


research will produce a simple explanation, but that still leaves 10% remaining unexplained."



However, Stuart Campbell, author of *The UFO Mystery Solved*, said he had "never been stumped" to explain a reported sighting.

"I claim that 100 percent (of reports) are explainable, it just depends how many explanations you have available.

"I have never found one that I couldn't explain."

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**O**N A raised platform beneath the galleried ceiling of the prestigious National Press Club in Washington DC, a group of men and women, all experts in their chosen field, waited patiently as the large hall filled with more than 150 journalists from newspapers and TV stations from all over the world.

For almost two hours, one by one, more than 20 "eye-witnesses" - amongst them US Army and Air Force officers, Nasa scientists, nuclear missile silo commanders and employees of large corporations - described their experiences to the assembled press. Some spoke of inexplicable encounters with unidentified lights and objects in the air, others of the crashes of strange craft, of "unaccountable, unelected and illegal projects". Yet others even claimed to be involved with the "back-engineering of advanced technology".

Many expressed frustration at their failure to be taken seriously. All referred to a worldwide conspiracy to keep the truth from governments and public alike. As each individual spoke there was hushed attention, as each sat down applause filled the room. At one point a cameraman for a US TV station was heard to say: "Bloody hell, this is amazing - bloody hell."

And yet, since that day in May 2001, the silence has been deafening.

Last year, the Sunday Express was the first newspaper to publish an article on the Disclosure Project, a US-based UFO group whose stated aim is to press the US Congress for an open hearing.

The group's founder, Dr Steven Greer, claims he is continuing to gather "deep-insider witnesses" who, if released from their security oaths, would tell Congress what they know about an alleged cover-up of the existence of UFOs and extra-terrestrials as well as the possession of their advanced, life-changing technology.

But one year on, the Project seems nowhere nearer achieving its goal, despite positive feedback from US Senators and overwhelming interest from the public via their website. Dr Greer is now concentrating on a grassroots effort to spread the word via a global network of representatives.

"This is the best chance we have had in 50 years to find out what is really going on," says David Williams, one of the Disclosure Project's UK representatives. Now an IT director in the finance industry, he is a former crypto-analyst in the Royal Signals, once based in Whitehall.

"While I was there I had Top Secret clearance, and the continuous flow of UFO reports that crossed my desk intrigued

## FOCUS

By Hamish Mackenzie

me," he says. "They came from everywhere, and I forwarded them on to various MoD and Government departments.

"I don't know what happened to them after they left me. I have been trying to find out ever since, and after the 2001 press conference I decided to get involved with the Disclosure Project. It only needs the wider public to realise that one of the witnesses, someone like John Callahan, is telling the truth for the whole thing to be blown wide open."

John Callahan, a former senior investigator with the Accidents and Investigations Branch of the US Federal Aviation Authority, is a bluff and imposing presence. His story, like the man, is hard to dismiss. At the press conference he recalled how, on November 18, 1986, the pilots of Japan Airlines Flight 1628, flying over Alaska, reported they were seeing "a huge ball with lights running around it... four times as big as a 747". The sighting was significant because the object was simultane-

ously being recorded on ground-based radar at Anchorage Air Traffic Control.

The flight crew and ground radar operators watched as the UFO performed aerobatics and flew at speeds beyond the capability of any

known aircraft. At one point the captain expressed concern at the effects the object appeared to be having on his instruments. After more than half an hour, the "strange craft" disappeared and the 747 landed safely.

**T**HE FOLLOWING day Mr Callahan attended a hurriedly convened meeting at the request of Admiral Engen, then Administrator of the Federal Aviation Authority. This meeting was attended by all of those directly involved and, claimed Mr Callahan, three anonymous CIA men. He says these men confiscated all the audio, radar recordings, printouts and documents associated with the previous day's events and "told us this had never happened and we had never had this meeting". He paused for effect. "I took copies of everything before the meeting. They never asked anyone if we had copies, so I never told them I did."

There was a flurry of clicking cameras as Mr Callahan held up numerous documents and invited the audience to inspect

# Flying

## After 50 years, the cover-up conspiracy goes on...



**CLUSTER CONUNDRUM** : The US Coast Guard released this picture taken at Salem, Massachusetts, in 1952

them later. But many who were at the press conference were bemused at the subsequent lack of publicity for the event.

"Perhaps the media were taken aback by the seriousness of what they heard and just did not know how to handle it," David Williams remarks. "It is surprising no one has even tried to discredit the witnesses. Why have the big US corporations [Lockheed Martin, Northrop, Boeing and others] named as part of the cover-up, not objected and sued?" Only last month the US newspaper

Florida Today contributed to the continuing speculation on how an event "with testimony designed to be so compelling the [national] media couldn't possibly freeze it out" had been left in the cold.

"We were disappointed but not surprised by the limited coverage," says Dr Greer, an accident and emergency doctor who now devotes all his time to the Project. "So we took our message direct to the people - local radio, TV and well-attended public meetings."

Since the press conference, it

has emerged that Dr Greer is not alone in seeking to persuade the US Government to support disclosure.

Charles Huffer, a US-based UFO researcher, met the then campaigning Governor George Bush in 2000. Live on CNN, Huffer secured a promise from Bush that when in office he would "get right on to" the UFO issue and tell the people what was really going on. Once in power this campaign promise has been ignored, and last year one of Huffer's supporters went on hunger strike in protest.



# Saucers



LIGHTS FANTASTIC: A UFO photographed over Sao Paulo, Brazil, in 1984

This year US business development consultant Stephen Bassett plans to run as an independent in the 8th Congressional District of Maryland on the UFO disclosure ticket. The election, in November, is expected to be hotly contested. Bassett's objective is to win sufficient votes to have a say in bringing the issue before Congress.

But interest among the general public has also been considerable. The Project's press conference was broadcast and watched live over the Internet by almost a quarter of a million people. "It was the largest web-cast in history," says Dr Greer.

Since then a further million have downloaded a recording of the event from the Disclosure Project website, which has received more than six million hits since May last year. Dr Greer reports that more than 100 new witnesses have

come forward, several from the UK. "This is not surprising," says Denis Plunkett, head of the British Flying Saucer Bureau, still an active organisation though wrongly reported last year to have closed down. "For 50 years I have been receiving reports from military personnel and police officers. Most did not want any publicity, they were just trying to understand what they had seen."

When asked if the Sunday Express could interview a UK witness, Dr Greer said: "We do not want to reveal any of our new witnesses now. There will be another press conference later in the year, which we are planning to broad-

cast on cable and satellite TV."

One concern for many observers has been that the Project may not be as rigorous as it needs to be when screening witnesses. And there does appear to have been some dissension within the ranks. Some witnesses feel that the more exotic stories, such as contact with aliens, should have been excluded.

"There is enough out there - unusual aerial craft that need explanation," said a source who did not want to be named. And at least one prominent witness has requested that his name be with-

**'There are too many people who have seen something they can't explain to keep all this secret forever'**

drawn from the Project as he feels some of the conclusions being drawn from the testimonies are "a step too far". Edgar Mitchell, the Apollo 14 astronaut, and one of the few men to have set foot on the moon, is no longer a Disclosure Project witness, though he continues to support its aims. "I still believe that governments should open their files on the UFO subject, but we don't seem to be much closer to that, though likely it will happen sooner or later," he told the Sunday Express.

"I am not a 'witness' of UFO events either in space or on Earth. I don't have any first-hand experience, but I have discussed the matter with some 'old timers' who do have first-hand knowledge."

One of the big tests of the Disclosure Project in the future will be the quality of the new witnesses and its openness to the sort of scrutiny it is claiming should be directed at others. The

history of UFO sightings has been furnished by fabrication - not just by people seeking attention but even by UFO researchers.

In the past few months, a prominent group has admitted planting false information to discredit others in an apparent attempt to prove that the whole UFO phenomenon can be dismissed.

"Is it possible we have been scammed by some witnesses? Yes. Do I think it likely? No," says Dr Greer, his hackles rising. "We are not the CIA, we can't afford to run \$50,000 background checks on everyone. Our objectives are to disclose the truth to the public and to persuade Congress to hold an open hearing.

"Over 20,000 letters have gone out from constituents all over the US to their Congressmen. We have received numerous expressions of serious interest from Senators. Only last week I had a Congressman ring and ask us to give him a private briefing.

"To get a Congressional hearing one of three things will have to happen," Dr Greer continues. "The media will have to call for it, or the public need to be heard asking for it, or there has to be a massive, undeniable UFO event."

**W**HAT IS clear is that a large number of individuals have come forward and made statements whose implications, if true, are profound. If the witnesses are who they say they are - and are found to be lying - then we should be very concerned about the type of individuals who fly our planes, control air traffic, man the missile silos and protect our communities.

If, on the other hand, the witnesses are telling the truth then - no matter how extraordinary - this is a serious issue. "If we believe them," says David Williams, "then we have to accept that we are not alone. Someone is covering up and we should want to know why.


"We may have been deceived by some of our witnesses, but not by all of them," he continues. "There are too many people who have seen something they can't explain. Those trying to keep the secrets rely upon most of us being too busy with our lives to be bothered. But more and more people are getting interested, and one day there will be enough to demand that governments tell us what they know."

● For more information contact David Williams at [disclosureproject@btinternet.com](mailto:disclosureproject@btinternet.com) or visit the Project's website at [www.disclosureproject.org](http://www.disclosureproject.org)

**GIVE US THE FACTS:** Disclosure is our best hope for finding out about UFOs, says former Royal Signals analyst David Williams



## DAS-LA-Ops+Pol1

**From:** DAS-LA-AD   
**Sent:** 23 May 2002 09:04  
**To:** DAS-LA-Ops+Pol  
**Cc:** DAS-LA-Ops+Pol1  
**Subject:** RE: UFO - Reports in Daily Star/The Sun

**Importance:** Low

██████████ on 40

Thanks. Strangely, I did not react adversely to this story. I just took it to be a tabloid interpretation of the syllabus (I presume there is discussion as part of the teaching process about bright lights etc that aircrew might experience). But as we say: "we believe that rational

██████████ 40

-----Original Message-----

**From:** DAS-LA-Ops+Pol  
**Sent:** 22 May 2002 09:41  
**To:** DAS-LA-Ops+Pol1  
**Cc:** DAS-LA-AD; DASDD  
**Subject:** UFO - Reports in Daily Star/The Sun  
**Importance:** Low

DD/LA AD/Ops Pol1:

A photocopy of a page in the press cuttings (sent in to OpsPol offices by ██████████ on 40) stated that officer cadets at Cranwell were being given a UFO briefing.

