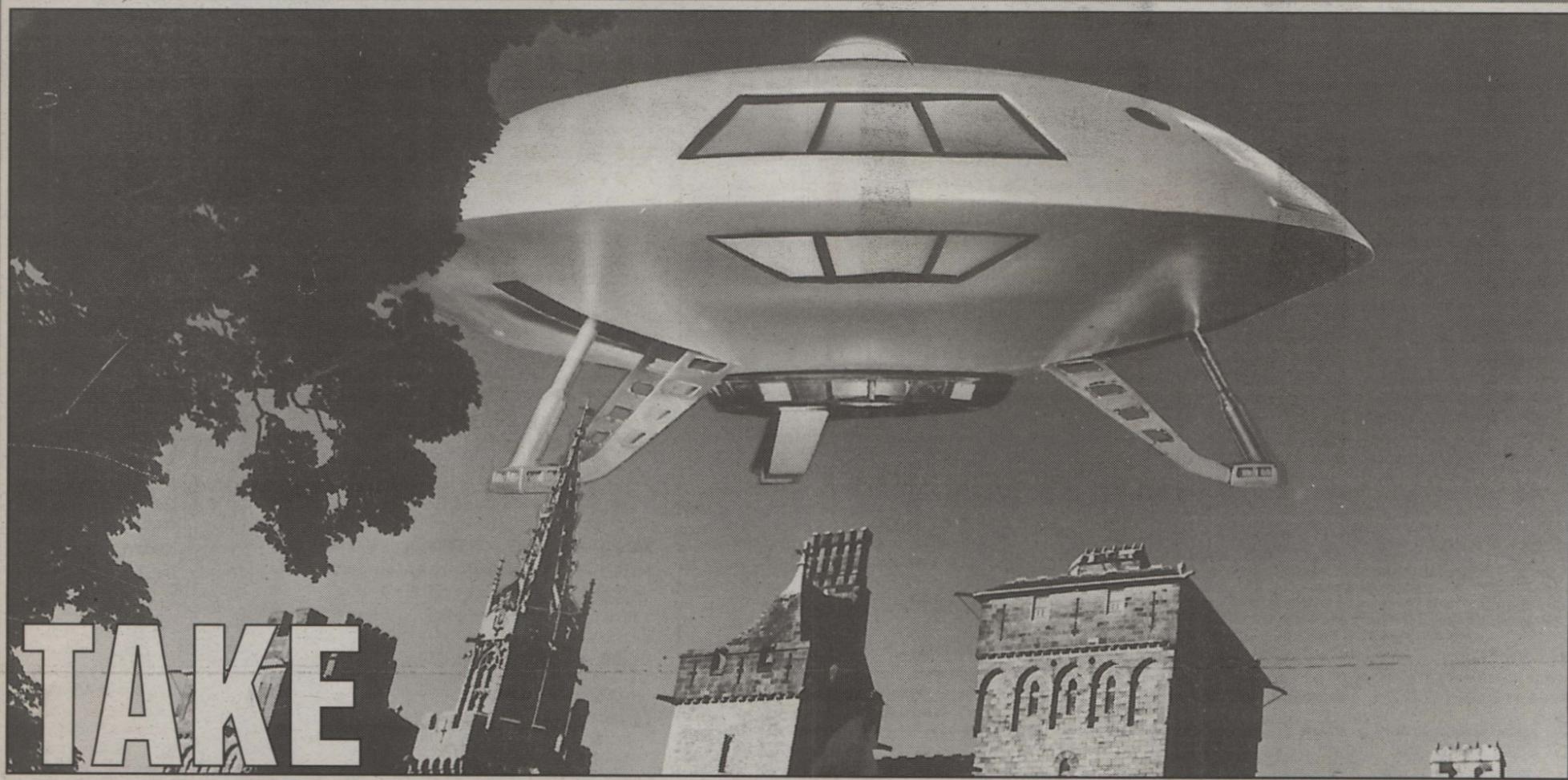


I know no other details than what's below. I saw no ads etc. locally.

A close encounter with a group from the CORN circle!



TAKE

ME TO YOUR LEADER!

Personally Speaking



By Dan O'Neill

IT WAS billed as South Wales's first UFO and Crop Circle Conference.

And here, in the homely surroundings of Llanedeyrn's Education Centre, the time had come (pause for eerie Dr Who type chords) to hear the facts that the public were never told by the media.

