

COMMENT

EVENING ECHO Monday September 18, 1989

Flights of fancy?

ONCE upon a time people who believed in UFOs were said to be no different from those who believed in fairy tales.

Yet the never-ending series of sightings of unidentified flying objects, the latest batch of which came from Canvey and Pitsea on Friday, are leading people to think twice about the prospect of alien visitors.

These reports are, if nothing else, a distraction from the humdrum of every day life. But with strange lights being reported by sober witnesses almost every week, many of the reports are being given serious consideration.

UFOs were all the rage in the 1950s. And there were many people who read and believed books by a man who claimed to have been taken for a flight in a space vessel from Venus.

That man, not surprisingly, has since been discredited, and not just by the evidence of unmanned spacecraft which have studied Venus at close hand but by his own admissions.

Spread of life

The belief in UFOs, or flying saucers as they were once called, is fuelled by well-made science fiction movies, a huge market in sci-fi literature and, of course, by the constant flood of alleged sightings.

No one is in a position to dismiss every one of these reports as nonsense although we believe many are caused by the aircraft which crowd our skies.

But we should not allow our reluctance to accept the possibility of inter-stellar travel to push us into the belief that we have the universe to ourselves.

Light from our nearest star, travelling at 186,000 miles per second, takes nine years to reach us. And most of the universe lies so far away that the distances are almost incomprehensible.

It is therefore not the existence of life on other planets which we should disbelieve. It is the ability of that life to reach Mother Earth which should be in doubt.

Last word

IS there intelligent life on Earth? Yes, but I'm only visiting

GRAFFITI

Conference date for UFO buffs

BRITAIN'S biggest conference on flying saucers will take place in West Yorkshire on Saturday.

The event, organized by the Yorkshire UFO Society, will begin at 12.30pm at the Town Hall in Ossett, near Wakefield.

Mark Birdeall, the society's spokesman, said: "This year's conference promises to be a major newsworthy event due to a world exclusive con-

cerning a UFO shot down over South Africa earlier this year.

"We will be displaying official documents from both the South African Air Force and the American Defence Department, who arrived to examine the object and two of its occupants.

"Taped conversations with South African intelligence chiefs and embassy officials will also be discussed."

Bristol Evening Post

23 SEP 1989

Man who saw the lights . . .

UFO watchers gathering in Yorkshire today were studying a video recording of Something Odd — seen over Leigh Woods, Bristol.

The Unidentified Flying Object, shown as a bright white light changing to a pulsing red and then back to white, has been sent on video cassette for an international conference at Ossett Town Hall, near Wakefield.

Richard Tarr, founder of Bristol Quest group of people interested in unexplained sky phenomena, claims he saw the strange light,

often hovering, over a period of about an hour on August 3.

His recording lasts 14 minutes.

"It was all the same, repetitive, so I didn't take more," he said.

Richard, aged 24, training to be a video shop manager, lives at Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol.

He set up Bristol Quest — which now has 11 members — earlier this year after hearing that UFO researcher Tony Dodd, a former North Yorkshire policeman, was seeking information.

Southend Evening Echo, Essex.

21 SEP 1989

Good grief! UFO hovers near as expert Tim talks

A UFO hovered over Basildon while flying saucer expert Timothy Good gave a lecture.

The author of Above Top Secret — The World Wide UFO Cover-up was talking at The Bullseye pub around the time four people claimed they saw a large round ball-shaped object hovering over the town centre.

It was white with a ring of multi-coloured lights and made no sound.

The witnesses watched it for two minutes while they were stuck in a traffic jam.

Also on Friday night five people on Canvey spotted seven lights in the sky coloured red, green and yellow hovering at 3,000 ft for 10 minutes.

The East Anglia UFO and Paranormal Research Association also received a call from a couple who saw six coloured lights making geometric patterns in the sky in Stanford-le-Hope on Sunday at 8.30pm.

Anyone who saw these unexplained objects and lights should contact the East Anglia UFO hotline on 0268 286079.

Russia's fear of flying saucers

By John Harlow

AS THE Soviet Union modifies its stand against Star Wars, its journalists have come up with another argument for scrapping the American anti-missile system — it could accidentally shoot down a flying saucer.

The latest issue of Soviet Military Review sets out to answer a letter from a Zimbabwean worried that UFOs present a direct threat to peace on earth.

Soviet scientists regard this as a serious problem. They have been studying UFOs at the Moscow Aviation Institute since 1958.

The magazine said it believed that the "lack of information on the characteristics and influence of UFOs increases the threat of incorrect identification.

"The mass transition of UFOs along trajectories close to those of combat missiles could be regarded by computers as an attack.

Military Review notes that in 1960, bombers at an American air base were put on full alert to combat Soviet invaders, which turned out to be nothing more than "radar reflections of the Moon".

"In SDI conditions such incidents could provoke immediate reaction from computers to destroy the targets, say by X-ray laser, which means a powerful nuclear explosion."

The magazine concludes that if an alien is not to be accidentally destroyed, possibly causing an angry backlash by its colleagues "from beyond the stars" more international co-operation is needed.

An American Embassy official said: "It is a novel argument. I am sure the White House will take it on board in future negotiations."