

# English brothers investigate UFO sightings

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LISBON—Strange objects in the sky aren't so strange to Graham and Mark Birdsall of Yorkshire, England.

The brothers who just completed a visit in Lisbon, are area investigators for the 6,081 square mile area of Yorkshire in the Contact International (U.K.) organization, covering all sightings and reports of UFOs in the area.

When the brothers were in their early teens, they became interested in unexplainable lights in the sky near their home in Leeds. Graham joined Contact International eight years ago, and Mark joined five years ago. Both have passed examinations to hold the position of investigator.

Graham said the most important step in UFO investigation is to establish good relations with area police departments. "Their cooperation is essential for any UFO investigator," he explained. Most of the departments call Graham or his brother when a sighting is reported.

As soon as possible after a report, the Birdsalls contact the persons who witnessed the phenomenon. In addition to asking the people involved a set of standardized questions, they ask them to draw diagrams and to give exact details of the incident. They conduct background checks to determine the sources' credibility.

After talking to witnesses, the brothers do physical research, such as taking soil samples if a landing has been reported, or examining animals which have been found mutilated. Sometimes, Graham added, people in the area of a sighting report rashes and nausea, and these cases are checked out also.

He said 95 percent of the incidents reported can be explained as results of atmospheric conditions or reflections of high-flying aircraft. An average of 12 unexplainable cases are investigated by Yorkshire police and the brothers annually.

After their report is completed, the Birdsalls send it to the

Contact International center in Oxford where it is evaluated.

"Official secrets are our biggest problem without a shadow of a doubt," Graham said, referring specifically to the high number of aircraft crashes in Yorkshire which occurred near the times of reported UFO sightings. The English government refuses to release its "official" information concerning the circumstances of the crashes.

He said that people are often reluctant to talk about their experiences because they are afraid of being laughed at. Such attitudes are becoming less strong, he said, crediting such movies as "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" with peoples' increased willingness to discuss the things they have seen.

In all of their time working as investigators, Graham said he and his brother have only discovered one deliberate hoax. He noted that when one has been investigating such occurrences for as long a time as he has, it is easy to determine between actual experiences and faked reports.

For example, he said, certain types of motion are commonly reported for descending and ascending objects. A blue haze around an object in a photograph indicates a piece of glass was used to produce the effect of a UFO.

The brothers are not fanatical believers in extraterrestrial beings, but said they try to be very objective when conducting investigations. However, since all the time spent in investigations is volunteered, they do feel there is definitely something to be gained from their work.

The Birdsalls were in Lisbon visiting their cousin, Mrs. William Murray of Pendleton Street, and returned to England over the weekend.

Contact International has a representative in Ohio, they pointed out, encouraging anyone who thinks he has seen a UFO to contact her. The representative, Vera Perry, can be reached at Box 464, Huron, Ohio 44839.



Mark, left, and Graham Birdsall du