

New book says ETs are secretly living among us



THAT neighbour you always thought was weird, the barman at your local who makes you uneasy, the boss who seems to be on another planet... It could be they're more spaced out than you feared. In his astonishing new book, *Alien Base*, bestselling UFO expert Timothy Good demonstrates that extraterrestrials are living among us in secret bases all over Earth—including Britain. Some of his chilling eyewitness accounts, documented over 40 years, indicate they are even able to take on human form. Today we present his evidence. But remember, the truth isn't necessarily out there—it might be right under your nose!

IT was a journey that newsagent Hubert Lewis had made hundreds of times before.

Dawn had yet to break over the deserted country lane as he wearily powered his old bicycle through the wind and rain.

All he could think of was getting to the Shropshire town of Church Stretton to collect the newspapers waiting there for him and getting home as quickly as possible.

At first Lewis barely noticed the tall figure standing in the road ahead. But a second glance brought him stumbling to halt—for hovering in the sky, to the right of the stranger, was a circular object, 50 to 100ft across.

The panicking newsagent cried out, demanding to know who or what was there. But the tall figure answered him, saying there was "no need to be alarmed".

Lewis recalled: "My visitor spoke quite clear English. He told me I had nothing to fear from the future."

"He knew of my troubles and mentioned names of people I had known. He wished me well—then vanished."

Thirty minutes had slipped by—and all the time the circular object had rotated above, whistling softly.

A year or so later, in the summer of 1958, the Shropshire newsagent was confronted by another of the strange beings—this time in a field.

The second stranger, says Lewis—who had taken on the appearance of a human male—claimed he was from Venus and that other aliens from his planet were living among us.

It was arranged that Lewis would take the train to London to meet the alien, who brought with him a second visitor, a female.

They were "well dressed, dark, with a likeness to Continentals."

They went to Hyde Park and strolled for an hour by the Serpentine, then drove to Wanstead Flats.

The three then went to a nearby cafe where the couple from Outer Space had tea and sandwiches.

The three had further meetings over the next week before the aliens saw him off back to Shropshire.

Lewis said: "There is much that I learned. Many spacecraft land on Earth. Many aliens are living among us—one can't tell the difference."

Author Good agrees, saying: "The



By ROY STOCKDILL

evidence suggests that several extraterrestrial races have established underground and undersea bases on Earth, perhaps as a centre of operations within the solar system."

He tells how a Sheffield-based market researcher, Joelle, witnessed an alien known to her as Mark land in his spaceship in the Derbyshire Peak District in 1963.

Over 15 months Joelle had several meetings with Mark and another alien, Val. They said they were from another solar system, but that their people had bases in South America, Australia and the Soviet Union.

"Once they asked her to translate a Russian manuscript at the British Museum," Good says.

"She cooked meals for them at her London flat. Both Mark and Val had perfect manners, enjoyed wine and had a great sense of humour."

In 1976 Jan Siedlecki witnessed a saucer-shaped craft land in Leeds. Two 4ft humanoid figures appeared. One said in English: "We apologise for the intrusion." Siedlecki says they showed him over the spaceship.

Aliens were gathered around a circular pool containing a black, bubbling, oil-like substance from which flashes of red light darted in the air.

A former squerry to the Queen says he had a two-hour conversation with an alien called Janus in 1954.

The extraterrestrial made a request that stunned Air Marshal Sir Peter

Horsley—he wanted to meet the Duke of Edinburgh. The former Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Strike Command, now in his seventies, says he ruled out such a meeting for security reasons.

One alien's visit to Earth ended when he was beaten to death with a stick by a teenage boy, according to a report from Puerto Rico.

Chino Zayas came across a group of creatures going into a cave in mountains behind Santiago in 1980.

Sergeant Benjamin Morales of Salinas police said: "It had a head too large for its body and pointy little ears. Its skin was grayish green."

Preserved

Chemistry professor Calixto Perez, who examined the body, said: "In my opinion it was extraterrestrial."

The creature was preserved in a glass jar at the Zayas home. One day men claiming to be from the US space agency NASA called and took it away, say the family.

Puerto Rico has long been regarded as a possible site for an alien base. For four decades there have been reports of disc-shaped spacecraft.

But sightings literally cover the globe. In Italy, photographer Filiberto Caponi claims to have met an alien creature several times outside his house in Abruzzo. He captured it on Polaroid film in 1993.

Reproduced from *Alien Base: Earth's Encounters With Extraterrestrials*, by Timothy Good, to be published by Century on Thursday, £15.99.

ALIEN INVASION

FILE ONE
Case of the housewife and the floating TV screen

UNLIKE many witnesses, housewife Cynthia Appleton wasn't alone in a quiet country area when she sighted her "alien"—he suddenly appeared in her Birmingham home.

And when she wondered where the tall man in a tight-fitting silvery garment had come from, the answer "from another world" popped telepathically into her brain.

The creature 'told' Mrs Appleton she had come to get titanium. Then between his outstretched hands appeared a screen on which she could see a spacecraft.

On a second visit the alien brought a companion. They told her they came from Ghanas Vahn, a place on Venus.

They said her brain was suitable to witness their projected images. Author Good says of the 1957 incident: "This projected image is one of a host of mental and technical feats certain extraterrestrials are capable of."

ALIEN INVASION

FILE TWO
Case of the mother paralysed by silver disc

JESSIE Roostenburg was in an outhouse behind her cottage at Ranton, Staffordshire, when she heard a loud hissing sound, like a blacksmith putting a hot iron into water.

She dashed outside and saw her two young sons lying flat on the ground. They shouted, "Mummy, there's a flying saucer!" She said: "I saw suspended in the air a massive disc, bright silver and shaped like a Mexican hat. In the middle was a tubular light going round very slowly."

"It had a dome-like glass and inside were two beings looking down at us."

"They were the most beautiful people I have seen but they weren't human."

"They were wearing vivid blue and had fish bowls over their heads."

She said of the encounter: "I couldn't move. I was paralysed. The craft circled the cottage, then shot up vertically and disappeared."

NEWS OF THE WORLD 01.02.98

CAMBRIDGE EVENING NEWS
14 MAY 97
Page 2

Strange sight in night sky

■ SAFFRON WALDEN: Two men who claim they saw a UFO are appealing to anyone who may have seen something similar to contact them.

The father and son say the object was hovering in the sky when they looked out of the window of their Radwinter Road home at about 10.30pm on Saturday.

They said the bright red circular UFO appeared to be heading in the direction of Shepherds Way.

"At first I thought it was a firework it was such a bright light," said the son, "but it didn't fall like a firework. It appeared to be powered and it floated gradually out of view."

"It was very curious and I

got my father, who is quite a sceptic."

The father said: "It really was strange. The first impression I got was that it was an aircraft with its lights on but it did not scream down, it just floated lower and lower behind Shepherds Way."

"I've no idea what it could have been. It was round and there was no tail. I'm still a sceptic but I would be interested to know if anyone else saw it."

If you saw the same object on Saturday night, or have a down-to-earth explanation for it, telephone the News on (01799) 522218.

A spokesman for Saffron Walden police said: "We have had no reports of any sightings of a UFO. I think I'd remember that one."

UFO was 'close to jetliner'

An unidentified, wingless object traveling at high speed passed dangerously close to a Swissair jetliner between Philadelphia and Boston, the airline said today.

The pilot and co-pilot gave US investigators different descriptions of the object which passed about 50 yards from the Boeing 747 after it had taken off from Philadelphia on August 9.

The pilot told the US National Transportation Safety Board that the object was long and wingless, but the copilot said it was more spherical, said Swissair spokesman Erwin Schaerer. The incident was at 23,000 feet on a flight to Zurich.

WOLVERHAMPTON EXPRESS & STAR
26 SEP 97
Page 5

Six more fireballs seen over Alyth

REPORTS OF a bizarre smoking fireball seen in the sky over the Perthshire village of Alyth last Friday have prompted another Courier reader to relate his similar experience at the weekend.

Meteorologists and the military have been unable to provide any reasonable explanation for the phenomenon and the police, who were alerted by witnesses who feared an aircraft might be in trouble, found no evidence of wreckage or debris.

