

Close Encounters of a UFO writer

SCHOOLTEACHER turned author, Jenny Randles, makes no secret of her intention in researching into and writing about Unidentified Flying Objects. It is not just to sell books, reports CHRIS CHILD.

JENNY RANGLES'S fourth book, *The Pennine UFO Mystery*, just published, investigates the many sightings and reports of unexplained objects and incidents in the Pennines area of Yorkshire.

But Mrs. Randles said she had never gone out with the intention of writing a book that was going to sell. "I don't say the things that people often want to hear about UFOs," she admitted. "People who are interested in the subject like to believe there really are aliens at the heart of this, and it is not very nice for them to have to face up to the realities, and I tell the realities."

Thirty-one-year-old Mrs. Randles, a former geology teacher in Cheshire, turned her attention full-time to UFOs five years ago. She first became intrigued with them on holiday in Blackpool 20 years ago. Now she is director of investigations for the British UFO Research Association, a job she carries out from her home at Wallasey, Merseyside.

Photographs

"We are learning pretty well to isolate the cases reported to us very quickly so that we now don't waste a lot of time with misidentification. We used to become very frustrated spending a lot of time on things that were completely worthless," she said.

Since the hit film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* in 1978 there have been reports that sightings of UFOs had increased four-fold.

But Mrs. Randles says that the opposite has happened — sightings have decreased considerably because people have become more aware of what there is in the sky.

In the past about 10 per cent. of all sightings made were unexplainable. Now Mrs. Randles says, that figure has risen to about 30 per cent.

The Pennines area is of particular interest to her because of the amount of

UFO activity reported there during the past 10 years.

"There is no question that the Pennine area has definitely generated far more UFO sightings than anywhere in the U.K. over the past 10 years," she said.

But the hard work in researching the experience of people who have seen UFOs has turned up only about three photographs that have had anything about them, said Mrs. Randles.

"There is not a single movie film that shows a structured object. All the movie films show is nothing more than the best of what the ordinary photographs show."

Her scepticism about some of the photographs does not mean she has her doubts about strange happenings in the sky. "I have no doubt at all that there are several unexplained phenomena at the heart of the reports. I have seen too many cases over the years that can't be explained, but I don't think belief is a natural prerequisite to the research."

World

The fact that an object looks to be physically real is still not satisfactory proof, said Mrs. Randles.

"Only about half a dozen photographs in the whole world have any substance about them. I turned up three photos that had something about them, and two of those were over 30 years old."



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Mrs. Randles is hoping that the change of attitude to UFOs by Governments from all over the world will help them to bridge the gap between the explained and the unexplained.

"About five or six years ago every Government would say: 'We have no evidence that there is anything going on here.' Then in the United States the Freedom of Information Act was passed and they had to release some of this information."

Activity

She said that since then other Governments had become far more open-minded about UFOs, including the Ministry of Defence, which she says are now likely to make some of their files freely available to her.

Mrs. Randles hopes this will provide more information for her next book — *UFO Reality*, a study of experiences and physical evidence throughout the world.

It may also include more references to the Pennines, which could become more noted for UFOs than Warminster did in the early days of sightings.

"There is far more activity along the Pennines than Warminster because it has been happening there without any stimulus," she said, referring to the great wave of publicity which followed the Warminster sightings of the 60s.

"Activity on the Pennines has continued to happen and has followed the same patterns, and is considerably above the average for Britain, without this kind of promotion."

Two of the investigators in the east Pennines area are Graham and Mark Birdsall, both from Leeds. They have had some 30 sightings reported to them from the area between Grassington and Carlton Moor, near Skipton, since the beginning of the year.

Mrs. Randles is aiming to keep in contact with the two researchers.

Mr. Birdsall has said that because of the lack of liaison between Mrs. Randles' organisation BUFORA and the research organisation Contact International of which the Yorkshire UFO Society belongs, that some of the sightings in the east Pennines had not been followed up by the author.

But she replies that the lack of communication had been on the part of the Birdsalls, and she was very keen to co-operate with them on their UFO sightings.

She said some of their research had not been included in the *Pennine UFO Mystery* because the details had had to go to print in January 1982.

Thus her next book ought to include more sightings from the Yorkshire side of the Pennines. Currently she receives about 12 sightings a week overall.