

# Object lesson

EVEN the organisers of Saturday's conference on Unidentified Flying Objects in Leeds were surprised that 150 or more people turned up to hear the truth about the Things out there.

But everyone, even the most sceptical, likes a UFO story especially backed up with numerous slides of sightings down the years. The believers can thrill to the thought of all manner of hyper-intelligent beings behind the blurred glows, the almost too saucer-like flying saucers and the weird atmospheric goings-on.

The less easily convinced can look for the bits of wire holding the UFO's up or learnedly detail the names of cloud formations which give the same effect, especially when the instamatic taking the shot is held in the quivering hands of a UFO enthusiast. So there was plenty for everyone at the Yorkshire UFO Society's conference.

Sensibly the organisers ran through the slides without comment or defence of their authenticity. The chairman, Graham Birdsall, did mention, rather optimistically perhaps, that one of the slides was a fake and challenged the audience to spot it. Indeed he was not one to make too much of a sighting and on several occasions went into great detail on a particular anecdote only to disappoint us all.

One such was the Adel, Leeds UFO of September last year, a marvellous display of aerobatics from several mysterious light sources. There are pictures of that one and a recording of an excited family watching it through the window. It made front page headlines, but on balance Mr. Birdsall

Weekend  
**PEOPLE**

**RICHARD ALCOCK**  
on a close encounter  
with Yorkshire UFO  
enthusiasts in Leeds  
at the weekend.

Pictures by **GRAHAM  
LINDLEY.**



tends to think it was some sort of natural phenomenon rather than a close encounter.

Then there was the case of the Halifax woman in May last year who was among residents who heard a mysterious noise in the air for months on end. Eventually one night she was approached through her bedroom window by a mysterious but friendly light and whisked off for a flying tour of the area.

When UFOlogists went to the scene they found she was into meditation and parapsychology. Whether or not that lessened the impact of her story in their eyes we were not told, but the average UFO watcher prefers the Things to be far more palpable in their nature.

Tony Dodd, the North Yorkshire investigator for the society, is convinced that at least some of the sightings are real, solid flying machines intelligently controlled. As evidence he points out that many have been seen heading for aircraft then veering away at the last moment. Also most seem to be seen after people have gone to bed. "Whether they appear then so they cannot be seen we don't know," he said.

Mr. Dodd has himself been within 100 yards of one of the Things. "They are out there all right," he said. "We are here to tell you they are flying around. They are solid craft. If they are military vehicles they are so advanced they are frightening. Huge machines that don't make a sound."

Yorkshire can proudly say it has one of the best pieces of evidence for UFOs in the country in the shape of a photograph of a strange set of eerie lights on Cracoe Fell, near Grassington. The picture was taken by two off-duty policemen.

This was fantastic news for UFOlogists, said Mr. Birdsall, and only an hour's drive from Leeds. Indeed, he could recommend the area to the north of Skipton as the one place in Britain most likely to turn up a UFO.

In his slides he was very concerned to point out the beauty of the area. "We in Yorkshire," he said, "are very proud of our county and heritage." Perhaps he has hit on the idea to attract more tourists to North Yorkshire. A walking tour of the top UFO sites with, for the very lucky ones, the chance of a flying saucer trip to Alpha Centauri.



**Above left: Graham Birdsall, right, president of the Yorkshire UFO Society, with Tony Dodd, North Yorkshire investigator.**

**Above right: Robert Cherry, a Leeds postman, with one of his UFO paintings.**

**Right: Youngest visitor to the conference, Paul Marsden, four, with his father, Paul Marsden, of Morley, a new member of the society.**