After reading the report of Friday's baffling incident in yesterday's newspaper, John Easson, who lives near the Backwater Dam, phoned The Courier last night with his account of six airborne fireballs in the same vicinity on Saturday.

"At about 5 pm on Saturday I was driving up the glen about half a mile below McRitch Farm when my wife and I noticed something odd in the sky," he said.

"There was what we took to be a large aircraft very high up in the sky—it was the vapour trail of it that we saw first—and these five or even six fireballs apparently coming from the area of the aircraft."

Puzzled by what he was seeing Mr Easson said he and his wife sat for several minutes watching the drama unfold.

"I couldn't begin to guess at what height this was happening at," he said.

"I know that some military aircraft can release flares to jam radar and missiles and the like but I couldn't say if that was what we were seeing."

"All I can say is that these things were very, very bright—even in what was still broad daylight—and I've never seen anything like it before."

A TUNBRIDGE WELLS couple are recovering from a brush with the other side after a late night trip home turned into a close encounter with a mysterious flying object.

Sally Rouse and Craig Rock were travelling down the A21 at 1.30am on their way home from Biggin Hill when they caught sight of a brightly-lit, disk-shaped craft hovering nearby.

Recounting the chilling tale, Miss Rouse, 22, of Mountfield Road, said: "As we were driving along I looked beside me and thought 'what's that?' I thought it was a helicopter with a spotlight underneath. Craig got really excited and said 'it's a UFO'."

"It was round with flashing lights

By Andrew Fraser

going one after the other lighting up the clouds around it. I was scared we were going to crash because Craig was not concentrating on the road. It was hovering and then disappeared."

They turned off the road at Tonbridge but had not seen the last of the strange object which appeared again as they were driving up Quarry Hill.

"This time it was much closer and we felt like it was following us. It was very creepy. That's when I was really scared and started shaking. Craig wanted to stop the car and take a look but I just wanted to go home," she added.

Despite a few sceptical comments from people she has spoken to about the incident Miss Rouse remains adamant that her close encounter was all too real.

"We have all seen Men in Black recently so maybe our imaginations are going wild, but I know what I saw and it couldn't have been a helicopter or a plane," she concluded.

ILFORD RECORDER

31 JUL 97

Page 26

20 YEARS AGO

■ **MASKED** gunmen rammed a garage manager's car and sped off with £5,000 takings in a daring daylight swoop.

The raid took place at Hills Automobiles, High Road, Woodford Green. The manager had just left the garage office and was carrying the takings by car to the bank.

A Transit van drove from the car park of the pub next door and rammed into the back of his car.

Four men leapt out of the van brandishing a sawn-off shotgun and a revolver. A third raider smashed the rear car window and snatched the cash.

A Silver Granada, driven by a fifth member, reversed to the robbery scene and the gang jumped in and it sped off.

■ **FLYING** saucer experts were examining the puzzling HFO - Hainault Flying Object.

Dozens of people spotted the "light in the sky" as it glowed menacingly above the forest area.

The light turned an early morning drive home from a party into a terrifying ordeal for a married couple as it "chased" them along Forest

Road in Hainault

Maureen and Terry McCreanor, of Leigh Avenue in Rush Green, ended the drive dramatically outside Dagenham police station.

The UFO was witnessed by several officers on early morning duty. The incident was investigated by a UFO study group in connection with previous reports of mysterious lights over the forest.

■ **SISTERS** Leigh and Donna Jones wanted to adopt a lovable grandma to share their childhood - but they ended up getting more than they bargained for.

The Bubbly Barkingside duo, and their friend Angelique Isaacs, made regular visits to the Green Elms Home in Mossford Green to cheer up the pensioners.

Leigh, 12, said: "We love coming here. We have more grannies than we bargained for."

Leigh and her 10-year-old sister, who lost their own granny five years previously, gave musical concerts for the residents of the Barkingside home.

Matron Mrs Beryl Reed said: "They are marvellous children who bring a lot of joy to the old folk."

"Though the pensioners have grandchildren, they love to see the girls because they brighten up their day."

Are aliens being cut off by gas in the galaxy?

IF little green men really are trying to call Earth, they may be having problems getting through.

According to a new theory from astronomers, signals from alien civilisations to mankind are likely to be disrupted by vast clouds of gas, deep in the heart of space.

If the theory is right, we may have already been contacted by extra terrestrials - but failed to recognise the message.

Every year, intriguing radio signals are picked up by U.S. scientists working for SETI - the Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence. But because the signals have been fleeting, and have never been repeated, they have been put down to random noise from space or glitches in the equipment rather than calls from another civilisation.

Now some of the most respected astronomers in America say those

brief messages might herald tantalising clues about deep space. Few radio signals picked up by SETI have ever lasted more than 20 or 30 seconds, supporting the old random origins theory.

But a new academic paper says the signals may be distorted by electrically charged gas between the stars.

This could alter a reading by 20 times, either boosting it or reducing it. That means scientists would have to search a patch of sky tens of thousands of times before they had a chance of recording a repeat signal, whatever its origins.

According to Joseph Lazio, one of the paper's authors, current SETI data is inconclusive. "It's compatible with both zero and tens of thousands of ET civilisations," he said. "Many more observations are needed before we can say anything concrete."

'I was abducted by aliens'

By JOE BRADY

POLICE are investigating a claim by a radio station boss that he and his dog were kidnapped by aliens when he disappeared in a forest for three days.

Police and volunteers scoured the area when broadcaster Lawrence John, 46, was reported missing - but found no trace of him.

After 86 hours Lawrence staggered out of the forest with his three-year-old dog Lobo and was found by a policeman.

He gave a detailed statement to officers. Lawrence, who was bruised and covered in dirt after his ordeal, said last night: "From the point when I walked into the forest until I came out my mind is a complete blank. But I have absolutely no doubt I was abducted by aliens.

"Otherwise, how could I have survived for more than three days?"

Lawrence had arranged to meet two students at the St Patrick's Chair and Well Forest straddling Northern Ireland's Armagh-Monaghan border last Saturday night.

Richard Bingham, 20, and brother Scott, 17, were researching UFOs and had heard a claim by Lawrence that he had previously encountered aliens in the forest.

When the brothers arrived at the rendezvous and found Lawrence's Jeep empty they alerted police.

But a search found nothing until Lawrence walked out of the forest on Wednesday morning.

Lawrence, who has had nightmares since his ordeal, said: "I was waiting for the brothers when I saw a blinding light.

"I remember running towards it with Lobo beside me. After that I can recall nothing until I woke up with the dog lying on top of me.

"I had no idea it was Wednesday. The police said they had combed the forest for me."

An RUC spokesman confirmed the incident was under investigation.

A search volunteer said: "There is no way he could have survived for four nights in cold weather in just casual clothes."

Woman claims she saw UFO over her village

was a barrage balloon - but as it moved slowly along the downs and then stopped completely I soon realised it was not."

After watching the object for about 15 minutes, Mrs Chalcraft said she continued her walk. She said: "I just can't explain what it was. It was like nothing I had seen before."

A Whitehill police spokesman said no reports had been received of UFO sightings.

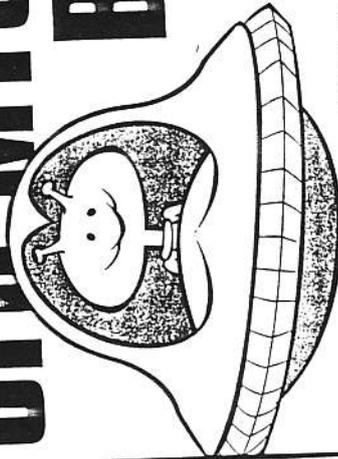
Did you see something strange in the sky? If so, ring The Post on 01780 268021.

A white metallic tubular object hovering above Liss Forest may sound like something straight out of the X-Files - but that is what a woman claims she saw while out walking her dog.

June Chalcraft, of Warren Road, Liss Forest, said she saw the UFO around 10am yesterday while she was walking through the Longmoor Enclosure.

