

Martians over Mynydd Maen? It's a novel idea



THEY'RE OUT THERE: Authors Darren Bowker-Powis, left, and Richard Finlan

JOURNALISTS often hear stories that are stranger than fiction.

But when former *Pontypool Free Press* reporters Richard Finlan, from Sebastopol, and Darren Bowker-Powis, from Penygarn, decided to use their experiences working in the South Wales Valleys as the inspiration for a new book, the result was something out of this world.

The two men, who met while working for the *Free Press* in 1995, have just published a new novel based on UFO sightings in the Valleys.

Waliens: Close Encounters of the Welsh Kind is set in a fic-

tional Valleys town and follows the story of a newspaper reporter investigating a spate of UFO sightings.

At first he is sceptical about the reports, but soon finds himself embroiled in the mystery.

Mr Bowker-Powis, 41, said: "The idea for *Waliens* has been buzzing around my head for more than twenty years. I talked about it with Richard and with the addition of his ideas and suggestions, everything just clicked into place."

The two men, who have written one other book together, took around two years to complete the novel, and the finished product is a story

inspired by the town of Pontypool and UFO sightings across South Wales – including some of their own extra-terrestrial experiences.

Sci-fi author Mr Finlan, 60, said: "We have drawn on Gwent UFO sightings, including one of my own in 1976. I was walking up Henllys Way, when coming over the mountain from Twmbarlwm I saw a silver, cigar-shaped object. When it got to the top of the mountain, it turned and disappeared."

Waliens is available from C & M News in Commercial Street, Pontypool, Reliance Stores in South Street, Sebastopol or online at www.daricbooks.com