I have spoken with the CRO's office at Cranwell to find out what their line was and whether there had been any press contact.

Their line is that there is no truth in the story; officer cadets are not being given lessons on UFO and their identification.

The only enquiry they received following the printing of the two articles was from BFBS (Forces Broadcasting Service) who wanted to run a piece - if the story was correct.

██████████ n 40



file

**Financial Times**  
**16 May 2002**  
**Page 2**

# RAF forced to employ private helpers

By James Mackintosh

The Royal Air Force is so stretched it is having to hire private cooks and truck drivers to give support staff at its forward bases a chance to see their families.

The RAF has hired locals in the Balkans and Sierra

Leone to assist military chefs as it struggles to cope with its new role as support for rapid reaction forces around the world. In the Gulf it has hired local haulage contractors.

"The thing is that when new operations come up, the old operations don't seem to go away," said one senior officer. "If only operations would stop when new ones come up things would be easier."

The RAF has used private caterers in the Falklands for several years, but the multiplicity of missions recently has increased the focus on contracting out support services.

It has also launched a recruitment campaign focused on what the RAF

calls "enablers" - cooks, firefighters, air transport staff, technicians and medics.

Geoff Hoon, defence secretary, warned last month that the military was "at the limit of our commitments", a statement widely regarded as a pre-Budget pitch for more cash.

But the RAF's staff shortages have been caused by the need to keep forward bases functioning while giving support staff time off in the UK to see their families and undergo training.

The problems have been exacerbated by requests from allies for British support staff to remain even after UK aircraft are pulled out. Apart from Britain, only the US and France are

thought to have appropriately trained support staff for rapid reaction.

Officers were keen to play down talk of a crisis yesterday, saying that the level of stretch was "under control".

The UK has aircrews stationed in the Falklands, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Turkey and Gulf countries from which aircraft are patrolling the Iraqi southern no-fly zone.

The threat from Iraqi air defences has intensified in past weeks after a shake-up of the way Iraq runs its anti-aircraft units. According to officers at RAF Strike Command, there have been several near-misses since Iraq gave more autonomy to operators of anti-aircraft missiles.

Daily Star  
 16 May 2002

# UFO lesson for pilots<sup>27</sup>

RAF pilots are being taught how to identify and report UFOs.

All new officer cadets at the RAF College in Cranwell, Lincs now learn about all types of aerial phenomena, including UFOs.

The reason why the subject is on the curriculum is because RAF pilots are continuing to report sightings of strange objects.

One sighting by RAF pilots of a UFO features in

the aerial phenomena lectures.

It happened in 1990 when three Tornado jets encountered an object over the North Sea.

Video footage showed a long cigar shaped object flying parallel to the aircraft at a distance of about two miles. It then shot off upwards at 6,000mph.

The Sun  
 16 May 2002

# RAF learn to spot 'aliens'

NEW RAF pilots are being taught how to spot and report UFOs. <sup>26</sup>

Cadets at the RAF College in Cranwell, Lincs, are shown video footage of a 1990 sighting.

Tornado pilots watched a cigar-shaped object for six minutes near the Dutch border.

The Daily Telegraph  
 16 May 2002  
 Page 25

# Letters to the Editor

## Show me the light

SIR - Denis Plunkett writes: "[It] requires just one sighting to be proved genuine for us to realise that we are not alone in the cosmos" (letter, May 14). Quite. In view of the tremendous amount of man- and instrument-power devoted towards that end, one wonders why no such sighting has taken place.

In fact, I suspect that, 50 years ago, far more people believed in flying saucers than do so today, with the RAF and the USAF charged to investigate every sighting. The ever-present "conspiracy theorists" tell us that military pilots were told to keep any

such sightings "secret". As a Royal Navy fighter pilot of that era, I can assure you that I received no such instructions and have confirmed with colleagues that they also did not.

In a sense, we all wanted to believe in "flying saucers" and looked for them avidly. We saw many meteorites and other wonderful natural phenomena. The only flying saucer I and my colleagues saw was on the stage of *Salad Days*.

Geoffrey Sherman  
 Commander, RN  
 Kilgetty, Pembrokeshire

25 APR '02 12:31 FROM DI SEC [redacted]

TO [redacted] 40

P.01

Classification	[redacted]
Caveat	[redacted]
Covering	[redacted]

F Sigs 927  
(int.9/92)

134

# Facsimile Transmission Cover Sheet

Transmission Details		Document Details
Serial Number:	Date and time of transmission: <b>25 April 02</b>	Reference(s): <b>DI SEC/ 10/8/3</b>
From: [redacted] <b>DI Sec 4</b>	Fax Number: [redacted]	Tel no. [redacted]
To: [redacted] <b>DAS</b>	Fax Number: [redacted]	Subject: <b>Unclass: Britain's x files</b>
Total Number of pages including this cover sheet		<b>3</b>

Authorising Officer	Transmit Operators
Rank, Name and Appointment: [redacted] <b>DI Sec 4</b>	Rank/grade and Name:
Signature:	Signature:

Message/Remarks:

[redacted] 40

**Hi! I attach the article from today's Express – it gives a flavour of the Radio 4 programme tonight.**

[redacted]

*Thanks*  
*DI Sec sent me this article from today's Express. The Press office have also had some questions from The Western Daily Press who have seen this article. After a long discussion with [redacted] D News HEO, he thought he could answer their questions but I have sent him some info anyway, as attached.*  
*DI are going to record the Radio 4 programme tonight and let us have a copy*  
 [redacted] 25/4/2002

Covering	[redacted]
Caveat	[redacted]
Classification	[redacted]

The X Files may be seen to be just Hollywood fantasy but two historians will reveal on a Radio 4 programme tonight that the British government set up its own shadowy team to discover the truth about flying saucers in the Fifties. **30**  
**SALLY EYDEN** unearths the details about the government's search for UFOs and finds that fact is stranger than fiction

**I**N THE years after the Second World War, the skies above were buzzing – not just with aircraft but also flying saucers. Ever since the phrase had been coined by a US airman in 1947, sightings were being reported up and down the country. In Clacton-On-Sea in Essex people reported seeing silvery discs skidding across the sky and in Putney, South-west London, another object was spotted whizzing between the clouds. People wanted answers.

The government was so concerned about these strange, disc-like craft that seemingly performed impossible manoeuvres and travelled at incomprehensible speeds that it set up a top secret department in 1950 to try to discover the truth about UFOs. This X Files-style unit, called the Working Party on Flying Saucers, contained the best scientific and military minds in Britain. Yet its very existence was denied by the Ministry of Defence for almost 50 years.

Now, two social historians have seen documents released from the the Public Record Office which prove that the department existed. Dr David Clarke and Andy Roberts will detail their findings on a Radio 4 programme tonight. Dr Clarke says: "After years of searching for something we only suspected existed, we found this incredible six-page document and the minutes of the original meeting to set the unit up."

The secret research into the sightings began in 1950 but ended a year later, concluding that what had been seen were nothing more than mirages, optical illusions or psychological delusions on the part of the witnesses. The case on the subject apparently seemed closed.

But despite these findings the sightings continued during the Fifties and people were still asking questions. Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill, worried at rumours of UFOs flying over Washington DC, sent a memo to the War Ministry asking: "What does all this stuff about flying saucers amount to? What can it mean?" He was told not to worry and shown the findings of the report, detailed in Clarke and Roberts's new book called *Out Of The Shadows: UFOs, The Establishment And The Official Cover-Up*. Clarke believes that the cover-up was nothing to do

with the existence of little green men, but everything to do with the Cold War. "This was a time of great paranoia and fear," he says. "The government took the decision to say as little about the sightings as possible because of fears about the inadequacy of our radar system."

Declassified government documents from June 1965 show that it was "official MoD policy to play down the subject of unidentified flying objects and to avoid attaching undue public attention or publicity to the subject, as a result we have never had any political pressure to mount a large-scale investigation". Another document states: "The press are never to be given information about unusual radar sightings, and unusual visual sightings are in no circumstances to be disclosed in the press."

Clarke is sceptical over the existence of alien crafts but throughout his four years of research, interviewing high-ranking military personnel in command at the time of this UFO activity, he has come across evidence that his theory of mass paranoia cannot explain.

In 1952, pilots Air Commodore Mick Swiney and Royal Navy Lieutenant Commander David Crofts were flying in a Meteor Seven advanced aircraft when they saw three flying saucers near Gloucester.

**T**HE UFOs were also spotted on the RAF radar and other fighter planes were scrambled to assess the threat. The pilots were so unnerved by what they saw that they recorded it in the flight log book. The pair, now retired, recounted their experiences to Clarke and Roberts. Both have tried to find out more about what happened on that day but the Ministry of Defence denies that the event ever happened.

The MoD has always claimed that it has never actively investigated UFOs. A spokesperson says: "We remain totally open-minded but we have no interest in UFOs unless they constitute a threat to national security. It is not the X Files – we do have reports of sightings and almost all of them are explained and it is not our role to establish those that aren't."

But despite this claim, the MoD

# Revealed: The spook truth about Britain's own X File

continues to look into the 300 sightings reported each year to a little-known department called the Secretariat (Air Staff) 2a. This is the X Files of the British government, which would make Nick Pope – who worked on the desk during the Nineties – the British version of Fox Mulder.

Pope joined the department as a sceptic about UFOs but when he left in 1994 he was a believer in the existence of alien craft. One event in particular changed his perception.

Looking back through the archives one day, he came across documentation of what he believes is Britain's first UFO landing. On December 27, 1980 two security patrolmen reported seeing unusual lights in Rendlesham Forest in Suffolk to Lieutenant Colonel Charles Halt, Commander of US Air Force base Bentwaters near Woodbridge.

The men reported seeing "a strange glowing object, metallic in appearance and triangular in shape". It had a "pulsing red light on top and

a bank of blue lights underneath". Lt Col Halt wrote in a memo sent to the MoD that this "object was hovering, or on legs. As the patrolmen approached, it manoeuvred through the trees and disappears. At this time the animals on a nearby farm went in to a frenzy".

The next day depressions were found in the forest and significant radiation readings were discovered in the immediate area. This incident was not only revealed in US documents, unearthed by researchers,

The Express

25 April 2002

but also in MoD reports. One of the officials who has seen this report is Lord Hill-Norton, former Chief of Defence. He is convinced that the incident is proof of the existence of extra-terrestrials.

He says: "There is a serious possibility that we are being visited - and have been visited for many years - by people from outer space, from other civilisations; that it behoves us to find out who they are, where they come from and what they want."