Mrs Chalcraft described it as a white tubular object flying just below cloud level. She said it was heading north towards Alton. She said: "At first, I thought it

UFO MYSTERY OF THE BRIGHT LIGHT IN THE SKY



Eyewitnesses baffled after 'craft' spotted over Markland Hill

anyone who can shed some light on the sighting to contact him. Mrs Barker said: "I have contacted Greater Manchester Police and Greater Manchester Air Traffic Control to see if they had a helicopter in the area on the night. Neither did, and both could not explain what the light was."

"Over the years, Bolton has been an active place for strange sightings, and anyone with any further information can contact me."

Stephen is at 10 Woodlands Avenue, Pennington, (near WNY 3HL, or telephone 0857 79292). All information will be dealt with confidentially.

my glasses on, which are tinted, to get a better look. Once I had them on it stopped the dazzle and allowed me to see it properly.

"It was oblong in shape and flat, but the strangest part was that it had shoots of light coming out of it on either side, similar in shape to cats' whiskers. They were only on the side of the main body of light.

"The evening progressed, it did move further around, but when I looked out at about 11.5am it then seemed to just vanish.

"I have never seen anything like it before in my life. It certainly did not look anything like a star."

"It frightened me a little and certainly made me feel unsettled particularly as I could not explain what it was."

"I do not believe in UFOs, but this has certainly intrigued me."

By Beverly Greenberg

MYSTERY surrounding an unusual bright white light spotted in the sky by residents in Markland Hill has deepened.

Further sightings of the dazzling light have been reported - leaving bewildered eyewitnesses yet further in the dark.

The light was spotted at about 9pm on Saturday night and a Bolton Evening News article outlining the sighting has prompted further reports.

A search volunteer on Markland Hill said: "I also saw the light in the sky. I put

The Men in Black are real

By DAVID CRAWFORD

THE Scots grandad who took an alien snap that shocked the world last night revealed he was visited by two real-life Men in Black.

But retired fireman Jim Templeton, from Carlisle, won't go to see the Hollywood movie of the same name - in case it brings back unpleasant memories.

The 77-year-old photographed the famous Solway Space-man in 1964.

And the Desert Rat has now revealed that Government agents turned up to investigate the alien sighting just days later.

Agents

The grandfather-of-four said: "It's only recently I've realised who these people might be and that they were no ordinary British government agents."

"They were two large fellas over six foot high, both dressed in black, of course, and wearing bowler hats - that's the only difference with the guys in the film."

"They said they worked for the government and that they were only identified by number."

"I had to take them to the exact spot where the photo was taken."

"Then they walked to their car and drove off. I'd to walk back."

Fife 'aliens' witness on TV

A WOMAN who claimed to have had a close encounter with dozens of aliens as she drove down a North East Fife road during September 1996 will tell her amazing story on a BBC2 programme tomorrow.

Mary Morrison, Newton of Falkland, will appear on the Right to Differ show, leaving viewers to make up their own minds on whether or not they believe in the existence of alien life.

According to Mary's story, she was driving down a quiet country road towards Freuchie with her son and a friend when she allegedly saw a group of little grey aliens roaming about a field in the shadow of the Lomond Hills.

She claims the alien beings, supervised by a larger creature with almond-shaped eyes, appeared after a brilliant white light left behind a black object with a shining dome. They appeared to be conducting scientific studies in the field.

Mesmerised by what they saw, the witnesses fled when the friend shouted, "They're coming!"—the field being lit up by a blue flash as they sped off in the car. They did not see what became of the aliens.

This story is only one of a number of alleged UFO sightings in North East Fife reported by The Courier, but is probably the most graphically described.

Other sightings have included a nocturnal "ball of fire" seen at RAF Leuchars last year; hovering lights over the Lomond Hills and radar station at Kinross; and silvery objects over St Andrews and elsewhere.

No official explanation for these sightings has ever been given. RAF Leuchars has said no aircraft were in the areas concerned whenever The Courier inquired about sightings.

UFOs and Ufology

The First 50 Years

by Paul Devereux & Peter Brookesmith

PSYCHIC NEWS

03 JAN 98

Page 7

BOLTON EVENING NEWS

22 SEP 97

Page 6

Lights in the sky

SIR: Weeks ago I reported seeing the huge bright light on Rivington, which other people saw.

And I think it 'strange' that the lights were never explained, especially as they had alarmed some people.

I am not one to knock Lancashire's historians, or those from these parts, into UFO's or items associated with the phenomenal, and obviously much discussed, paranormal.

Perhaps my witnessing of the recently sighted low flying Hindley Green - Ashton in Makerfield UFO will clear the air for those others that saw the UFO. I was so close to it I could almost have touched it, as it silently edged at precisely 4am towards Liverpool.

It wasn't really an unidentified flying object at all... it was a large aeroplane, well lit up and had two glaring lights full on.

I would be greatly surprised if a nearby airport (likely the one at Liverpool) couldn't confirm that an aircraft was flying directly over the Heinz factory at four in the morning on the date that the UFO was reportedly noticed!

Mr Kenneth Lucas,
Park Road,
Hindley, Wigan.

'UFOs and Ufology' is the most exact work ever to appear on this continually fascinating phenomena: uniquely, it is a book which offers a comprehensive, exhaustively researched and closely argued history and analysis of both UFO sightings and ufology. Infinitely more than just another UFO book: this is the only academically positioned study of the subject available, and, undoubtedly, it is set to become the definitive reference source on the topic. In this powerful and unparalleled survey, the authors take us on a bizarre 50 year journey, which reveals as much about the mysteries of human consciousness as it does about strange things seen in the sky.

Devereux and Brookesmith have a wonderful grasp of their subject, along with contributors Keen and Watson. Paul Devereux whose work was recently the subject of the Equinox documentary 'Earth Lights' is based in America but will be coming to visit Britain this month.

UFOs and Ufology published by Cassell is available from Psychic News @ £18.99 plus £2 p&p.

EXTRA FOLKESTONE & HYTHE

19 SEP 97

Page 3

No explanation for nippy 'UFO'

AN 87-YEAR-OLD man has admitted he cannot come up with a rational explanation for a mysterious object he saw hovering over the Channel.

John Jenkins, of Shakespeare Terrace, Folkestone, was looking out of his window at about 9pm one Thursday a few weeks ago when he saw a long, thin shape in the sky, which he described as "all lit up."

He said: "It was very high up above the clouds and looked like a school ruler with powerful white lights all over it."

"As I watched it made a couple of slow circles in the air before shooting off at very high speed in a westerly direction. I've never seen anything like it in my life and cannot offer any explanation for what I

saw."

The encounter lasted about 15 minutes. Dover coastguard said it had not had any reports of ships in distress or any unusual activities in the Channel at that time.

A spokesman said: "We often get reports of strange things in the sky but there was nothing on this particular evening."

RAF Manston community liaison officer, Robin Shepherd, said the base had not received any other reports of unusual activities in the sky over the Channel.

He said: "There have been one or two reports of Unidentified Flying Objects in the area lately but this is a new one on me. There probably is some sort of logical explanation but we don't know what it is yet."

AS EXPERTS MEET AT A WORLD UFO CONGRESS, A STARTLING THEORY FROM A TOP WRITER

COLIN WILSON is one of Britain's most eminent authors. He has written dozens of plays and books, covering subjects from Mozart and Rasputin to Tolkien and Hermann Hesse, and has been a visiting professor at leading American universities. But it was for his studies of real-life crime, in particular serial murder, that he acquired an international reputation. Possessed of a first-rate sceptical mind, he prides himself on solving forensic problems.

It is in this context that what follows is an extraordinary testament. For here, as experts from all over the world meet in Mexico for the second World UFO Congress, Wilson reveals for the first time why he believes that there are, indeed, aliens among us.



by COLIN WILSON

THREE years ago in Washington DC, at a conference on unsolved mysteries, I heard a professor named David Jacobs lecturing about UFO abductions.

I could hardly believe my ears when he said that thousands of Americans believed they had been kidnapped by aliens, taken on board spacecraft, and often subjected to some kind of medical examination.

