

Brothers who keep a check on UFOs

IT WAS midday on the road between Skipton and Grassington on March 16 1981 as two North Yorkshire policemen went about their business. It was a clear day but it was something unusual which suddenly attracted their attention.

Hovering below a sheer cliff face at Cracoe Fell were three large white glowing balls of light. The officers reached for their camera and snapped what could prove to be the best photographic evidence of a UFO in Britain for a long time.

The photograph which was reproduced exclusively in the Yorkshire Evening Post yesterday, is now under the copyright of the Yorkshire UFO Society whose chairman and co-ordinator is Leeds local government officer Graham Birdsall.

He and his brother Mark get to know about most of the UFO sightings in Yorkshire, and now have over 300 on their books. The sighting by the two policemen is the most dramatic photographic evidence they have ever had. They have already contacted America's top UFO photo analysts, Ground Saucer Watch, about the evidence.

Graham Birdsall was 14 when he first became interested in UFOs after seeing strange and unusually bright lights in the sky. That was 15 years ago, and since then he and his brother have records and research on most of the sightings made in Yorkshire. And the brothers believe they are very close to pinning down the phenomena to an area of North Yorkshire which borders Skipton, Grassington and the east Pennines.

Shapes

"There is a regularity of sightings occurring up there in a very sparsely populated area," said Graham. "It is not just lights seen by the odd individual. These are definite shapes, solid objects which don't bear any similarity to flying craft.

"These things are being seen at such a close range and descriptions we are getting back from witnesses all combine and indicate that something major is happening up there.

"If we are there to meet it head on, the conclusion could be quite staggering."

Some of this year's sightings in North Yorkshire show a pattern:

February 11: Grassington, large oval with three flashing bulbs underneath;

March 23: Bolton Abbey, circular yellow object moving north west of Grassington;

March 23: Grassington, orange glow in an area of trees, one tree found badly scorched;

March 30: Rylstone Fell, yellow object seen in the sky;

March 31: Grassington, yellow light manoeuvring from stationary;

NORTH Yorkshire's east Pennines area is making a name for itself as one of Britain's best grounds for UFO sightings. More than 30 incidents have been reported since the beginning of the year. Following the YEP's exclusive UFO picture published yesterday, CHRIS CHILD talks to two Leeds brothers, GRAHAM and MARK BIRDSALL, who have been researching sightings in the area.



UFO enthusiasts Graham (left) and Mark Birdsall.

April 13: Hebden Bridge, object 300 feet above Simon's Seat;

April 13: Grassington, white light, large and stationary which moved away at a fast speed;

May 1: Halifax, woman sees white light moving from a valley towards her bedroom window. Comes to within a few feet from window, disappears, and blue object with two red arms appears. She is unable to move.

Another woman who was driving from Lancashire to her home in North Yorkshire observed coloured lights in her rear view mirror. She slowed down and let the lights overtake her because the road was narrow, but they refused to go.

Suddenly, the lights were above her. Her reaction was not to stop but press hard on the accelerator and as she did so, a cone-shaped light hit her bonnet. This continued for about a mile and a half. When a wagon came towards her in the opposite direction the lights disappeared.

Graham said that the woman did not realise just what had happened to her until she reached home — mysteriously 45 minutes late. "She couldn't believe it because she could not recall stopping off anywhere," he said.

The woman reported the matter to the authorities because she was concerned it could happen to other motorists. By mutual agreement, the woman was put under hypnosis and took part in five regressions which provided a fascinating account of her missing time. A 30-page study of the results of the regression are still being analysed.

It is now hoped to put the woman into another regression and invite leading

exponents of hypnosis and psychoanalysts to be present.

"Something we always maintain is that we are not out to convince everyone that these things exist," said Graham. "People will only be 100 per cent. convinced at the existence of these craft when they see one for themselves or when a colleague, friend or relative says they have seen one.

Truth

"There has been hundreds of thousands of UFO reports in the last 37 years worldwide," said Mark. "If a fraction of one per cent. of those are the truth, then there is something there."

The Yorkshire UFO Society is an opportunity for those who are interested in UFOs to get together. You don't necessarily have to believe in the phenomena to be a member.

The society meets every month in Centenary House, North Street, Leeds, and for £5 a year members get a bi-monthly journal, newsletters, social events, sky watches, use of UFO books, and the chance to participate in research.

The brothers say they could do with more field researchers in the east Pennines area, and believe that reports of sightings there would then double. It is a painstaking job following up and researching a sighting. If it is felt a person should be interviewed, this takes place, and it enables them to draw up a positive picture of what was seen.

"If we believe that something really extraordinary has occurred, then steps are taken to try and eliminate all the possible explanations," said Graham.

"We then contact the civil-

ian authorities — police, airports, electricity board, gas board, etc. The more witnesses we have to a particular incident the more credence we give to the possibility that a UFO has been sighted."

If further investigations are needed, then this is done. Expert opinion is often sought, and Leeds University come to the aid with analysis of soil samples. Photographic experts are also called in from time to time.

Mark said one of the most frustrating things for UFO researchers was that there are so many people who see things and don't know who to go to. "Only 10 per cent. of people who see these things report them," he said.

Constant

Some people often don't report their sightings until years after they have happened, like a man at Beeston, Leeds, who said he could actually see an eight-foot tall figure waving at him from a glass windowed craft. It happened in the summer of 1978.

"What we are up against is an attitude that has remained constant throughout the past four decades among the public," said Graham.

"That is that any notion that UFOs exist must be put down to cranks or head cases. In fact, the people who are seeing these things often come from the police, company directors and ordinary housewives."

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