It seems that these sightings are not random but occur in hotspots, many in areas with a military significance. Pope was called in to investigate an incident in the early hours of March 31, 1993. "There had been lots of sightings that night," he says. "The UFOs were seen passing over two military bases in Shropshire, RAF Cosford and RAF Shawbury. It was described by one military witness as being a vast, triangular craft, only slightly smaller than a jumbo jet. It flew slowly over the bases, travelling at a height of 200ft, firing a narrow beam of light at the ground, before flying off at high speed."

At the same base 24 years earlier a UFO was tracked on radar systems and two RAF jets were scrambled to intercept the craft. The pilots recounted how they engaged in a game of cat and mouse, with the UFO accelerating just before the planes were able to lock on to the target. The mysterious craft was too quick for the jets.

But it is not just Air Force bases that have been visited by UFOs. More than 60,000 sightings have been made in Bonnybridge, near Falkirk in central Scotland,

since 1991. And only yesterday there was yet another sighting of mysterious objects in the sky over Bonsall Moor, Derbyshire.

Pope has suggested that 95 per cent of all sightings can be explained by natural phenomena. Dr Jacqueline Milton of the Royal Astronomical Society says: "Many people see meteors, shooting stars, even the bright planet Venus and think it is a UFO. People have looked up to the sky throughout history and interpreted what they saw as being supernatural or not of this Earth. However, in the past it was dragons or witches. Now we are living in an age where space travel could be possible - so people now see UFOs instead."

**S** O IF This accounts for the 95 per cent, what of the elusive five per cent? Lionel Fanthorpe, President of the British UFO Research Association, believes these sightings prove we are not alone. He says: "If only one star in a thousand has a planet system and only one planet system in a thousand can support life, then statistically, we are not alone in the universe."

Pope, who still works for the MoD, says: "You have to consider that the committee members liaised with the Americans about UFO research in the Fifties. The conclusions the British government made seemed to exactly mirror what the American's were telling its public. I believe that the truth is still out there."

● Britain's X Files, BBC Radio 4, tonight, 8pm.

Not to MoD

The Express

25 April 2002

## A blow for wind farms

DEFENCE chiefs are blocking government plans to use more green energy by building wind farms - because they threaten national security. The Government backs proposals to erect 18 new wind farms on hillsides to meet its target of generating 10 per cent of electricity from infinite resources such as wind, wave and solar power by 2010.

Ministry of Defence officials are opposing five of the farms, all near RAF bases, as they say they interfere with air traffic control and could provide cover for enemy aircraft. Experts say the wind turbines create a radar shadow behind them.

However, Friends of the Earth spokesman said: "Other countries have overcome similar problems."



**DAS-LA-Ops+Pol1**

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**To:** D News HEO  
**Subject:** Press Enquires about UFOs

[REDACTED] 0

Following our discussions earlier today about the enquiries from the Western Daily Press, I have now seen The Express article and attach a few paragraphs that might help with any further enquiries you may receive. I have included something on our change of title as you asked about this. Please give me a call if you need any more information. I would appreciate it if you could also keep me informed if there is any more press or media interest in this.



PRESS-THE  
EXPRESS 25 April 200...

[REDACTED]  
DAS-LA-Ops+Pol1  
MT6/73 [REDACTED]

- The Ministry of Defence examines any reports of 'unidentified flying objects' it receives solely to establish whether what was seen might have some defence significance; namely, whether there is any evidence that the United Kingdom's airspace might have been compromised by hostile or unauthorised air activity. Unless there is evidence of a potential threat to the United Kingdom from an external military source, and to date no 'UFO' report has revealed such evidence, we do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each reported sighting. We believe it is possible that rational explanations, such as aircraft lights or natural phenomena, could be found for them, but it is not the function of the MOD to provide this kind of aerial identification service. We could not justify expenditure of public funds on investigations which go beyond our specific defence remit.

- The integrity of the UK's airspace in peacetime is maintained through continuous surveillance of the UK Air Policing Area by the RAF. This is achieved by using a combination of civil and military radar installations, which provide a continuous real-time "picture" of the UK airspace. Any threat to the UK Air Policing Area would be handled in the light of the particular circumstances at the time (it might if deemed appropriate, involve the scrambling or diversion of air defence aircraft). From that perspective, reports provided to us of 'UFO' sightings are examined, but consultation with air defence staff and others as necessary is considered only where there is sufficient evidence to suggest a breach of UK air space. The vast majority of reports we receive are very sketchy and vague. Only a handful of reports in recent years have warranted further investigation and none revealed any evidence of a threat.

- In August 1950 a Working Party was set up (at the suggestion of Sir Henry Tizard) who thought "flying saucers should be investigated". Records show that the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Joint Technical Intelligence Committee (June 1951) received the Chairman's Report of the "Flying Saucer Working Party". The Committee decided that "the document should be regarded as the final report and, in view of the conclusions the Working Party should be dissolved". The Chairman (Mr. G. L. Turney DS13) went on to say that, "following the lead given by the Americans on this subject, the report should have as little publicity as possible and outside circulation should be confined to one copy, for Sir Henry Tizard".

Files containing minutes of the JTIC have been available at the Public Record Office for a number of years. The report mentioned above was not on these files and it was thought that a copy had not survived. However, last year, during a routine review of files which had been retained in the Department, a copy of this report was found on an unrelated file. The report was removed from the file, downgraded, and has been released to the PRO.

- Following the merger of Directorate of Air Staff and Secretariat (Air Staff) last year, the section Secretariat (Air Staff)2a is now known as Directorate of Air Staff (Lower Airspace) Operations and Policy 1. This is still the focal point within the MOD for UFO correspondence and there has been no change in the way in which UFO reports and correspondence are handled.

- The MOD does not have any expertise or role in respect of 'UFO/flying saucer' matters or to the question of the existence or otherwise of extraterrestrial lifeforms, about which it remains totally open-minded. However, to date the MOD knows of no evidence which substantiates the existence of these alleged phenomena.

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**T**HE alien craft was shaped like a cross between an upturned saucerpan and a child's spinning top. It was 20 to 30 feet in diameter, the colour of aluminium, with portholes around the side. And it was hovering over the home of Lord Louis Mountbatten, one of the most senior members of the British Royal Family.

The remarkable apparition was reported in February 1955 by a bricklayer called Briggs. In a signed statement, he told how he had spotted the flying saucer while on his way to work at Broadlands, Mountbatten's country residence in Hampshire.

Briggs described how he had dismounted from his bicycle as the saucer hovered, and was amazed to see a tube descend from its centre. A platform appeared in the tube, containing a man. He was wearing a dark suit or overalls and a close-fitting helmet.

As he watched, Briggs was suddenly overcome by an 'unseen force' which caused him to stumble. The tube retracted into the flying saucer, which suddenly shot straight up into the sky and disappeared.

Later, the flying saucer and its occupant returned. Communicating via telepathy, the alien being invited Briggs on board and whisked him off to see the Egyptian pyramids — a round trip that lasted just ten minutes.

Before he was returned to Hampshire, the aliens told the bricklayer: 'If Lord Mountbatten met us, he could change the world.'

Sceptics might have their own view of this tale, but Mountbatten himself was fascinated. His personal records show that he questioned his employee closely. Then, accompanied by another of his workers, he visited the scene of the sighting.

They found marks in the snow consistent with Briggs' account of his movements, but there was no evidence of the UFO's visit.

But the very fact that Mountbatten took so much trouble to check out the story speaks volumes about the seriousness with which he — and other members of the Royal Family and military elite — took the whole strange subject of extra-terrestrial activity.

As we will see, those who came to share his interest included the Battle of Britain mastermind Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, the British Army general Sir Frederick 'Boy' Browning, and — most astonishingly of all — Mountbatten's nephew, Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.

By the early Fifties, a significant number of this discreet 'gentleman's club' had become convinced that Earth was under observation by aliens.

To this day, Prince Philip has every issue of the magazine Flying Saucer Review sent to him at Buckingham Palace — and once appointed an equerry as his personal UFO investigator.

THE story of the British Establishment's interest in UFOs really begins in World War II, when pilots first began to report what became known as 'foo-fighters' — mysterious lights in the sky that resembled unknown enemy craft.

For years, however, the question was hushed up and UFO investigators could find no official documentation.

It was only in 1986 that proof of RAF sightings emerged when the late Goon Show star Michael Bentine, a former intelligence officer with Bomber Command, spoke of debriefing crews who told of lights which were 'pulsating and had flown round the aircraft'.

In fact, such reports had long been taken with great seriousness within military circles — particularly in the years after the war, as fears grew about the threat from the Soviet Union. Some experts believed the saucers could be advanced Soviet aircraft.

Mountbatten belonged to a small group of high-ranking military personnel who believed flying saucers were from another world. He began collecting reports of sightings using his contacts in the armed services.

His theories about their origins were clear in letters he wrote to his friend Charles

Eade, editor of the Sunday Dispatch, one of the popular newspapers of the day.

'These extraordinary things have now been seen in almost every part of the world: Scandinavia, North America, South America, Central Europe,' he wrote.

'It seems clear that the overwhelming weight of opinion from every part of the world will show that some new thing definitely exists which is capable of flying at very slow speed, or even perhaps of hovering and accelerating at an unheard-of speed several times the speed of sound.'

'The available evidence will show that they are not of human agency, that is to say they do not come from Earth. If that is so, then presumably they must come from some heavenly body, probably a planet.'

Mountbatten believed that the UFOs should be seen as the intergalactic equivalent of contemporary aircraft. 'Maybe it is the Shackletons or Scotts of Venus or Mars who are making their first exploration of our Earth,' he mused.

But he also suggested that the flying saucers might be the alien life-forms themselves —

'not a form of aeroplane from another planet but the actual inhabitants of that planet!'

Sensing the media headlines which sensational statements such as these would produce, Mountbatten asked Eade to keep his private opinions out of the newspapers.

'I know this sounds ridiculous and I am relying on you as a very old and loyal friend not to make any capital out of the fact that I have put forward such a far-fetched explanation.'

**S**UCH an explanation, however, would apparently fill all known cases in which the flying saucer has so far been seen.

Despite his desire to conceal his own beliefs, Mountbatten was keen to persuade the public to take the subject seriously. He urged Eade to publish weekly articles about UFOs in order to gauge the popular reaction.

Eade obliged with a series of sensational reports and a long editorial describing UFOs as 'the story that may be bigger than the atom bomb wars'.

The editorial went on to

describe how the subject had been dismissed as nonsense, but 'many intelligent and distinguished people in all parts of the world are intensely interested, and treat such reports very seriously indeed'.

