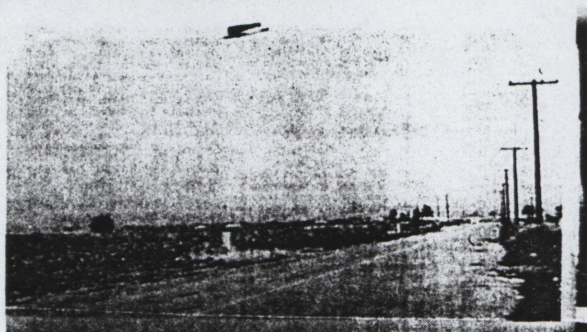
The "silvery man" was then followed by a shimmering image, believed by some to be the Virgin Mary.

Mr Barclay's line on it was the shimmering image may have been a UFO. The interpretation it was given fitted the country at the time.

And he claims in his book that 25 million people died following the Portuguese encounter — during a flu epidemic. Many such viruses and epidemics may be linked to similar events, said Mr Barclay.

"On a very general level, there are two schools of thought in this field. The first looks at UFOs in a Ming-The-Merciless way, and the second says you have to be a psychic to be receptive to UFOs.

"From another dimension, it's difficult to choose between these two but, if UFOs are ever explained, it certainly will teach us a lot about the human race and our world," said the Shipley-based author.



● A POLAROID shot of an alleged UFO taken by lorry driver Rex Hefflin at Santa Anna, California, in August 1965 — part of Mr Barclay's research material.(S)