

MONDAY

With
WILF
BERRY



THERE will be smiles — even laughter — when I say that the highlight of Christmas week in Bingham was the sighting of a Flying Saucer.

However, for the sober, well respected citizens of Cogley Lane area who were eventually drawn out of doors by the light from a

luminous object hovering in the night sky, it brought both mystery and fear.

I did not see it myself, but I have been told it was so brilliant that it penetrated drawn curtains.

One of my neighbours, a gentleman I have known and respected for 23 years, told me that he first saw the UFO hanging huge and low in the sky to the north of the village. At the time it was stationary and soundless. By its light he could clearly see the adjacent railway crossing and the contours of the hilly field below it.

There was nothing shy or elusive about this intruder to our night sky. My friend had time to ring up several people in the vicinity and invite them to go outside and have a look at it.

Then, apparently, it emitted a low humming noise — much quieter than any conventional aircraft or helicopter — and moved directly overhead to disappear beyond the hills to the south.

So far there is no satisfactory explanation.

No doubt it will go down in history along with thousands of other reports. In Britain these were first firmly documented in the late 1940s when an RAF photographer recorded a strange object following an aircraft landing at Topsham Down.

It is tempting and exciting, even if alarming, to think that perhaps advanced beings from another world are keeping an eye on us.

However, poor George Adamski, the man who was largely responsible for focusing popular attention on the

This festive object was a mystery

phenomenon with his book *Flying Saucers Have Landed* in the early 1950s, has been largely discredited.

His claims to have actually met a being from a landed saucer somewhere in the USA were certainly hard to accept, even though several people who witnessed the event subsequently swore affidavits confirming their testimony.

My personal scepticism switched to open mindedness when in 1958 I met Prof George Hunt Williamson, one of the original witnesses.

At the time of the sighting he was a student but had later graduated in archaeology and has since written extensively on UFO phenomenon and its association with ancient ruins and mysticism.

His firm, friendly hand-shake and candid sensible approach to the subject left me with the impression of a thoroughly down to earth and dedicated academic, though his startling book *Road in the Sky* is thought-provoking to say the least.

Since those days there

have been innumerable books and thousands of newspaper stories about UFOs.

Only last summer UFO researchers and other experts flocked to fields in Leicestershire to examine mysterious circular marks among growing crops.

Nor is this Christmas sighting the first experience in Bingham of such things. A few years ago a strange and not easily explained crescent shape was reported in the night sky over Toothill School sports ground.

Parson's Hill to the north of the village, quite close to the current sighting, was once the site of ancient standing stones and it is known to have an affinity for UFOs.

As Shakespeare wrote: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

One thing is certain, Bingham's close encounter will pass into village legend to become a Christmas talking point for many generations to come.

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