Eade quoted from a letter he had received 'from one of the most famous men alive today', whom he could not name but who 'commands universal respect and admiration'.

It was a discussion with this mystery man, Eade said, which led to his decision 'to place before the readers of the Sunday Dispatch all that is known about the flying saucers and all the theories about them, no matter how sensational and fantastic'.

We now know that the 'mystery man' was Lord Mountbatten — and the effect of his intervention was to prove dramatic.

Following publication of these stories in the Dispatch, accounts of UFOs poured into newspaper offices across the British Isles.

In hindsight, it is clear that the aggressive newspaper campaign played a huge part in creating the fascination with UFOs that was to grip the country for decades to come.

OVER the years, rumours of Mountbatten's role leaked out to UFO enthusiasts. Improb-

# CLOSE OF THE

## The Mail opens the Buckingham Palace X-Files and finds that Prince Philip (an avid reader of Flying Saucer Review) appointed his own investigator into visitors from space ...

by **David Clarke**  
and **Andrew Roberts**

# ENCOUNTERS ROYAL KIND

Royal intrigue: Prince Philip has long been fascinated by UFOs

ble stories circulated that he had access to 'Top Secret' photos of flying saucers from Royal Navy files, or that he was involved in the investigation of a UFO that had crashed in Britain.

The latter story originated in 1955 with an American journalist named Dorothy Kilgallen, who claimed that the wreckage of a 'mysterious flying ship' was being investigated by scientists. The tale was later embroidered with claims that the saucer was crewed by 'small men, probably under four feet tall'.

Kilgallen said the Government was holding back from issuing an official statement because 'it does not want to frighten the public'. She claimed her source was 'a British official of Cabinet rank' who wished to remain anonymous.

Rumours went around that it was Mountbatten. Since Kilgallen was a well-known figure at high-society parties where she mixed with royalty and aristocrats, this was not totally implausible — although it seems unlikely that Mountbatten would have let slip state secrets to a gossip columnist over cocktails.

After Kilgallen refused to elaborate on her story, UFO enthusiasts became convinced that she had been 'silenced' by the Establishment. Her sudden — and some claim mysterious — death in 1965 added to their suspicions that there was a conspiracy to hide the truth about UFOs.

Years later, Margaret Thatcher would fuel these cover-up theories. At a cocktail party in 1997, author Georgina Bruni claimed she discussed alien technology with the

former Prime Minister. Baroness Thatcher was said to have treated the matter with utmost seriousness, twice repeating the comment: 'UFOs? You must get your facts right, and you can't tell the people.' She then abruptly changed the subject.

Details of Prince Philip's interest in UFOs have been given by one of his equerries, the late Sir Peter Horsley.

He confirmed that Philip 'was open to the immense possibilities of new technology leading to space exploration, while at the same time not discounting that, just as we were on the fringe of breaking out into space, so other older civilisations in the universe might already have done so'.

By one account, later denied by royal sources, the Duke requested that all flying saucer reports received by the Air Ministry should be copied to him.

He was once reported to have told a dinner party guest: 'I'm sure they exist. All the evidence points to it. So many people say they have seen them.'

Horsley's autobiography revealed how reports of flying saucers were enthusiastically discussed among

the staff at Buckingham Palace throughout his time as equerry.

Most intriguingly, Horsley recounts how Philip 'agreed that I could investigate the more credible reports, provided I kept it all in perspective and did not involve his office in any kind of publicity'.

**B**Y VIRTUE of this unofficial role as royal UFO investigator, Horsley was given carte blanche to read any reports of UFO sightings by the RAF, and to interview the pilots concerned.

The case which impressed him most involved two pilots from 25 Squadron, who observed a flying saucer while on patrol in a Vampire jet from RAF West Malling, Kent, one afternoon in November, 1953.

Horsley investigated the sighting as thoroughly as he could, visiting the base and quizzing both airmen. He submitted a report to the Duke of Edinburgh, saying that he was 'satisfied that the Vampire crew was perfectly reliable' and the two airmen had seen 'a genuine UFO'.

A number of UFO witnesses were

invited to the Palace, including James Howard, captain of a British airliner who, with his passengers and crew, reported seeing a formation of UFOs over the Atlantic.

The most unusual visitor was 11-year-old Stephen Darbishire from the Lake District, who had taken photographs of a 'saucer-shaped' object hovering over the slopes of Coniston Old Man in 1954.

In both these instances, it was the equerry who sent out invitations to Buckingham Palace. There can be no doubt, however, that he was encouraged to do so by the Duke of Edinburgh and that his reports detailing these sightings are still preserved in the royal archives.

Horsley says he invited UFO witnesses to the Palace partly to 'put them on the spot' and test their honesty in the presence of royalty — a ploy that may indeed have been as effective as any truth serum in those deferential times.

One of Sir Peter's strangest contacts was a mysterious General Martin, who believed UFOs were visitors from an alien civilisation which wanted to warn us of the dangers posed by atomic war.

Martin arranged for Sir Peter to

meet an equally enigmatic woman named Mrs Markham at a flat in Chelsea. Arriving from Buckingham Palace one night in 1955, he was ushered into a second-floor drawing-room on Smith Street occupied by a man referred to only as 'Mr Janus'.

Janus asked Sir Peter to tell him everything he knew about UFOs. Sir Peter asked what was his interest in the subject. The answer was simple: 'I would like to meet the Duke of Edinburgh.'

Sir Peter and Mr Janus proceeded to discuss a variety of esoteric subjects, including how the flying saucers were trying to save the Earth, and the perils which faced mankind as a result of technological progress.

He recalled that although Mr Janus never claimed to be from another planet, he gave the impression that he was visiting Earth as 'an observer'. Throughout the meeting, the equerry was given the strange impression that his thoughts were being read via telepathy.

Horsley was acutely aware of his responsibility to report any evidence of plots against the Royal Family to the security services. However, he was sufficiently swayed by Mr Janus's otherworldly presence not to take this seemingly obvious step.

Instead, he handed his report to another UFO enthusiast at the Palace, 'Boy' Browning, a renowned soldier who had led the airborne forces at Arnhem and was now Controller of the Royal Household.

Browning, along with the retired RAF chief Lord Dowding, was one of a number of war veterans convinced that UFOs were a reality. They believed that the saucer occupants were peace-loving and fiercely opposed the idea that the airforce should attempt to shoot them down.

In Dowding's words: 'We should be guilty of criminal folly if we were to do anything to hinder a contact which may well bring untold blessings to a distraught humanity.'

**N**ATURALLY, 'Boy' Browning wished to arrange his own personal audience with Mr Janus. But the already surreal story took a further step into the twilight zone.

For when Sir Peter tried to contact Mrs Markham, he found she had vanished and his other contact, General Martin, 'suddenly became distant and evasive'.

Puzzled, Sir Peter retraced his steps to the Smith Street address where he had met Mr Janus — and found it empty. Neighbours said its occupant had 'left in a hurry'.

Had he been the victim of an elaborate hoax designed to ensnare the Royals? Sir Peter remained convinced that he might actually have made contact with a visitor from another world.

On one level, this and other accounts of royal and aristocratic involvement with the early development of the flying saucer myth may be read as just celebrity gossip.

But the influence of the British Establishment upon the formation of public opinion during the Fifties was immense, and should not be underestimated.

Rightly or wrongly, their endorsement put the stamp of authority on UFO sightings and belief in visitors from space.

■ EXTRACTED from *Out Of The Shadows* by Dr David Clarke and Andy Roberts, to be published by Piatkus Books on May 9 at £17.99. Copyright © 2002, Dr David Clarke and Andy Roberts. To order a copy for £15.99 (p&p free), please call 01476 541-001

**F**OR the past 50 years, there have been sporadic claims of UFOs — 'flying saucers' — trans-  
porting alien visitors to Earth.

Some of these aliens are claimed to have come to a bad end, such as in Roswell in the U.S. where their dummy-like corpses were allegedly photographed. On the other hand, people have sometimes claimed to have been abducted by aliens.

In the 1990s, their favoured 'visiting card' was a pattern of crop circles in cornfields — mainly in southern England. But scepticism is now in the ascendant. Even former believers say that UFO sightings have become rarer, and now *Fortean Times*, the journal of the unexplained, has declared 'ufology' dead.

It appears that the aliens have seen as much of humans as they want and have decided to leave us alone.

I don't believe in alien visitations any more than I believe in ghosts. Along with most scientists who have studied these reports, I'm utterly unconvinced by them. Extraordinary claims need to be supported by extraordinary evidence — and the evidence is flimsy in every case.

If aliens really had the brainpower and technology to reach the Earth, would they merely despoil a few cornfields? Or would they content themselves with briefly abducting a few well-known cranks?

Their manifestations are as banal and unconvincing as the messages reported in the heyday of spiritualism 100 years ago.

We should, perhaps, be thankful to be left alone. An alien invasion might have the same devastating effect on humanity as the white man had on North American Indians and some islands of the South Pacific. The film *Independence Day* may be a truer depiction than *E.T.*

But I'm open-minded about the existence of aliens, even though I don't believe we've found them yet. Most scientists would, I suspect, be amazed if life were unique to our Earth.

How life began, and whether it exists elsewhere, remains one of the most fascinating questions in the whole of science — indeed, you don't need to be a scientist to wonder about this.

But we still don't know the answer. The question 'Are we alone in the universe?' has fascinated people for centuries.