What was more, Jacobs said, the aliens usually destroyed all memory of the abduction, and the victims came to suspect that something was wrong only when they became aware of 'missing time'.

After the lecture, I asked Jacobs: 'Do you think these people are sane?' He nodded. 'I've interviewed hundreds, and most of them are as sane as you or I.'

The whole thing sounded so absurd that I pushed it to the back of my mind. But a year later, when a publisher asked me to write a book about extra-terrestrial life, I decided to return to the subject.

At first what I learned made me wonder whether the human race was going insane. It seemed vast numbers of people were telling the same story: they had been taken from their beds by little grey men with huge wrap-around eyes, often floated through the wall, and taken aboard flying saucers.

Women often said that they were subjected to some kind of examination, and that fetuses had been implanted in their wombs. When they woke up the next morning, they were often puzzled by red marks on their navels, yet had no memory of anything happening during the night. But their ordeals often returned in dreams and many consulted a doctor or psychiatrist, who recovered memories under hypnosis.

AND WHAT happened to the babies? This was the weirdest part of the story. According to the women, when the fetuses were a few months old they were taken away during subsequent abductions and brought up by the aliens.

What was going on? Was all this some kind of mass hysteria? Over nearly three years, I progressed from being a sceptic to a believer.

I talked to John Mack, a friend who is a professor of psychiatry at Harvard University. He has studied hundreds of cases and has written a book called *Abduction*.

John assured me that it was happening. It was not hysteria or imagination. He also felt that many of those he had examined had been made 'spiritually stronger' by their experience.

But surely little grey men were not kidnapping human beings to make them stronger?

Mack admitted that he had no idea of their motive. All he knew was that something strange was undoubtedly happening.

I had never taken any deep interest in UFOs. But in the Seventies I had been friendly with Uri Geller and his mentor, Andrija Puharich.

Professor Puharich had written a book called *Uri*, in which he claimed that all kinds of miracles had happened in front of their eyes: UFOs swooping out of the night sky, metallic voices speaking from thin air, tape recorders that switched themselves on and off

with messages that claimed to come from 'the Nine' — aliens who were anxious to help humanity.

The aliens told Puharich that they were preparing for a mass landing on Earth in the Seventies. But, of course, it never happened and Puharich's book flopped, virtually destroying his reputation.

Now, for the purposes of my book, I decided that I had to start from the beginning and study UFO phenomena that had been appearing all over the world since a pilot named Kenneth Arnold saw nine 'shining discs' in 1947 and invented the term 'flying saucer'.

The first thing I recognised, as I studied hundreds of reports, was that the whole subject of UFOs had to be taken seriously; that it was not some strange fad or superstition.

There have been millions of sightings and most have been made by perfectly ordinary, reliable witnesses with no reason to lie. And the number is incredible. When an American called John Keel decided to collect newspaper cuttings about them in the early Sixties, he

was astounded to receive more than 2,000 in a month.

Then the nature of the cases began to change. In 1967, 16-year-old Shane Kurz was puzzled when she woke up one morning to find her feet covered in mud and her muddy footprints going downstairs and across the street.

She began to show signs of pregnancy — but that was impossible, because she was a virgin.

UNDER hypnosis by Dr Hans Holzer, she remembered being summoned from her bed by some inexplicable compulsion, being taken aboard a spacecraft, and being impregnated by a humanoid alien. When she struggled, the aliens rubbed some ointment on her body that made her sexually excited.

A month or so later, her pregnancy vanished as suddenly as it started.

That was the beginning of an

apparent wave of abductions. And throughout the Eighties they became increasingly frequent.

Budd Hopkins, a New York artist, wrote a book about 'missing time' and received hundreds of letters from people who were certain they had been abducted. He is now a world expert on abduction and his meticulously documented cases are disturbingly convincing.

French astronomer Jacques Vallee, studying UFO sightings in the Fifties, came to a very strange conclusion: that the aliens were attempting to accustom human beings to the idea of beings from space coming to Earth.

But were they beings from space? After 20 years, Vallee reached an even more amazing conclusion: they were not. Rather they existed in a kind of parallel dimension, more like poltergeists than aliens.

Their craft, a kind of UFO, can do things that no normal spacecraft can do. They can turn at right angles at a thousand miles an hour, appear and disappear at will, communicate with those they abduct by telepathy. I have known

Jacques Vallee for many years, and I found his evidence overwhelming. There is a sense in which the UFO entities behave like the traditional ghosts — except that they are very obviously not ghosts, but highly evolved beings.

If they are so highly evolved, why are they bothering with us, why must strike them as little better than Neanderthals?

Slowly, as I researched my book, which will be called *Alien Dawn*, I began to see what I believe to be the only explanation.

Ever since I wrote a book called *The Outsider*, 40 years ago, about the mystical states of man, I have been convinced that mankind is on the point of some great evolutionary change. We possess inner powers that we scarcely begin to understand, but which were glimpsed by the Romantic poets of the 19th century.

Now I became totally convinced: the aliens are interested in us because we are what they were once. I believe that the task they have given themselves is to act as midwife to us as we go through the next stage of our evolution.

What first convinced me was the number of cases in which people who have had UFO encounters have been deeply changed.

A woman who stopped her car to look at a UFO as she was driving to Oxford said that, for the rest of the drive, it was if a mental explosion was taking place. Knowledge and insight seemed to flood into her mind. She told Vallee: 'All I can say is that in the course of a few hours, I changed from an agnostic to a gnostic.'

I, too, have come across dozens of such cases. Sometimes the change is interesting but minor.

ONE British couple who later realised they and their family had been abducted experienced personality changes. They became vegetarians. The husband suddenly became interested in art and religion. A smoker, he gave up overnight. Their backward child became brilliant at school.

In other cases, there has been a deep and permanent inner transformation of awareness.

An American, Beth Collings, realised that not only had she been abducted since childhood, but so had her father, her grandfather and her children. And when she asked a grey alien why he was inserting a needle into her navel, he replied: 'For the sake of change.'

H. G. Wells once wrote a novel suggesting that humans were slowly being changed into 'Martians' by some higher beings who were bombarding our genes with cosmic rays from space. I have come to believe that Wells was showing the amazing prophetic insight that was part of his genius.

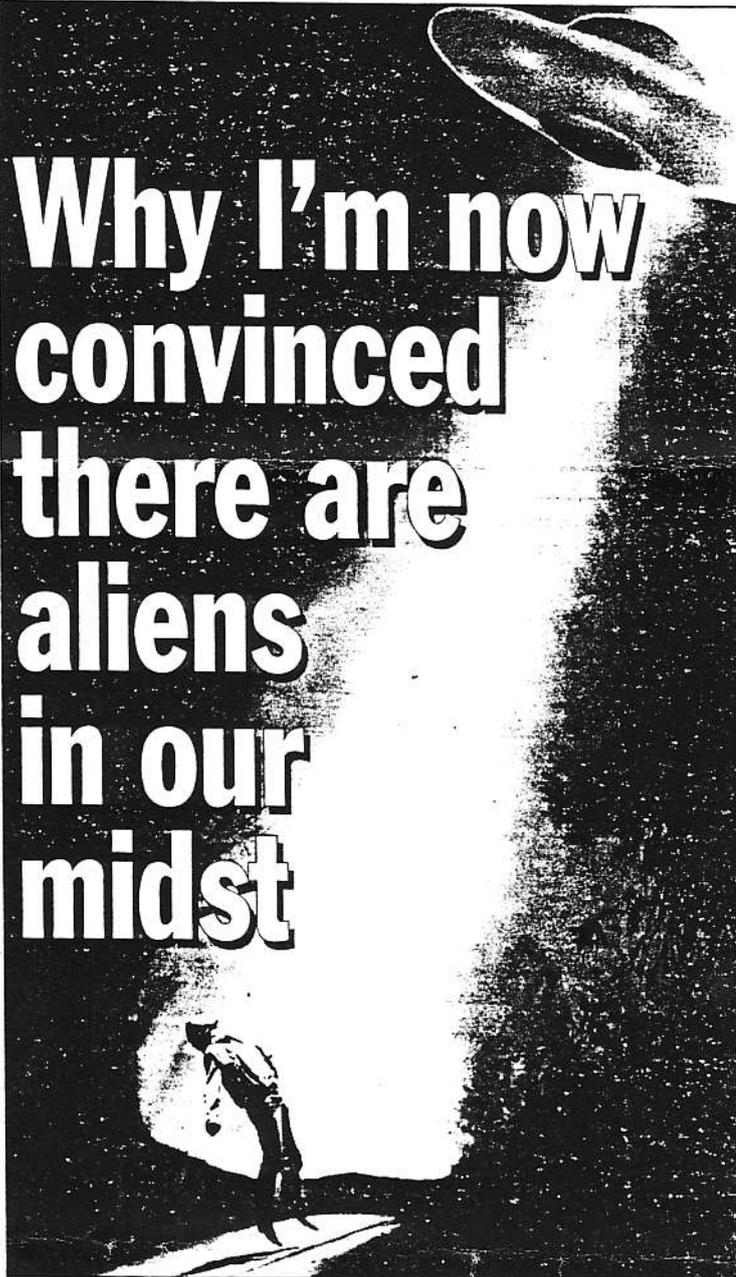
I rang Andrija Puharich, not long before his death, to ask him what he was working on. He told me that he was studying super-normal children. 'You wouldn't believe how many of those kids there are out there,' he said. 'They seem to be on genius level. I know dozens, and there are probably thousands.'

