



This UFO was seen over Zanesville, Ohio.

A bewildering sequence of uncanny events has led experts to believe alien forces are trying to contact people in West Gwent. The number of unidentified flying objects recently seen has surprised even those who believe we are not alone . . .

Is there anybody there?

CARL DIFFORD has been investigating.

THE sheer volume of UFO sightings in West Gwent within the last 18 months has led to speculation that the area could be a "hit zone" for intelligent life from another world trying to make contact with Earth.

At least that is the theory put forward by some people who have noted the sightings with interest, and even anticipation.

Whatever the source of lights in the sky, the "Gwent Triangle," the "Oakdale enigma" and the "Blackwood lights" have continually cropped up as topics of conversation since the number of reported sightings multiplied.

The first of the recent "close encounters" occurred at 11pm on Friday, September 5, 1980, when Mrs Dorothy Jones,

of George Street, Blackwood and her sister-in-law, Mrs Sandra Jones, were driving home from Cross Keys.

"There were two lights - a bit like car headlights, but they were suspended in the air," she said.

"We hadn't been drinking and we stopped to look at the lights. They were moving slowly across the sky, but they weren't aeroplane lights and there was no noise.

"Then, after about ten minutes the lights came closer together and rose vertically until they disappeared from sight."

Mr Raymond Davenport, of Yellow Cottages, The Rhiw, Oakdale, said he saw lights in the sky several times during the summer of 1981.

"The last time was in November. I saw a blue light in the sky that didn't look like an aircraft or a firework. It rose vertically before disappearing."

On Thursday, February

25, this year, at 6.30pm, Mr Tony Davies, of Rhymney Close, Penllwyn, Pontllanfraith, was driving his car with his wife, Sharon, and their three young children.

Mrs Davies takes up the story: "We were driving over Bedwellty mountain near Blackwood when these really bright lights appeared.

"They were reflecting from the bonnet and they lit up the whole car.

Shadow

I could just make out a sort of circular shadow behind the lights, which were revolving like the ones in a disco.

"The lights were only a few feet above us, but the strangest part was that there was absolutely no sound coming from the object at all.

"The shape was about 15 to twenty feet in diameter and continued to hover above us for several seconds.

"The children were crying and I was terrified. I told Tony not to stop driving, but the lights stayed just above us, and then suddenly vanished.

"I was shaking for hours and I never slept a wink that night. I've never seen anything like it before - not even in books or on the television.

"I never used to believe in flying saucers and things like that, but now nobody can tell me they don't exist."

Helicopter

At 7.25pm that same evening, Mr Malcolm Collins, of Trinant Terrace, Crumlin, was driving from Trinant with his daughter's boyfriend, Mr Peter Evans.

Near Pen-y-Fan pond they saw two orange lights in the sky.



Near Albuquerque in New Mexico this UFO was photographed.

"They were very bright and like lights on a police car, but they were the wrong colour and in the air," said Mr Collins.

"I thought it could have been a helicopter but there was no sound of engines at all."

The Anslow family, of Goldcliff, Newport, also saw lights in the sky at about the same time.

Blackwood Police-constable Stephen Gamlin was on duty in the town on Wednesday, March 17, when he saw blue and white flashing lights circling low in the sky over Blackwood.

The lights turned red before the mystery object headed off towards Oakdale.

Police-constable Gamlin's sighting confirmed an anonymous telephone call the police at Blackwood received, reporting a UFO at the same time.

Also on March 17, Mr Frederick Jackson, of Dorset Crescent, Liswerry, Newport, saw red, white and green lights in the sky.

"I am no stranger to aircraft because I was in the RAF for seven years and my son is a pilot, and I'm sure those lights were not from an aircraft," he said.

The following night, at 8.30pm, Mrs Monica Joyce and her daughter,

Nicola, of Beechwood Park, Newport, saw five red, amber, white and green lights on what appeared to be a grey, cone-shaped object in the sky.

Fantastic

"I am a very rational person, but this was a fantastic sight," said Mrs Joyce.

Five minutes before that sighting, Gwent police received a call from a Croesyceiliog resident reporting a similar object in the sky over Cwmbran.

With so many sightings of UFOs by sober, sensible, sceptical people, there must be some explanation for the lights in the sky.

The RAF have said they were not conducting any night-time exercises in the area at the times of the reported sightings.

An air traffic control spokesman for Cardiff (Wales) Airport at Rhoose

said it was impossible to say if there were any aeroplanes flying near where the people saw the lights at the relevant times because most of the area concerned was outside the space they controlled.

One possible explanation is that weather balloons used by the Meteorological Office may have been mistaken for something more sinister.

Several weather balloons have been sent up from a site near Blackwood as part of a long-running experiment into wind patterns in the Sirhowy Valley.

Researching

But some of the experiences reported do not conform to this hypothesis and so the more unusual theories continue to be put forward.

Mr Jonathan Pope, of

Candwr Lane, Pontthir, spends his spare time researching UFO sightings and is a member of the UFO Welsh Study Group - a society which investigates reported close encounters throughout South Wales.

Mr Pope and his colleagues think there is more to the mysterious lights in the sky than can be simply explained.

"We are certain these are extra-terrestrial," he said.

"There have been many sightings in the last few years, particularly around Twyn Barlwm mountain near Risca and in the Blackwood area.

"We investigate all these reports because we are after a closer encounter - maybe even a close encounter of the third kind - actual contact with life from another world."

Gwent sightings

- September 5, 1980 - Mysterious lights spotted in the sky over Cross Keys.
- November, 1981 - Blue lights in the sky over Oakdale.
- February 25, 1982 - Family terrified by lights above their car on lonely mountain road near Blackwood.
- February 25, 1982 - Two men driving through Trinant see strange lights in the sky.
- February 25, 1982 - Newport family see coloured lights in the air.
- March 17, 1982 - Blackwood policeman reports blue and white flashing lights in the sky.
- March 17, 1982 - Newport man confirms Blackwood sighting.
- March 18, 1982 - Grey cone-shaped object seen in the sky over Cwmbran.
- March 18, 1982 - Newport mother and daughter spot an unidentified flying object.

PR Thomas