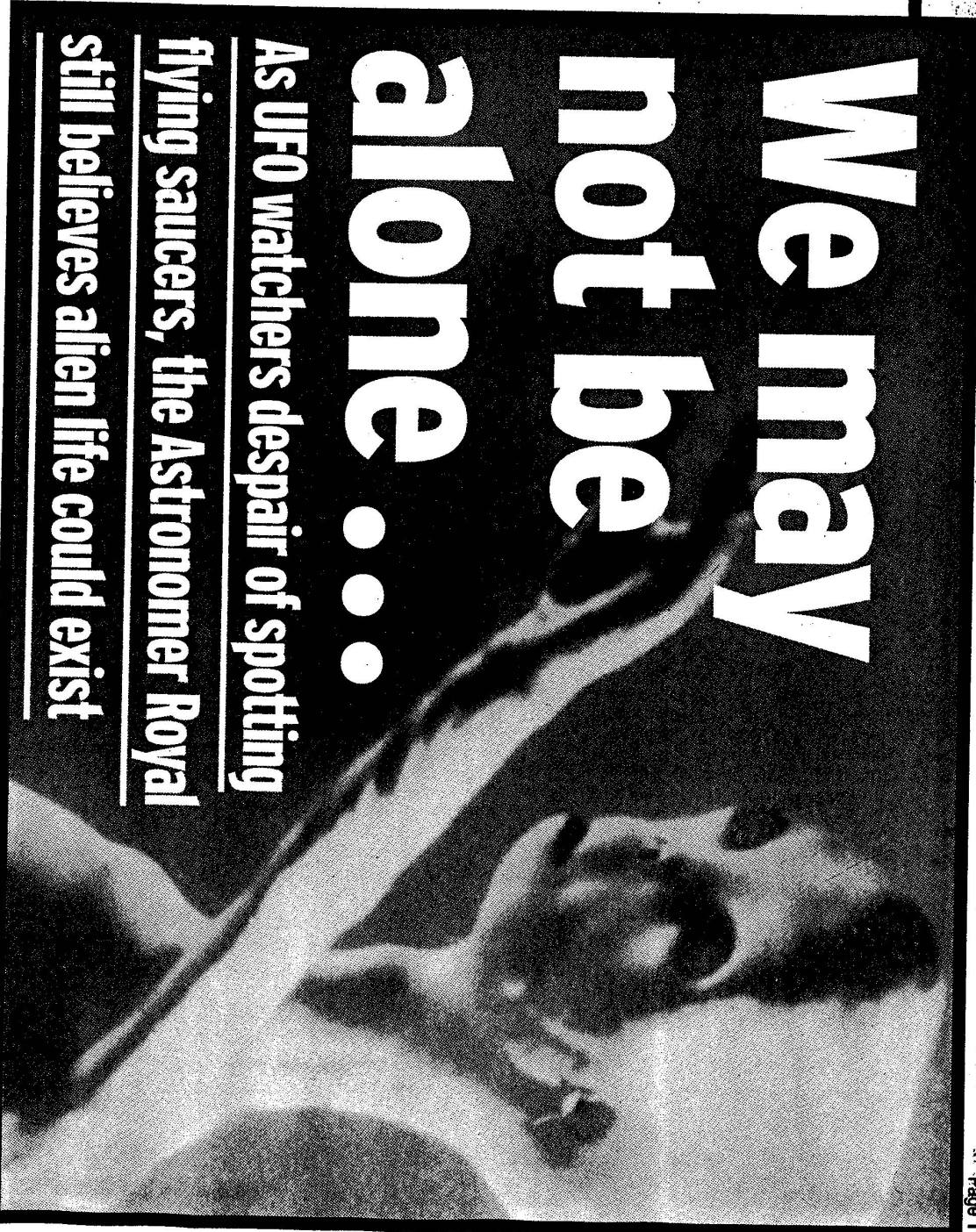
**M**ORE than 400 years ago, Giordano Bruno, an Italian monk, was burnt at the stake for various heresies including the belief that 'in space, there are numberless earths circling round other suns' and that some of them harboured creatures that were 'fully the equal of those on our human Earth'.

In the 18th century, many believed that the Moon and even the Sun were inhabited. In the late 19th century, the science fiction of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells further popularised the idea of alien life.

Perceval Lowell, a wealthy American, built his own observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona, primarily to study Mars. He believed that its surface was criss-crossed by 'canals', dug by an advanced civilisation to channel water from the frozen polar caps to the 'deserts' near the Red Planet's Equator.

Then in 1900, a French foundation offered the Guzman Prize of 100,000 francs for the first contact with an extra-terrestrial species; but prudence led them to exclude Mars — detecting Martians was thought to be too easy!

In the 1930s, an American radio



# We may not be alone...

## As UFO watchers despair of spotting flying saucers, the Astronomer Royal still believes alien life could exist



by **Sir Martin Rees**  
ASTRONOMER ROYAL

Dramatisation of Wells's *War of the Worlds* was so compelling that many, in panic, thought it was a news flash and that a real Martian invasion had begun.

We're less optimistic about Mars than our forbears were 100 years ago, since there is certainly nothing on Mars like the 'Martians' of popular fiction.

But it would be important to discover life there, even if it were only primitive 'bugs'.

So long as we know about life only on our own planet, we can't rule out the possibility that it was caused by a chain of accidents so improbable that nothing remotely like it could have happened anywhere else in the universe. But if life *did* exist on Mars as well, it couldn't be a fluke.

During the coming years, an armada of space probes is being launched toward the Red Planet to analyse its surface, to fly over it, and (in later missions) to return samples to Earth.

Life could also exist in the ice-covered oceans of Jupiter's frozen moon, Europa, and there are plans to land a submersible probe that could explore beneath the ice.

Indeed, if life had emerged twice within our Solar System — an issue which could be settled in less than 20 years — this would suggest that the entire Galaxy would be teeming with life, at least in simple forms.

But our Sun is just one star among billions. And in the vastness of space far beyond our own Solar System we can rule out nothing.

Astronomers have discovered that the Italian monk Giordano Bruno was right in one respect: other stars *do* have their own retinue of planets circling around them, just as the Earth, Mars and Jupiter circle around our own star, the Sun.

But was Bruno also right in his second conjecture that some of these planets, orbiting other

stars, harbour life-forms far more interesting and exotic than anything we might find on Mars? Could they even be inhabited by beings we could recognise as intelligent?

If intelligent aliens were common, shouldn't they have visited us already?

Some astronomers cite the lack of absolutely certain UFO detections as evidence that aliens are rare.

They note that some stars are billions of years older than our Sun, and point out that if life were common, its emergence should have had a 'head start' on their planets.

So why shouldn't they have got here first, and why aren't their artefacts staring us in the face? However, the fact that we haven't been visited doesn't, in my view, imply that aliens don't exist. It would be far harder to traverse the mind-boggling distances of interstellar space than to transmit a signal.

**T**HAT'S perhaps how aliens would reveal themselves first. (Aliens equipped with large radio antennae could in any case pick up the combined output of all our TV transmitters — if they could decode them, it's hard to think what they might conclude about intelligent life on Earth.)

Searches for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) are being spearheaded by scientists at the SETI Institute in Mountain View, California, and are bankrolled by Paul Allen, the Microsoft billionaire, and by other private benefactors.

Using various large radio telescopes, they have concentrated on searches for radio transmissions that could be artificial in origin. But radio is not the only conceivable channel: narrowly-beamed lasers could span inter-

stellar distances with a modest power consumption. We already have the technology, if we so wish, to proclaim our presence many light years away by either of these methods.

The nearest potential sites are so far away that signals would take many years in transit. For this reason alone, transmission there would be time to send a measured response, but no scope for quick repartee!

Short stretches of data from the SETI searches have been downloaded by three million people to home computers — each hoping to be the first to detect ET.

I wouldn't hold my breath for success. Even if these searches fail, that doesn't mean that we are alone. The brains and senses of the aliens may be so different from ours that we couldn't recognise any patterns in their signals. Or they may not be transmitting at all.

Super-intelligent dolphins could be enjoying a contemplative life on some other water-covered planet without our even knowing. There may be a lot more life out there than we could ever detect — absence of evidence isn't evidence of absence.

But I'm enthusiastic about these searches, because of the import of any manifestly artificial signal. Even if we couldn't make much sense of it, we'd have learnt that 'intelligence wasn't unique and had emerged elsewhere'.

Our cosmos would seem far more interesting; we would look at a distant star with renewed interest if we knew it was another Sun, shining on a world as intricate and complex as our own.

We have no idea what intelligent aliens would look like — in any case, their appearances would depend on the habitat of their 'home planet'.

They could be balloon-like creatures floating in dense atmospheres; they could be the size of insects on a big planet where gravity pulled strongly. Or they may be freely floating in space.

They could even, as some science fiction reminds us, be super-intelligent computers,

created by a race of alien beings that had died out millions of years ago.

If we ever established contact with aliens, what could we discuss with them? This is the theme of my new book, and I think we'd belong to the same universe of stars and planets, all governed by universal laws.

We'd all trace our origins back to a single 'genesis event' — the so-called 'big bang', which happened about 12 billion years ago.

It would, in some ways be disappointing if searches for alien intelligence were doomed to fail. We might then feel alone in a vast, uncaring cosmos. On the other hand, it would boost our 'cosmic self-esteem'.

If our Earth were a unique abode of intelligence, a unique spark of life in the cosmos, then — tiny though it is on a cosmic scale — we could view it in a less humble perspective than it would merit if the cosmos already teemed with complex life.

Moreover, astronomy teaches us something else: the time lying ahead is even longer than the 13 billion years that has elapsed since our universe began.

**W**E might think we are the culmination of evolution. But we may not be any more than the first fish-like brute that crawled on to dry land about 200 million years ago.

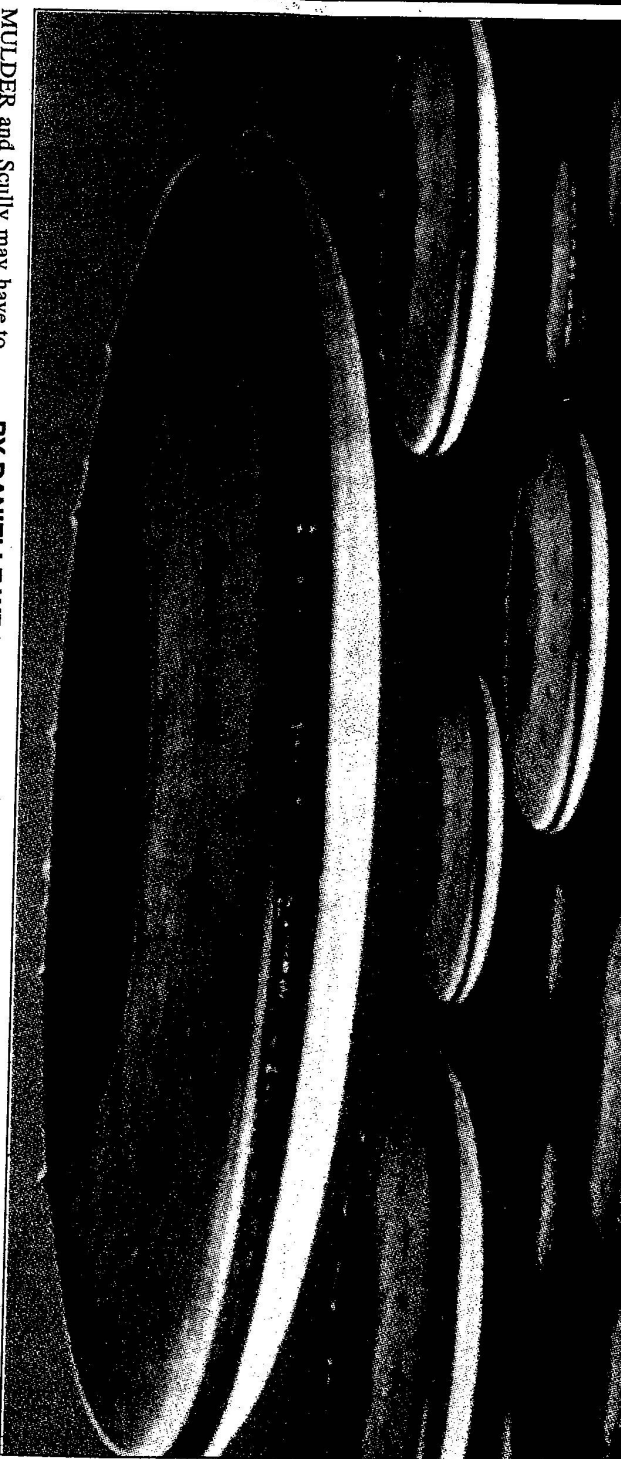
We may be still near the beginning of an evolution that takes our remote descendants far beyond the Earth, spreading life through the Galaxy.