I have also come to believe this. I am convinced that the aliens are using many methods to 'seed' the human race with different types of being: alterations in individual consciousness, genetic engineering, even the creation of people who do not realise that they have two personalities — as a human being and as an alien.

The aliens know that the human race is at a dangerous point in its development, that we are creating a chaos that will be hard to disentangle.

Nostradamus foretold that the coming millennium would bring about some frightening changes.

But if I am right — and the study of a vast body of evidence I have compiled has convinced me that I am — then we are also close to a change that will alter the course of human history.



Why I'm now convinced there are aliens in our midst

A New Cosmic Vision Is Opening Minds

By Richard A. Shweder

CHILMARK, Massachusetts — Many Americans have apparently traded in their old perceptions of the heavens for something new.

Gone is the vision of the starry sky as a canopy separating us from paradise. Gone

MEANWHILE

is the counter-image of the aerial regions as a mindless matrix of dead elements, silent forces and intergalactic debris.

According to a recent Harris poll, about 60 percent of Americans believe that there is some kind of sensible being out there in space, and the belief is more common among the more highly educated.

The celestial bodies and spaces of our visible universe have always been a cosmic Rorschach test, inviting the human imagination to project meaning into outer space. And until recently, two master narratives have prevailed.

One is the religious epic about sunlight as the shadow of God and starlight as the luminous power of heaven shining through holes in the firmament. The other is the equally momentous secular saga about space as an ocean of emptiness, an astrophysical and metaphysical void, offering no hope of celestial glory. These days, many of us have lost confidence in — or have become bored with — both types of tales.

Closer analysis suggests that educated opinion on the meaning of the blue yonder divides into three camps. There are those who hold

the belief — perhaps fueled by episodes of "Star Trek" — that amidst all those "billions and billions of stars" is an extraterrestrial smarter than Einstein and more erudite than Aristotle. According to the Harris poll, this is a large and growing group.

Then there are those who emphatically deny the existence of extraterrestrials. As they see it, if you can't find signs of intelligent life on earth, you're not going to find them anywhere else. So they find it easy to dismiss the tales of those who claim to have been abducted by aliens, taken for a ride on an unidentified flying object and sent home with a videotape of elf-like creatures sipping tea by the control panel.

Perhaps one reason people in this group are so skeptical is that when they were kids, "Invaders From Mars" and "War of the Worlds" gave them nightmares. They find comfort in the idea that there is no one out there beyond our cozy home planet.

Finally, there are those who believe that anything is possible, and so they are open to the idea of intelligent life in outer space. When the CIA recently disclosed that more than half of the alleged UFO sightings in the 1950s and 1960s could be attributed to high-altitude spy planes, many people in this camp probably wondered whether a crafty UFO captain might have been shadowing those U-2s to avoid visual detection from the ground.

The big question is why

UFO riddles remain in the X-files

MYSTERY still surrounds the cause of a rash of possible UFO sightings in the skies above North Staffordshire.

Two paranormal groups are currently investigating reports of strange objects and lights spotted over Milton and Norton during the last few weeks.

Now other members of the public have come forward to report phenomena in the same area or its surrounding districts.

Julie Dodd, of Benliscie, said she saw a strange shape with flashing colours in the sky three times in a week. On one occasion she stood watching it for hours.

"Without binoculars it

Investigations, said there could be a wide number of explanations for the phenomena.

He said: "It is a process of elimination. When you can't find an explanation that is when it gets interesting."

"If people are looking at something that is stationary for a long time that has light around it then it is probably something astronomical."

He said orange balls of light can often be ionised gas released from cracks in the earth.

Other explanations for strange lights could be satellites or the reflection of car headlights in the atmosphere.

looked as if it was not moving but with them I could see it zig-zagging," she said.

Elsewhere in North Staffordshire there have also been reports of strange activity.

Roy Hammond, of Tean, said he was in his garden when he saw a "bright orange flame" which appeared cigar-shaped.

He added: "It was not an aeroplane and not a balloon. It was nothing I had ever seen before."

David Pointon, director of Staffordshire Paranormal

students do think that to be educated is to be open-minded, and that anything is possible. At least 60 percent of my most literate and sophisticated undergraduates believe that levitation cannot be ruled out.

A few of them believe that magicians really do perform levitation and that they call it magic so as not to frighten the general population. So why not believe in extraterrestrials?

A third explanation gives a more positive spin to Americans' open-mindedness about the heavens. According to this view, a long overdue spiritual revival is taking place in the United States in which the tired and tiresome opposition between faith and science is finally being laid to rest.

Those who see this as an uplifting development may also welcome the boom in books, movies and television shows that take us, as "Star Trek" would have it,

"where no man has gone before" — beyond the legends of premodern theology and the disenchanting stories of modern science.

At the moment, all one can say with confidence is that interpretations of the cosmic ink blot are changing. And only God knows what it all means.

The writer is a cultural anthropologist and professor at the University of Chicago. He contributed this comment to The New York Times.

What's going on up there?

TUNBRIDGE Wells residents with tales of the unexpected have contacted the Courier Newspaper this week following our Focus report on unidentified flying objects.

A member of Ufomek, which monitors and investigates sightings across Kent and south London, has confirmed several incidents here in the past two weeks.

A woman living on the edge of Dunorlan Park, whom the Courier has agreed not to name, said: "I have been seeing two space craft in the sky for the past three years.

Star Wars

"It is usually like Star Wars up there. What they are doing I don't know. There are two, a big one and a smaller one and the larger one shoots a flare of light, like a shooting star and sometimes it's like lightning because it's so bright.

"They seem to disguise themselves. The little one is like a big star and it's only when there are millions of stars that you see them. And when a car comes down Halls Hole Road, their lights go dim.

"I'm not imagining it, I'm perfectly sane. I'm not doolally, I actually have been seeing them."

Deirdre Morris, of Upper Grosvenor Road, told how she saw something strange in the sky on her return from her August holiday in Winchelsea and lost an hour of time in the process.

Strange

She said: "As my friend and I came to Frant, I saw a shape hidden by the clouds hanging there. It was roundish with lots of lights underneath and it wasn't moving.

"We were wondering why it had got so dark and thought it was very unusual. When we got in we found it was 9.30 although both our watches said 8.30 and it had apparently taken two hours to do a journey of under an hour. I haven't the foggiest idea where that hour went."

Sean Jones, of Ufomek, said there had been seven separate sightings in the two weeks up until the Focus article which were under investigation.

"We can identify about 75 to 80 per cent of reported sightings as planes, kites, satellites etcetera but the rest are unidentified aerial phenomena."

