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# UFO buffs from around the world gather in park

by  
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● Ken Phillips

But when I investigated it further, I found the object was an exotic kite, being flown on a 2,000ft tether, but it sure did look strange."

Once a month, members of BUFORA get together practically on the borough's doorstep for their meeting at the London Business School in Regent's Park. From tomorrow, about 100 UFO fans will be at the school for the congress.

Mr Phillips, who works as a messenger at the London office of the Birmingham Post newspaper, will be there helping with registrations, and to give a talk outlining his latest research. For five years, he

has been putting together information from British UFO witnesses for an Austrian-based researcher, Dr Alex Keul, as part of a project called Anamnesis (life memory).

"I feel there is definitely something strange going on — I have no doubt about it. I've been very impressed with the sincerity of the witnesses I've spoken to...people who have gone through strange experiences and have very impressive stories. As to the origins of what they've seen, that is entirely unknown, it's a very debatable point."

Mr Phillips' off-beat interest in extra-terrestrials has at times brought criticism from sceptics — "though I think my biggest critic is my wife," he joked.

His interest developed after he followed reports of a series of flying saucer sightings around Westminster in the early 1960s. His work as a BUFORA investigator, a role he took up in 1969, started with him making inquiries after reading of sightings in newspapers, or receiving calls direct from witnesses.

"There's no training to become an investigator. You just go out and do it. I was as green as grass — just so naive — the first time, but I learnt as I went along."

"I think the most dramatic case I've worked on involved a woman and two members of her family in Manchester, who underwent a fugitive abduction quite near their home. The actual event was traumatic enough, but I think the aftermath, the post-event happenings, proved to be even worse, with the family and their lives being completely upset."

"But these reports do tend to come in waves or cycles. Sometimes you can be absolutely rushed off your feet, and at other times, like at the moment, it can be very quiet. Last year was quite busy, but we haven't had much come in recently."

THIS weekend, UFO enthusiasts from around the world are meeting in Regent's Park for their bi-annual congress.

Among those attending are several people who will give terrifying, first-hand accounts of being abducted by aliens.

Camden man Ken Phillips, an investigator with the British UFO Research Association, counts himself lucky he will be there to listen — and not to pass on similar experiences.

His 20 years of looking into reports of unidentified flying objects, without making a single sighting of his own, has left him anything but frustrated.

"I used to feel like that, but in hindsight, I don't think it's a particularly pleasant experience, especially the close encounter-type experience," said the 49-year-old.

"Witnesses I have spoken to have been left with various symptoms, including disorientation in time, headaches, sleeplessness, and just a general physical and mental discomfort. They have strange dreams, nightmares, skin rashes and burns, and their work and social lives are often very upset by what they have gone through."

## Hobby

Mr Phillips has travelled around Britain to talk to people who claim to have witnessed UFO activity, but his hobby has barely involved him locally.

"I don't know what it is. Maybe the people of Camden don't see these things, or if they do they're keeping very quiet about it."

"There was a report in Highgate but it wasn't particularly interesting. It was just a brief observation of a roundish object which was seen in the sky. It could have been a kite or a balloon."

"The only other local one I can recall was from Parliament Hill fields. I had a call from a producer with ITV, who said he saw a very bright, rotating object in the sky. I went along to his house in Highgate, and got details and spoke to a neighbour who had seen it too."