So, if we turned out to be alone in the cosmos, we'd have even stronger motives to cherish this 'pale blue dot' in the Universe on which we live and not foreclose life's future — a future that could be even longer than the timespan over which simple life has evolved into humans.

The entire cosmos, not just the Earth, could be our eventual habitat.

■ *Sir Martin Rees's book on alien life, Our Cosmic Habitat, was recently published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson.*

# WE ARE ALONE



Metro 3  
Monday, April 8, 2002

## Bombshell ends soccer match

A TEAM of football losers were minutes from their first victory in two years when the game had to be abandoned — because of an unexploded World War II bomb. Edinburgh Asians FC were 2-0 up with 20 minutes to go in a match which could have lifted them off the bottom of their league.

Manager and right-back Jim Chaudry, 32, said: 'It was unbelievable. We thought it was some sort of joke. We have been playing for a couple of years now and have never won. When the police showed up, we thought people in the houses round about had complained about bad language or something.

'Then the ref told us the game was abandoned.'

Army bomb disposal experts carried out a controlled explosion of the shell, found by a homeowner under his shed in Roseburn, Edinburgh.

## METRO FACTILE

In February 1942, former actress Nina Ward was found dead in her flat at No. 152 Wardour Street, W1. Her throat was slashed and her body mutilated with a th-opener. Within a few days, two more women were found strangled in the West End, prompting fears of another Jack the Ripper. Eventually, police linked RAF cadet George Cummings to the four murders on June 25, 1942.

## Star Wars was a dud, says Ewan

EWAN MCGREGOR has admitted what audiences and critics knew all along about Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace — it was a dud. The Scottish actor, who played the young Obi Wan Kenobi in the first 'prequel' of the space saga, said he thought it 'disappointing' and 'flat' — despite the fact it became the third most successful movie of all time. It is the first time the 31-year-old has publicly criticised the film, which did not impress dedicated followers of the series. However, McGregor said the next instalment, to be previewed next month, is much better. He added: 'I think there's much more humour and there's much more colour in Episode II: Attack Of The Clones. It's more reminiscent of the original three Star Wars films than Episode I was.'

## BY DANIELLE WRATE

MULDER and Scully may have to look for new jobs — the existence of UFOs has been officially dismissed as pure fantasy by the bible of the extraterrestrial. A decline in sightings, which have inspired countless films and TV series such as The X-Files, has led paranormal journal Fortean Times to declare the science of ufology dead. The world's oldest UFO society, the British Flying Saucer Bureau, has also suspended its activities after 50 years owing to lack of evidence. Experts and amateur enthusiasts began researching unidentified flying

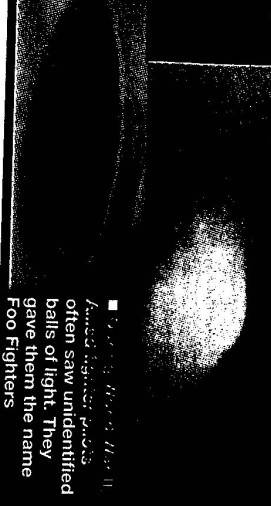
objects in earnest following the 1947 Roswell incident, when aliens allegedly crashed in New Mexico. The incident triggered numerous conspiracy theories and many believe the US government tried to cover up the existence of extra-terrestrials. Aliens were held responsible for the disappearance of ships and aircraft which mysteriously vanished in the so-called Bermuda Triangle. But Fortean Times editor Bob Rickard, who hosted the magazine's annual ufology convention in London

at the weekend, said: 'UFOs driven by real aliens don't appear to exist. Over the past decade, there has been a slump in sightings. We had hoped advances in technology and the wider use of cameras would lead to more concrete evidence of alien life but that just hasn't happened. The Star Trek idea of being visited by aliens just isn't going to happen. Thousands of people throughout the world have reported sightings and scores of blurry images have been captured on film. Former US President Jimmy Carter

claims to have spotted a UFO when he was governor of Georgia in 1969 — and even filed an official report. More recently, alien craft were blamed for the appearance of crop circles in cornfields across the UK. But, according to Mr Rickard, all the evidence points to overactive minds rather than cold facts. 'Reports of alien abductions and encounters spring from an entirely different phenomenon. They are in people's minds,' he said. 'The image of UFOs is so much a part of modern day culture that sightings are no longer innocent or spontaneous.'

## THE HISTORY OF FLYING SAUCERS

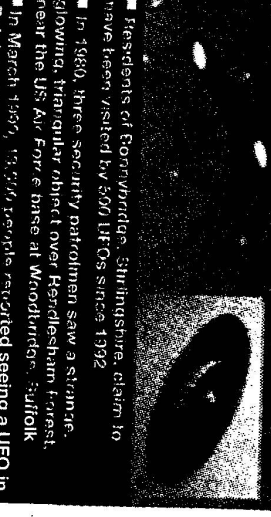
UFO sightings date back to ancient times. Old testament prophet Ezekiel described a flying object and in ancient Egypt, Pharaoh Thutmose III saw a circle of fire descend from the sky



As a young boy, Bill Beckwith often saw unidentified balls of light. They gave them the name Foo Fighters



In 1947, US newspaper reporter Bill Beckwith coined the term 'flying saucer'. Later that year a UFO was said to have crash-landed in New Mexico in what became known as the Roswell Incident



Residents of Gornwyddrhydd, Shropshire, claim to have seen a UFO since 1992. In 1980, three security patrolmen saw a strange, glowing, triangular object over Ayrshireham Forest near the US Air Force base at Waddington, Norfolk. In March 1967, 14,000 people reported seeing a UFO in Belgium. The case is considered the best-ever sighting

## METRO weather

### London Today

It will be a pretty murky start but the cloud will break during the morning to leave plenty of sunshine again. There will still be a chilly north-easterly breeze. High 12-14°C (54-57°F).

Monday AM		10°
Monday PM		14°
Tuesday AM		10°
Tuesday PM		14°

**Outlook**  
The fine weather looks set to carry on for a few more days. There will continue to be periods of sunshine but a little more cloud around.  
**Air pollution today**.....Moderate

### South-East

A dull start to the day for most areas. However, the cloud will break through during the morning to leave it dry and bright for the rest of the day. There will be plenty of sunshine. A light to moderate north-easterly wind. High 12-15°C (54-59°F).

Oxford	13°	Luton	10°
Chesham	12°	Dover	9°
Brighton	14°	Sheff	10°

Oxford	12°	Luton	10°
Chesham	11°	Dover	9°
Brighton	13°	Sheff	10°

**Tomorrow**  
The region will have a dry day with plenty of sunny periods. However, there will be more patchy cloud around during the day than there has been of late. There will continue to be a chill in the air with a north-easterly breeze. High 12-15°C (54-59°F).

## Britain Today (Max)

North	11°	South	16°
N.West	13°	S.Wales	14°
Yorks	12°	N.Wales	13°
VI.Mids	13°	Scotland	14°
E.Mids	13°	N.Ireland	14°

### Around Britain yesterday

Aberdeen	9 Cloudy	Jersey	12 Fair
Belfast	11 Sunny	Leeds	10 Sunny
Birmingham	11 Fair	London	12 Sunny
Bristol	11 Fair	Manchester	11 Sunny
Cardiff	11 Sunny	Newcastle	9 Fair
Dover	9 Fair	Norwich	8 Fair
Edinburgh	12 Sunny	Plymouth	9 Fair
Glasgow	13 Sunny	York	10 Fair

## Europe Today (Max)

Athens	19°	Geneva	13°
Barcelona	21°	Madrid	16°
Rome	21°	Moscow	10°
Berlin	10°	Paris	17°
Brussels	15°	Paris	17°
Dublin	13°	Rome	22°

### Around the World yesterday

Amsterdam	10 Sunny	Madrid	11 Cloudy
Athens	20 Sunny	Melb	16 Cloudy
Barbados	28 Fair	Miami	24 Cloudy
B Aires	25 Thnr	New York	6 Cloudy
Cape Town	28 Sunny	Paris	14 Cloudy
Hong Kong	26 Fair	Rome	17 Cloudy
Ibiza	17 Cloudy	Seychelles	30 Cloudy
Istanbul	11 Cloudy	Sydney	22 Fair
Lisbon	11 Cloudy	Tokyo	12 Cloudy
L.Angels	17 Fair	Venice	12 Cloudy

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Further to our conversation last week about the Flying Saucer Working Party, please find attached details supplied by DIS which they are happy to release to the TV company. As discussed even though we are the focal point for correspondence and enquires about 'UFOs' the FSWP was part of the Defence Intelligence organisation so it was important that we consulted them. The report referred to at the end of para 2 is the one which I gave you a copy of. As far as DI are aware papers relating to the FSWP are open for viewing at the Public Record Office and there are no other records retained in DIS.

I would be grateful if you could inform me when this programme is going to be broadcast if you are told.



Flying Saucer Working Party - ...

[redacted]  
DAS-LA-Ops+Pol1  
6/73MT [redacted]



**DAS-LA-Ops+Pol1**

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**To:** DI ISEC SEC4  
**Subject:** RE: FLYING SAUCER WORKING PARTY

-----Original Message-----

**From:** DI ISEC SEC4  
**Sent:** 22 February 2002 16:30  
**To:** DAS-LA-Ops+Pol1  
**Cc:** AD DI 55  
**Subject:** FLYING SAUCER WORKING PARTY  
**Importance:** High

Dear [REDACTED] 0

<< File: UFO study - summary - for release.doc >>

I attach an **updated** version of the summary which describes the DIS involvement in UAPs, including the Flying Saucer Working Party. We are happy for this to be released to the TV company. As far as we are aware, there are no other records relating to the FSWP in the DIS and nobody here has anything more to add!