I took cover as UFO fell in my garden

EXCLUSIVE
By RAY NOTARANGELO

A HOUSEWIFE had to dive for cover when a UFO landed on her doorstep.

Last night, experts said they still didn't know if the silver ball Margaret Benvie found came from a meteor or spacecraft.

Emergency services were bombarded with calls after people saw flashing lights in the skies across Scotland.

Defence experts first said the scare was caused by fragments of a Russian spy satellite failing to burn up in the earth's atmosphere.

But they changed their minds and now think a



MISSED ... Margaret with pieces from UFO

SPACE INVADERS ②

meteor is responsible.

Margaret, 28, was sure a chunk of a spacecraft had just missed her outside her home in Tullibody, Clackmannanshire.

She said: "A glint in the sky caught my eye and I was mesmerised. As I watched, this object fell.

"It came whizzing past at quite a speed. It just missed

me and my husband and landed on our doorstep."

Margaret later discovered neighbour Caroline Gear, 32, had found a similar object in her garden.

A spokesman for the MoD urged anyone finding fragments to hand them to the police. He said: "We don't know for sure what caused the incident."

AN unusual bright sparkle in the sky dazzled bemused residents in Markland Hill.

And they are now asking if anyone could throw some light on the incident.

The bright light was spotted at about 9pm on Saturday night and did not appear to move for at least 30 minutes.

A resident who spotted it said: "It was just west of south in direction, and appeared to be a very bright white light with slight red lights underneath it.

"I looked at it through the binoculars, as did my next door neighbour, but we couldn't make out what it was at all.

"At 9.30pm it still had not moved, but when I looked out again at 11pm, it had moved by about 45 degrees to a more westerly direction and was stationary again.

"I looked out again on Sunday night, the following evening, at about 9pm, and it was there again in virtually the same place. Again it was still, but when I looked out at 9.30pm it was gone.

"It was a very unusual bright, white light, and the way in which it did not move, struck me as being very strange."

He added: "I do not believe in UFOs but can not explain what I and my neighbours, saw."

BOLTON EVENING NEWS

21 OCT 97

Page 7

They've seen the light, the people of Bonnybridge. Spinning lights, flashing lights, giant headlights, the people of this quiet Scottish town have had the lot. In the past five years more than 3,000 townsfolk have reported sightings of unidentified flying objects (not to mention the alien abductions). What on earth is going on?

Look up. You might see something. Balls of brilliant white light flipping across tree tops. Flare-like objects in the night skies performing leaps and 'hyper-jumps'. Huge jet-black discs hovering soundlessly over lonely country roads. Things like Ferris wheels whirling on the horizon. Balls of light materialising from nowhere and dive-bombing cars. In Bonnybridge, in the Central region of Scotland, they say they've seen it all.

The place is just a couple of bars and a handful of shops – the mini-market, the cafe, Wags and Whiskers pet grooming salon, the video store. Round here, if you want some action, look skyward. They say that there's more going on in the heavens than there is in the streets.

A popular night out is to go up on to the ridges on the back roads, among the windy farms, 'skywatching'. At one point, the whole area had sold out of binoculars and telescopes. Local councillor Billy Buchanan says that in the past five years more than 3,000 people have come to him with stories of strange lights in the sky, unidentified flying objects, alien abductions, the lot. There's been talk of the 'Bonnybridge Triangle', and that the town is a UFO 'hotspot' where multiple sightings occur, like others in Florida, Puerto Rico, Mexico and the Pennines.

Letters have been dispatched to Tony Blair, local MP Dennis Canavan and the Ministry of Defence, demanding enquiries. The local papers and the Scottish tabloids have had a field day with 'wee green men', and wild headlines: Town In Terror, Beam Me Up Bonnybridge, UFO Capital Of Britain.

Along the way, UFO spotters have fallen out. Accusations fly around like saucers; that some are making it up, doing it for publicity,

doing it for the money. On top of that, all this is a magnet for nutters.

'There's people here'll tell you that aliens landed in their gardens, gave them presents, all sorts of daft things,' says a girl on the local council estate. Across the Forth estuary in Fife, a woman claimed to have seen hundreds of little grey beings carrying boxes and cylinder-shaped objects to a craft in a field, in the midst of a blue mist, overseen by a tall brown creature.

'It's a hard story to swallow, even for me,' says local 'ufologist' Malcolm Robinson, who has publicised it nevertheless – and despite the fact that while he was interviewing her the woman said that if she concentrated hard enough she could see aliens looking in at them through the lounge window. Hysteria is a word that comes to mind. Take the man who came to Billy Buchanan claiming he had been abducted.

'He said he was taken away by 8ft-tall men in black; you'd start laughing, wouldn't you? [I tried not to] and he said he was taken on a ship, and forced to have sex with a large gooey object... Now let's be honest, who can you tell that to? It's unbelievable! Who can you tell it to? But I've known this chap all my life, and I believe he believes it; it took him three days to get the story out, and the tears were streaming down his face...'

But then come the voices of calm. There are people like Vera Prosser, 51, who lives on the estate above Bonnybridge. Shy and speaking in a whisper, she's still frightened by what happened to her and her husband Myles, a labourer, and their daughter Heather. It was a Friday evening in October two years ago.

'We had our Lottery tickets done, and we were going to the garage outside Falkirk to put them on. We went on the road past the old Rechem plant. It was dark, and there was me and Myles and Heather in the car. We were driving along and we saw what looked like a headlamp in the field, like it was on

full beam. We slowed down, and as we were looking at it, it started to come nearer...'

She sits on the sofa in the front room with Heather, now 15, and Mark, their whippet. She keeps drawing her blue cardigan round her as if for reassurance. Though her husband was out of work, she didn't ask for any money to recount this story – no one around here did – and there was no apparent reason to disbelieve what she said next.

'We'd slowed down to maybe 10mph, and it got closer, and suddenly it was on top of us, over the car, and the light from it was blazing through the sunroof. Heather was screaming.'

'I was!' Heather cuts in. 'I was going, "Get out of here! Get out of here!" And I looked up through the sunroof and I could see this thick silvery wire round the bottom of this thing, all twisted together like the cables on the Forth Bridge – that's what it made me think of, this heavy wire just above the top of the car, and all this light. It was wider than the car, and it just sat there about six feet above us, and it was pure silent, no sound at all – that's how we knew it wasn't an aeroplane or anything.'

'Then suddenly it just shot off; it skiffed over the grass really, really fast and went over towards the pylons,' continues Vera. 'I just put my foot down – I felt like we were going at 90 – and I was never so pleased to see streetlights as when we got to the bridges by Camelon [on the outskirts of Falkirk].'

Back home, Heather ran in tears to her best friend next door. Myles was shaking. 'At first I was too frightened to tell anyone,' Vera whispers. 'People would think I was crazy; in case they thought I was mental, you know...' But she decided to go to Billy Buchanan's house. He remembers her coming through the door in tears.

'You feel so stupid, so ridiculous,' she explains. 'But it was just so real at the time, and so frightening. It's just something I wish had never happened. It was months before I would go along that road in the dark ▶'

They come from outer space, and for some reason like to hover about over the back road from Bonnybridge to Falkirk

SEPTEMBER 21 1997 NIGHT&DAY 33

HELENSBURGH ADVERTISER

27 AUG 97

Page 5

UFOs in Garelochhead?

ANOTHER close encounter with UFOs in the area occurred on Monday night, this time near Garelochhead, with four people witnessing the sighting.

Last month, a Rhu man sighted something but was pronounced by the British Astronomical Association as a possible weather balloon, apparently a common sighting.

However, Mike Smith, who lives in Ardeaton near Garelochhead, says he and his wife saw what they think was "a very large UFO".

Mike, who is a writer, told the Advertiser: "Four of us actually saw it. My wife and I and our neighbours all saw something moving in the air late on Monday evening.

"It was above the

Ardentiny hills and it was enormous. I'm ex-RAF and my neighbour is an army major so we know what aeroplanes look like and it wasn't that."

"It was gold, disc-shaped and kept turning about and going between clouds. Then disappeared in a flash. There was no bright light or anything like that but it just disappeared."