More than that... "The time has come for the truth to be exposed!"

And, hallelujah, once inside that truth was evident. One of the great mysteries of our times was no longer a mystery - we were given the answer the world had waited so long to hear.

Forget flying saucers. We at last discovered where trainspotters go when they grow up - to UFO and crop circle conferences.

Only one anorak, mind you, but plenty of bangles and beaded braids, ponytails and beards, jangling earrings and protective pendants. And, above all, eyes filled with that strange intensity more often seen on Platform Four when a previously unsighted engine number rolls into view.

Never mind aliens and crop circles in our cornfields, this was pure corn without the aliens, the same claims of cover-ups and abductions that have been doing the rounds ever since George Adamski, archetypal American fruitcake, announced in 1952 that he had been for a ride in a flying saucer piloted by a Venusian.

You knew what you were in for when organiser Tom Blower, introduced proceedings as though he was inviting us to step into The Twilight Zone.

Deep, echoing voice accompanied by what sounded like a musical saw: "Since time began, man has looked to the heavens for the answers and found many clues."

It didn't suggest an objective, even critical conference ahead and we got no cynicism from Gary Rowe, of Clwyd, a veteran - he claims - of two close encounters



CORN BLIMEY: But can you tell the wheat from the chaff?

and a UFO investigator for 35 years.

He reeled off a list of famous names Who Had Seen, including three US presidents, NASA scientists, Sammy Davies Jr and Muhammad Ali.

He then showed us photographs alleged to be of UFOs on a white screen so blindingly lit by the sun streaming through the windows that hardly anything was visible. We'd just have to take his word for it, he observed, which is about par for the UFO course.

There were also photographs of dead aliens. They've been crashing on to our planet for yonks, joy riders from Jupiter, maybe?

And, you'd never believe it, but they look like the bloke behind the counter of your friendly Chinese takeaway.

Mr Rowe did a von Daniken, milking the ancient astronaut theory (Was God an Astronaut?) with references to UFOs over ancient Egypt and battling in the skies above the Himalayas 7000 years ago.

Not forgetting the Biblical accounts of spaceships appearing to prophets like Ezekiel. For true believers, every burning bush and fiery cloud was a UFO.

The most interesting part of the day was when film of UFOs was shown with an unctuous voice over and this, more than any speech, suggested that there is...something.

After all, with 600 million planets like earth in our galaxy and millions of other galaxies Out There, why not? The problem with conferences like this is that the 300 or so attending seem to be looking for deeper, more mystical explanations for UFO's than science might offer.

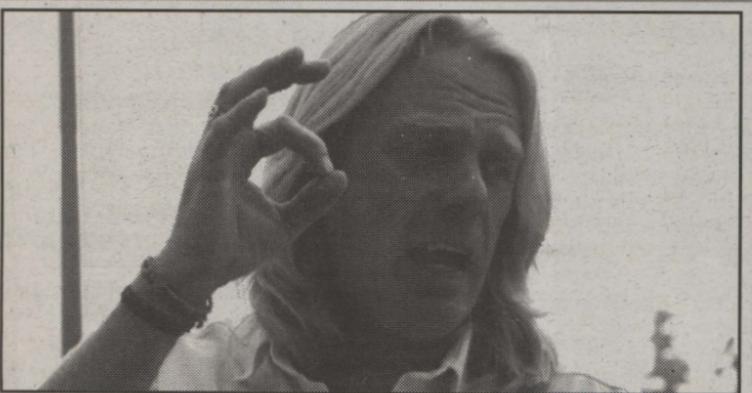
So as we walked in we were confronted by masks supposed to show what alien faces look like - six quid apiece, two for a tenner.

Then there were crystals for sale, 50p per item, bloodstone to draw out depression and other chunks of rock to protect you from negative thoughts.

There was the crop circle jewellery, postcards and books about...yep, crop circles.

One speaker, Paul Daman, represented the Truth Seekers Movement. It was hard to believe that the customers were seeking truth. Rather, they were there to have their beliefs reinforced.

Someone should tell them - fairytales DON'T come true.



HEAVENS ABOVE: Event organiser Tom Blower is still looking for clues.

CLIVE PARSONS, 77 MEADOWCROFT, RHOOSE, BARRY, SOUTH GLAMORGAN, CF6 9FQ