[REDACTED] 40  
please pass to [REDACTED] thanks

DI ISEC Sec 4  
[REDACTED] 306WH

## UNEXPLAINED AERIAL PHENOMENA (UAP)

Since the 1950s, reports of unidentified aerial phenomena from within UK airspace alone number thousands. These report objects which were not identifiable at the time of observation. UAPs have increased since the 1950s in line with the beginning of manned flight, the advent of outdoor laser displays, space flight, weather balloons, and so on. It has been recent MOD practice to refer to such phenomena, in the absence of rational explanation, as Unexplained Aerial Phenomena (UAP). MOD interest in UAP is only necessary as an assurance that any such object is not a threat to UK airspace or assets.

In August 1950 a Working Party was set up (at the suggestion of Sir Henry Tizard) who thought "flying saucers should be investigated". Records show that the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Joint Technical Intelligence Committee (Ref. DSI/JTIC(51) Item 8 (1951)) received the Chairman's Report of the "Flying Saucer Working Party". The Committee decided that "the document should be regarded as the final report and, in view of the conclusions the Working Party should be dissolved". The Chairman (Mr. G. L. Turney DS13) went on to say that, "following the lead given by the Americans on this subject, the report should have as little publicity as possible and outside circulation should be confined to one copy, for Sir Henry Tizard". The report has been released to the PRO. The UK was happy to allow the US studies to answer any outstanding questions.

The United States Air Force had started to take an official interest in 1948 with PROJECT SIGN, later changed to PROJECT GRUDGE and then to PROJECT BLUE BOOK. Such was the concern in the US that by 1952 the CIA instigated a covert study group to investigate the "10% of incredible reports from credible witnesses". In fact over 10,000 reports, spanning 19 years, were processed by 1965 (of which it was reported that only about 7% were unexplained). The covertness of this investigation subsequently contributed greatly to charges of a government 'cover-up'.

In 1952-3 the US set up the Robertson Panel (Intelligence Scientific Advisory Panel). Meanwhile, the possibility of the USSR using a UFO scare as a means of jamming communication channels, while simultaneously attacking the West was considered a serious possibility by the US – even though the investigation team had dismissed sightings of 'UFOs' as 'explainable'. In 1953, USAF began a more detailed collection of sighting information which, according to US Government statements, ceased in 1958 with no proof of extra-terrestrial origin.

The topic would not go away, however, and by 1966 the USA's CONDON Report had studied and reported on 59 events in detail. The report concluded "While we do not think, at present, anything worthwhile is likely to come out of research [into UFOs] each individual case should be considered on its merits. No (separate) US Agency is required - but this may not be the case for all time". The UK took no part in this USAF study, and there is no record of the Air Ministry requesting or receiving this report.

In the 1950s, the Air Ministry, produced a 'minimum format', a one page, 'UFO' reporting procedure for both public and military reporting of the phenomena. Reports of sightings from either military or civilian sources were sent to Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) from the Air Staff in case they contained any information which was of value in DIS's task of analysing the performance and threat of foreign weapons systems, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programmes and technologies and emerging technologies. However, none of the reports received over a period of 30 years have yielded any valuable information whatsoever. DIS therefore decided in December 2000, not to receive these reports any longer.

ITN



D/News Projects - DBCC



Approach from TV co making a documentary  
on flying saucer working GP party in 50's  
(they mentioned room on site of Metropole in connection with this)

- would like MOD Policy
- copy of document? (Report No 7)
- any other relevant info

UFOs.

Room.

D/News Prog.

**G**uy Fawkes' Night wasn't a big deal for me at the age of 18. As I ambled home from work on November 5, 1976, I was probably looking forward to a pub crawl with my friends rather than a few damp squibs in the garden with my parents. More likely, I suspect my mind was virtually a blank, the kind of meditative state that often precedes a ghostly experience or a religious vision. I

certainly wouldn't have been thinking about work: I was a trainee computer programmer at Crawley Borough Council, a job I was happy to abandon at 5.20pm every evening – or 4.25pm, weirdly, on Fridays like this – for my 10-minute stroll home.

A jovial careers adviser had suggested the job – based, I thought then, on an inspired reading of the unique potential displayed by my O-levels in English, Latin, French, maths and art. All too late, I now realise he saw me as an archetypal nerd, a misshapen peg for a slightly off-square hole. I had rampaging acne, long hair spilling dandruff down my slouching shoulders, an addiction to prog-rock records and pints of lager-and-blackcurrant. I was one of those irritating fools who memorise whole Monty Python sketches. Girlfriends were something other people had. In my spare time, I laboured over a shapeless novel about a sinister lobster recipe that was taking over the world, though most of the action was confined to my home town of Crawley, West Sussex. I was a Hobbit in all but name. What other choice of employment could anyone have suggested?

But as I turned the corner into my home-territory of Buckmans Road in the district of West Green, destiny was about to deal me a new role. A mission. A pointer for the future that I had consistently failed to visualise for myself.

It was floating above the rooftops of my road – an assemblage of mysterious lights. It didn't seem to be travelling in a linear way but wobbling from side to side in the darkness, without making a sound. I stopped and watched it, dumbfounded. Then I remembered it was Guy Fawkes' Night. Oh, it's a rocket, I remember thinking. Or an Air Bomb. Or some other firework that goes up in the air. But when the lights continued to wink and hover for several minutes, I discounted that theory.

No, this was an unidentified flying object, possibly a spacecraft piloted by aliens. People see them all the time; it's just that it hadn't happened to me before. I was excited beyond intelligent thought. I was trembling so much, I almost shook myself out of my tank top and oxford bags.

There was fear in the excitement, because I was dealing with the unknown. Who's to say, I remember thinking, that this isn't the start of a full-scale invasion? It could be The War of the Worlds or, at best, The Day the Earth Stood Still. People could be massacred; the whole planet could be destroyed in a flash. It was the kind of day when anything could have happened – indeed, I have since discovered that on this very same day, a former member of the band Steps was born.

I hurried home and gibbered to my mother that there was a UFO outside, just down the road. I was disappointed that she wasn't that bothered; instead of rushing outside to see it for herself, she suggested I call nearby Gatwick Airport to see if they had spotted anything on their radar. So I checked the telephone directory, picked up the receiver ➡➡➡



# BRIEFENCOUNTERS

**Tony Barrell**

ILLUSTRATIONS: JACKIE PARSONS

on our green Trimphone and dialled. "Why do you young man?" an urbane aviation official asked me. "What have you seen?" I could almost hear his regulation RAF moustache twitching.

"A UFO," I replied, helpfully.

"Well, we haven't picked up anything unidentified here. Are you sure?"

"I think so."

"Don't worry, young man, we'll keep a lookout."

"Oh. Okay. Thanks."

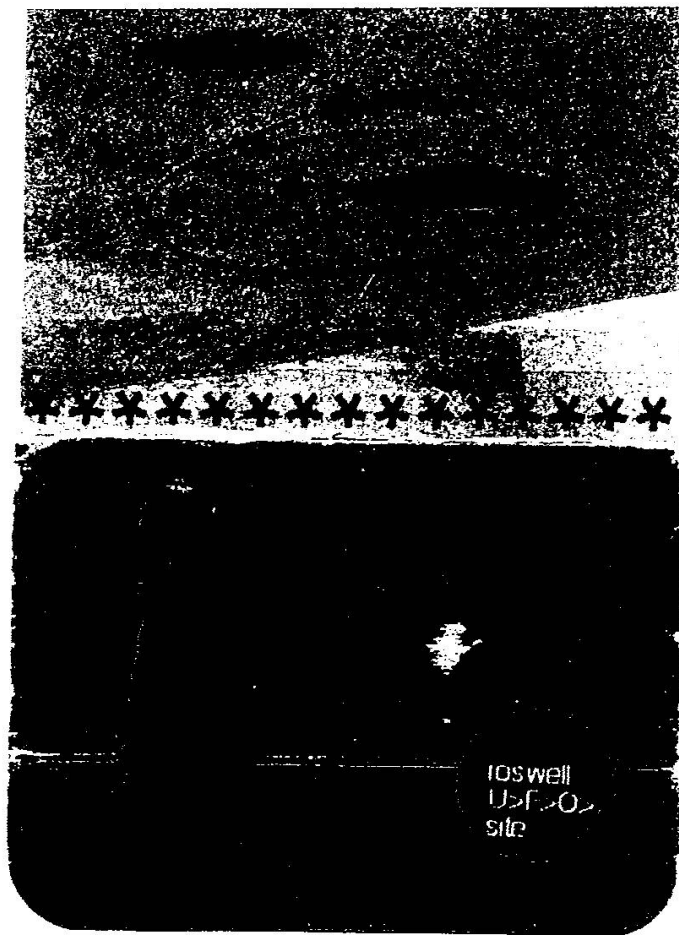
When I went back outside to check on the progress of the object, it had gone. For some reason, my dear old mum thought it would be a good idea to get in touch with the local paper, the *Crawley Observer*. Possibly for the same reason, I agreed, without considering the consequences. A friendly reporter chap sounded mildly interested and said someone might get back to me. He didn't say, "if we don't have any better news this week", but that's what the cynical, grown-up part of me hears now when I recall the conversation.

There was a call for me at the office the following week. Was I the youngster who'd seen the flying saucer? Yes, I said, if that's what it was. In the cold light of day, I was on the point of disowning the experience and starting to clutch at rational explanations. I also wished that I hadn't phoned the paper. I gave a half-hearted and not terribly articulate interview, mumbling into the receiver lest my story be heard by my work colleagues, many of whom held diplomas in the art of mickey-taking.

The reporter asked if a photographer could call and take a picture. "No," I said, "the UFO's not there any more. It disappeared after several minutes." No, a picture of *me*, the local hack patiently explained. "Oh, okay then," I must have said, because a snapper duly turned up on the doorstep one evening. As a *Sunday Times* writer I have had the pleasure of working with some fine photographers since, but this guy had an imagination like no other. "Could you pick up something round?" he asked. "Like a saucer? And look at it?" The nearest such object was a cheap ashtray with a photograph of Blackpool Tower in its centre, a souvenir from a distant holiday. I held it up and smiled, and the flash went off.