Mike added: "It was an

extraordinary thing and was tremendously massive."

He then rang the British Astronomical Association but in this case, couldn't provide any explanation.

Apart from contacting an amateur informer of UFO sightings who has asked him to send him a description for a magazine, Mike said: "No one's been much help about it at all."

THE BONNYBRIDGE FILES

► again.' Heather says she never told a soul at school.

A few miles away, in his seventh-floor flat in a block overlooking Falkirk, William Bestall, 75, describes the spinning lights he saw in the sky. He brings out the handwritten accounts he made at the time.

One night in early March 1994, he and his wife Mabel watched 'a circular illuminated wheel... rotating, [going] forward and reversing on a straight trajectory path over the high-rise flats in Camelon'. He described it as being like a Catherine wheel, brilliantly illuminated. 'Naturally,' he wrote, 'possessing a rather cynical outlook on these UFO reports, I tried to think of an explanation.' He mused on the TV transmitter masts in the area as a possible source, and noted that the lights 'disappeared over the horizon at a speed far beyond the limits of any aircraft'.

While he and Mabel were visiting friends five months later, they all saw the object again, the friends signing his account in confirmation. Then, on January 12, 1995, he got up at 5.30am to go to the bathroom, and happened to look out of the lounge window.

'I saw this circular light spinning on the far horizon,' he says. 'I stood watching, and all of a sudden I saw it coming towards us. I was getting a little bit concerned that it was going to hit this flaming block, y'know? It got nearer and nearer, and I dragged a very reluctant wife out of bed - "What is it now?" she was asking - and then we saw these smaller discs going round the bigger one, which was like a Ferris wheel you'd see at a fun fair. It would rotate, then stop. And then they went south, out of sight round the side of the building, with just a wee flare at the back...'

Bestall wasn't going to tell anybody, until a nurse coming home from the infirmary in the early hours was quoted in the local paper as having seen something, too. He backed up her account.

'Then we just got invaded,' he says. 'We had BBC, Channel 4, Japanese TV, German TV - cameras everywhere, cluttering the place up - and I was getting little whispers about all the money I was supposed to be making - it was fantastic, like the lottery. And out of the whole lot, do you know, it was the Germans that sent a £50 cheque for my favourite charity.'

Bestall was surprised at his old enemy. He had served in the Navy on the Atlantic convoys during the war. He then worked for 30 years at the nearby British Aluminium plant, where he was a senior shop steward until injuring his back in an accident in 1979. He says his late, brief career as a UFO spotter wasn't much fun.

'I wouldn't have got involved, because people think you're away... up here,' he says, tapping the side of his head. 'But I wanted to back this lassie up - and it was a real can of worms. The terrible fact is that nobody believes you unless they've seen it themselves - that was the hard thing. Before all this there was no bigger cynic than me. When all these rumours about UFOs started, I used to think: "What have they been drinking?" But then this happened, and nobody will convince me that me and Mabel didn't see those things. There's been all these sightings round here, in Falkirk and Bonnybridge. They must like us down here. I don't know why. It's not as if we've even got a good football club or anything like that.'

Indeed, Scotland's central belt between



The most popular pastime in Bonnybridge is gazing into the night sky for flying saucers (there isn't a lot else to do); councillor Billy Buchanan (left) is the town's unofficial UFO Agony Aunt; and Malcolm Robinson (right), one of the town's self-styled 'ufologists'

Glasgow and Edinburgh would not figure highly on the 'must-see' lists of many tourists, terrestrial or otherwise. Motorways, a tangle of power lines, belching petrochemical chimneys at Grangemouth, damp streets and chip shops. Separated by windy moorland and isolated farms is a string of small towns.

Bonnybridge is one of them: about 7,000 people; some neat war memorial gardens; a good chunk of the Antonine Wall, built in 142AD as the north-western frontier of the Roman Empire; a Bronze Age fort; and the site of a Norman castle. Apart from one plant, the foundries and brickworks which once employed 12,000 people have all closed down. There are scrapyards, haulage depots, some opencast coal mining, and a catering equipment manufacturer. Billy Buchanan represents the area on Falkirk Council.

'This all started one evening in 1992, when I got a knock at the door and a friend of mine, a well-known local businessman, was standing there,' he says. 'I could see there was something untoward. He started telling me that while he was driving on the back road from Falkirk to Bonnybridge, he was stopped in his tracks by a bright object hovering over the road, blocking his path. He said he sat and watched this thing, transfixed, for 10 minutes; then it went off at tremendous speed. He didn't want to go to the local media; he felt the ridicule might affect his business.'

This meeting was the catalyst for a saga that has embarrassed some, fascinated

others, drew UFO investigators from the US, and made Bonnybridge famous - or infamous, depending on your point of view. Buchanan put an ad in a local paper asking if anyone else had seen anything that night.

'This opened the floodgates,' he recalls. 'In the first week, I must have had 300 people coming to me with reported sightings; my phone was going all day and all night - even at 5am. And the letters I was getting were unbelievable. We're talking sackfuls.' And he still, even now, gets phone calls from people claiming they're from the CIA, and letters addressed to: William Buchanan, Bonnybridge, The Milky Way.

Among the calls was one from local 'ufologist' Malcolm Robinson. He works at a glass factory in Alloa, checking whisky bottles for imperfections. Beside his house on an estate on the edge of Alloa is his caravan office (registration plate: UFO ONE), packed with models of little aliens (one wearing a Hibs strip, holding a football) and books on UFO sightings and the paranormal. This is the HQ of his society, Strange Phenomena Investigations. He and Buchanan arranged some public meetings. The first was at the Norwood Hotel in Bonnybridge in February 1993.

'It was unbelievable,' says Buchanan. 'I expected 50 or 60 people, but there were 400 crammed in and hundreds outside who couldn't get in. People were saying they'd seen things, but didn't know who to tell without people ridiculing them and saying they should be locked up.'

By now the press was making a meal of the story. 'Wee green men, town in terror - you can imagine,' says Buchanan. 'I was getting attacked personally and politically. Colleagues at the council were saying: "Would you vote for someone who believes in flying saucers?" And others were saying I was in it for the money, or trying to hype it up to put Bonnybridge on the tourist map. I got a terrible time of it. Who wants ridicule? And I wasn't getting paid for this. I was doing it to try and get an answer for the people who'd had the courage to come forward, and had been booted all over the place by the media.'

It got worse. Before another meeting, Malcolm Robinson claimed in his magazine, *Enigmas - The Journal of Strange Phenomena Investigations*, that Buchanan had had a chat with an alien called Zalus in his office at Falkirk Council, and would bring him along to make an 'earth-shattering announcement' at the meeting in Falkirk Town Hall. The story, as Robinson puts it, 'went round the world from Bathgate to Bombay'. May The Farce Be With You, ran one headline.

'Kids were shouting "Zalus!" at me in the street, and I got a lot of stick at functions and that, and my wife had a hard time at work,' says Buchanan. 'It was terrible. I spent £1,000 on lawyers seeing if I could sue. There were people at the council demanding my resignation, saying I was bringing the area into disrepute, everything.'

Robinson has since apologised to Buchanan, and admits he got it wrong. He explains this bizarre incident - somewhat lamely - by claiming pressure of work, a rush to get the magazine out, and separate stories about Buchanan and an alien called Zalus getting mixed up. 'Something from another story somehow fell into Billy's story,' he says. 'I'm very, very sorry about it.'

Though he still grumbles about the £1,000 and thinks Robinson should reimburse him, Buchanan is irrepressible. In blazer and clipped moustache, he strides around his manor acknowledging waves from almost every passing car, cracking a stream of jokes, talking Bonnybridge up. A former professional footballer - striker at Brentford FC and in Hong Kong, coaching in Saudi Arabia - he has dabbled in antiques, made a cassette of ballads (*The Singing Councillor*), and undergone regression therapy. 'Apparently I was hanged as a sheep stealer in 1692, killed at the battle of Culloden, and shot in the First World War. According to my regressor, I'm about 640; but you can put in that I'm 49 - a young 49, mind...'

Buchanan says he has seen lights himself, on three occasions. The most dramatic was at Wester Glen above Falkirk. Up here, on a windy ridge by a farm, looking out over the Forth estuary with its petrochemical plants and power station, he says he and another couple stared, amazed, at an hour-long display of rushing lights.

'It was a very cold night, but very bright, about midnight. We couldn't believe it - these lights were coming out of the sky and seemed to be landing in the hollow in the field over there and just disappearing. They weren't balls, but more like a conglomeration of bright light. We watched it for about an hour, and I wanted to go over the fence and run across these fields like General Custer, but the woman we were with was getting frightened and asked to be taken home.'

At the edge of the field are three tall ►

THE BONNYBRIDGE FILES

► transmitter masts, with a sign on the high fence surrounding them. 'Warning,' it reads, 'strong radio frequency fields exist in certain areas of this transmitting site. If you have a cardiac pacemaker or bones repaired by metal/plastic bone implant you must report this fact to reception on your arrival'.

Many others claim they've seen strange lights in this spot. One theory, Buchanan says, is that it's something to do with electricity coming from the masts. Another is that balls of light are created by gases from the petrochemical plant. Like almost everything else around here, it's speculation and rumour.

Others have suggested a 'collective illusion' — people believing they'll see UFOs as a result of the publicity, and persuading themselves that they have. Malcolm Robinson, who has been logging the reports since 1992, says he always checks with the airports at Glasgow, Edinburgh and Cumbernauld to see if a reported 'sighting' might simply be the British Midland shuttle from Heathrow.

'People can be mistaken, seeing ordinary objects in the sky — aircraft at an angle, flocks of birds in the distance, silver fair-ground balloons; when they go high, they really look like a disc. Satellites go across the sky. And some of these sightings could well be secret advanced-technology aircraft like the Stealth bomber overflying parts of Scotland. But there's nothing specific in this area that you could safely say could be the reason for this intense activity.'

He admits he's foxed. 'I cannot provide an explanation as to: why Bonnybridge? People can lie through their teeth and sound amazing, and pictures and videos can easily be faked, but nonetheless I can say the evidence we have in the Bonnybridge area is very strong and very impressive. I'm convinced there's a genuine mystery, something very real going on in the skies of central Scotland.'

So far, so weird. Or not, as the case may be. Sceptics are forthright, and a Falkirk publican speaks for them. 'See these UFOs? Load o' pish,' he says, chucking out the last few punters a bit after midnight. And Heather Prosser says that when anyone in Bonnybridge sees a light in the sky, it's got to be a UFO. 'It's a joke now,' she smiles.

For others it's not, apparently. There's the 'A70 incident' of 1992, in which Colin Wright and Gary Wood, a painter/decorator and an ambulanceman from Edinburgh, were driving along the desolate A70 to the hamlet of Tarbrax south west of the city.



'You feel so stupid, so ridiculous,' says Vera Prosser (above left, with daughter Heather), explaining the strange light she saw in the skies above Bonnybridge; Craig Malcolm (right) has shot six hours of video footage of 'blips' in the sky. It's weird; he wants some answers

Near the Harperrig Reservoir, they are said to have rounded a bend to be confronted by a jet-black disc hovering 20ft above the road. As they tried to drive underneath it, it supposedly emitted a shower of silvery snowflakes, plunging the men into darkness. After what seemed to them like a few seconds the darkness lifted, the car was shuddering violently and the object had disappeared. They drove on, but when they arrived at Tarbrax they were told they were late — very late. The journey had taken 90 minutes longer than it should have done.

Gary Wood won't talk about this now. 'I've given up with the papers — they're only interested in spooks and aliens and that,' he says. 'I'm trying to look at this in a scientific way. I just do my work and my research and send things in to the MOD and try and find some form of evidence.' Does he have any explanation for what is supposed to have happened? 'Not really, no. That's why I do my research. It's the only way I can cope with it.'

Back near Bonnybridge, Craig Malcolm, 27, has compiled nearly six hours of video footage of lights and other things he has seen

in the skies near Wester Glen, and around the family home and blacksmith's business in Larbert.

'Just last night I saw from the window a light getting brighter and brighter, coming across above the trees, then it slowed and stopped. Then it started again. It disappeared over the roof of the bus garage opposite, so I jumped in the car to go round the back of the building. I was only 45 seconds doing that, but when I got there, it was gone. And it was so clear last night you could see for miles.'

La d-off two weeks previously from his job as a delivery driver for a building company, Malcolm spoils through some of his footage. Lights tracking across the night skies, pulsating, doing up and down 'blips', or 'hyper-jumps' as he calls them. On one, a little blob of light appears to shoot out of the back of another light. There's a plane, seen in daylight, with a grey disc apparently flying beneath it.

'There's a lot of weird things go on here,' he says. 'I'm not saying they're spacecraft or not — to me they're just weird objects in the sky, and I'm wanting answers.' A 'ufologist' has visited the family from the US, and they've been on TV here and in Japan.

Malcolm says it began when his elder brother Neil dashed into the house one night in 1992, ashen-faced. 'He was driving his car down that road outside, and he said this object approached him from the sky and lit up the interior of the car. We thought he'd been in a smash when he came in because he was so white in the face, like freaking out. We ran out, and this light was floating up above the house...'

He claims that up at Wester Glen, he and his fiancée have seen balls of light dancing across tree tops, like beach balls. And once, he says, he and his parents and his fiancée were driving on the country road to Slamannan when they saw a huge blaze of light in a field.

'It was this massive thing, it seemed like the size of a jumbo jet to me. My dad got out the car, and I was shouting at him to get back in. And then these two lights came out of it and came straight across to us and just hovered there. Then they went back towards the big thing, and everything just switched off, like a light going out. It didn't go up, or down or sideways — it just disappeared.'

Lights, balls, alien abductions — they've all become a way of life for the residents of Bonnybridge. The only mystery they really worry about is what on earth they'll do when the great lights in the sky go out. ■

THE PARANORMAL INDUSTRY

When a town, village or area gets a name for itself as a site of paranormal activity, the consequences can be highly lucrative. The tourist industry has known this for years, even when it has had nothing more marketable to promote than a few ghosts. Cities which sell themselves to the world as 'haunted' include Bath, Chester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, London and — most often cited as Britain's 'most-haunted' city — York, which claims 140 ghosts and offers visitors seven separate 'spirit tours'. Crawford in Scotland and Pluckley in Kent both claim to be Britain's most haunted village, and there are about 150 hotels around the country that sell

themselves on the strength of their ghosts. The British Tourist Authority produces a guide to haunted inns and hotels, but the leaflet is only available abroad, owing to concern about the Trade Descriptions Act.

In Wiltshire there are farmers who earn thousands of pounds every summer from tourists who want to see their crop circles; at Glastonbury, most of the local economy is based on the rainbow hordes of New Age tourists who are drawn by the town's alleged associations with Jesus, Joseph of Aramathea, King Arthur and various 'earth mysteries'. But nowhere in Britain can quite compete with Loch Ness, where 500,000

visitors spend in the region of £25 million each year.

Increasingly, there is competition from abroad. Paranormal tourists can visit Area 51, Nevada (see page 12), or Roswell, New Mexico (see page 30), to inspect the alleged sites of the world's most widely believed-in UFO incidents. They can look at the alleged alien landing strips at Nasca in Peru, they can enjoy 'earth mysteries' at Ayers Rock in Australia, or they can even experience the thrill of flying over the Bermuda Triangle.

Or, if they prefer their mysteries quasi-religious rather than quasi-scientific, they can join the growing band of Britons who are taking their conspiracy

theories and their metal detectors to Rennes-le-Chateau. This is the tiny Pyrenean village made famous by The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail (1982), the book which investigated an arcane mystery involving the possibility of Jesus having had children who ended up in France, sold more than one million copies and made its authors, Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln, rich men. The tiny village currently attracts 35,000 visitors a year.

All of which goes to show that, even if everyone else pours scorn on your paranormal experiences, you can always be sure of a sympathetic hearing from your local tourist board.



Rennes-le-Chateau, famed for its quasi-religious conspiracy theories