"That UFO was no firework," trumpeted the *Observer*, above the picture of me and the ashtray. The anonymous reporter had had some easy fun with the story: "Air traffic control at Gatwick missed the scoop of a lifetime on Friday, when a UFO hovered over West Green..." My age was omitted, giving me an enigmatic village-idiot quality. Friends and co-workers went through the whole pantomime of ridicule, the most repeated jest being that I must have "had a few". (I still have a problem with this cliché that alcohol is a potent hallucinogenic. When was the last time you "saw things" after having one beer too many?) One of my mother's female office colleagues looked at my photo and commented that I was a "nice-looking lad", blithely ignoring the terrible threat of alien invasion implicit in the story.

The sighting "has certainly increased my interest in these things", I had told my interviewer. "Now I would like to find out more about it." True to my word, for months afterwards I read every trashy paperback about UFOs and aliens I could get my hands on. The more I read, the more I was prepared to believe that not only were we just one of a myriad of intelligent races in the universe, but also that Stonehenge, the Egyptian pyramids and, in all



Roswell was packed  
with nutters  
wearing alien suits

probability, the Hanger Lane gyratory system had been built by extra-terrestrial visitors. The movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* came out in 1977, and I gorged on that as well.

But like many adolescent enthusiasms, my obsession inevitably waned. I put away childish things, grew up, switched my career to journalism, and eventually joined *The Sunday Times*. In 1997, the editor of this magazine, unaware of my former life, spontaneously decided I was just the person to fly to Roswell, New Mexico, to cover the 50th anniversary of the legendary UFO crash there.

Roswell was the assignment I was born for. I had already done half of the research, unwittingly, in my teens. The town was packed with nutters in alien suits, and earnest ufologists arguing the toss about spaceships and weather balloons, and I could never go far without meeting someone who wanted to discuss how alien technology was secretly used by modern stealth bombers, or who needed to offload their own stories of alien abduction. Some of these tales made *The X Files* look like *Bob the Builder*. And not only did I get to interview the celebrity abductee Whitley Strieber, author of *Communion*, but we had an enjoyable if abstruse argument about time travel after he suggested that the Roswell craft had come from the far future of our own world.

This was also my first visit to America. Imagine that – your first impression of the good ol' US of A isn't Manhattan, Disneyland or the Golden Gate Bridge but a southern hick town in the desert, with pictures of black-eyed "greys" gazing out from most of the shop windows.

Subsequent assignments have seen me hunting for ghosts at the site of the Battle of Gettysburg, attending pagan rituals in Britain, hanging out with *Monster Raving Loonies*, and joining an alien-loving religious group for nude meditation in Canada. Why, people frequently ask me, do I fixate

on the unusual, the offbeat, the unexplained, the paranormal? Let me lie on this couch awhile and tell you. Well, maybe it makes me feel like a crackpot again. There is also the possibility that the experience of November 5, 1976 – the sight of the craft and the humiliation that followed it – intensified my ability to empathise with people whom many others would dismiss as crackpots. I've been bought the T-shirt: I know what it's like to be taken to unusual beliefs and to suffer mockery for them.

I'm sure that some of the more out-there ufologists I've met would have another hypothesis: that the craft I saw landed in my street and I was abducted by the aliens on board, that they programmed me with a mission to enlighten the world about all kinds of weird and wacky stuff, and then erased my memory. Perhaps I should have my head examined: it may contain an elaborate implant fashioned from an otherworldly material.

But I really don't think so. You see, although the experience was a defining moment, even the passport to an unusual career, I have grave doubts about its authenticity. I have tried over and over again to replay that memory, clean it up, bring it to something approaching DVD quality, so I can determine exactly what I saw. I've tried to recall those moments through meditation, and I've even been back there in dreams. I can't make myself 18 again, even with a lengthy series of hormone injections. It's a tough one. But what follows is the best I can do.

It is already quite dark. The air is heavy with smoke from early bonfires and fireworks. I can hear them popping and fizzing at regular intervals. My attention is attracted by lights in the sky, above the rooftops. There is at least one red light, at least one white light, and they are glowing and winking eerily. The lights aren't self-contained dots, but are in the air. If whatever is responsible for the lights is making a noise, I can't hear it over the sound of the bangers and rockets and roman candles. I can't explain why I told the local paper that the object was hovering "absolutely silently". (My neighbour, who my neighbours is standing outside one of the houses nearby, but I can't bring myself to speak to him or her; my memory doesn't make it entirely clear who they are or what sex they are. (My reluctance to speak to this neighbour may be based on uncertainty as well as shock: I don't want to share this experience until I have established that it really *is* an experience. I am also very shy.)

I continue to watch the object for a few minutes. It doesn't seem to be moving away from me or towards me, but hovering and wobbling from side to side. It is at this point that I realise – or rather believe – that I am seeing something very special. I begin to worry about alien landings. It has been a tough week at work, I hate programming computers and I need a break. Yippee, this is my chance. My life and my life will never be the same again.

As special-effects designers know, ordinary objects can appear extraordinary when they are filtered through smoke. And, as good UFO investigators know, everyday objects may appear alien when they are viewed from unusual angles, and their trajectory may not be perceived correctly. If a flying machine were travelling away from me, it might seem to be static or wobbling from side to side.

The answer is so obvious. But I think I've been in denial for a long time, because I so wanted the experience to be truly supernatural. Reader, I'm really sorry. I think it was an aeroplane ■

# The night of the flying saucer

## A silvery craft zig-zagging across the sky, discs hovering over the sea front. Newly released documents reveal what really happened on November 16, 1950

**F**IFTY years ago, in that austere era when food was still rationed and new cars were for export only, the skies above Britain were alive with strange and exotic flying machines.

Since World War II ended, the Press had been full of reports of sightings of a new phenomenon — the Unidentified Flying Object (UFO). Suddenly, the firmament, which had all-too-recently been buzzing with Heinkels and V2 rockets, was home to fantastic craft capable of travelling at several thousand miles per hour.

Some were shaped like cigars, but most were disc-shaped. Usually, the UFOs were made of shiny, polished metal and could perform fantastic aerobatics — the ability to turn on a sixpence at 900mph was noted by one RAF pilot who saw a UFO whizzing past his Meteor jet.

At 4pm on November 16, 1950, residents of Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, saw several discs hovering over the seafront. And in Putney, London, citizens had witnessed a silvery craft zig-zagging across the sky far faster than any plane.

There was so much concern that in 1951 the British Government set up its own 'X-Files' unit within the Ministry of Defence, to investigate the UFO phenomenon.

Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister, hardly a man to be swayed by the latest fad, was worried. 'What does all this stuff about flying saucers amount to?' he asked in a memo to the War Ministry. 'What can it mean?'

The truth, Churchill was told, was nothing to worry about. Documents, newly released from the Public Record Office under the 50-year rule, reveal that the boffins employed by the Ministry found no evidence that the UFOs had anything to do with aliens.

Instead, they were dismissed as 'optical illusions and psychological delusions', birds and

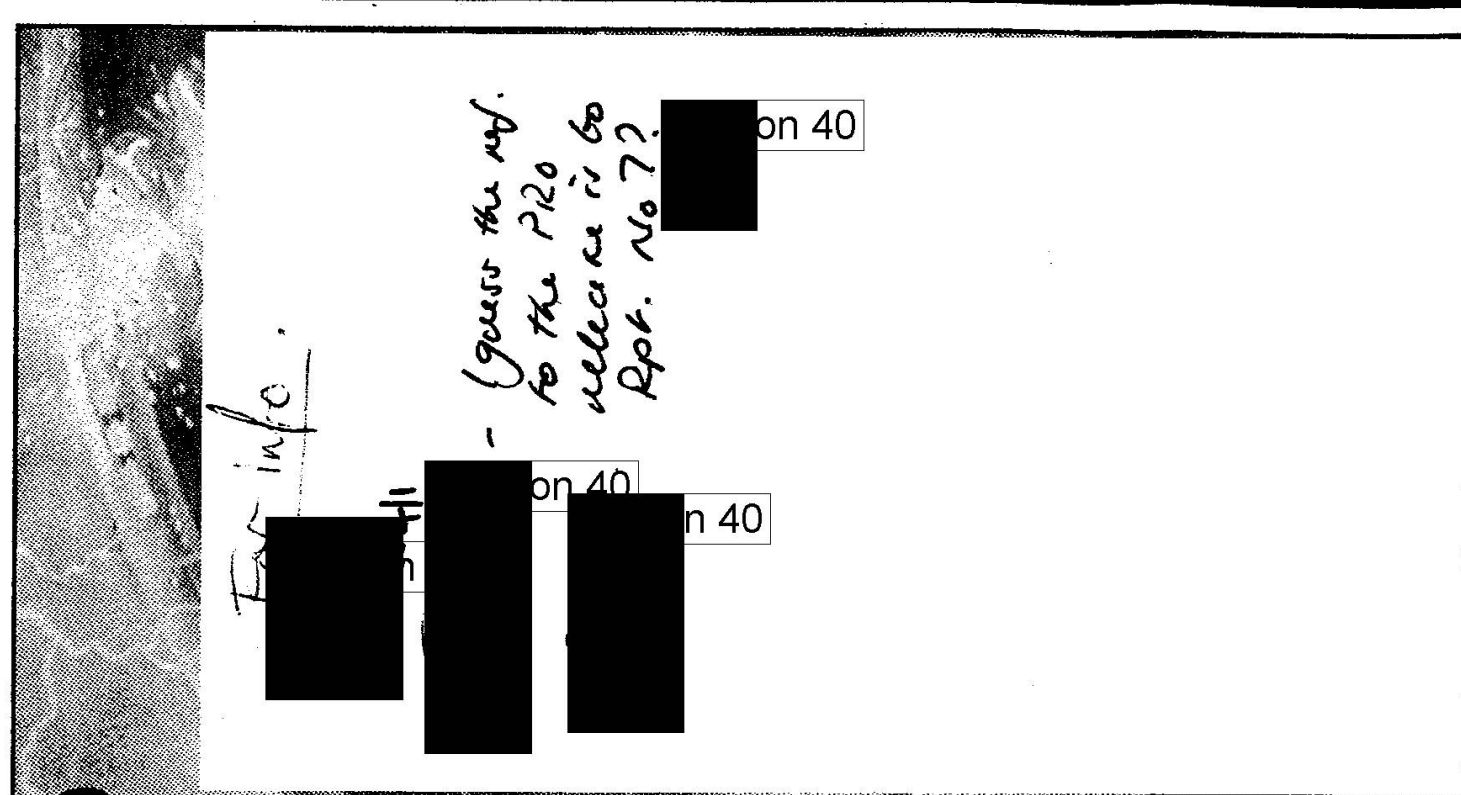
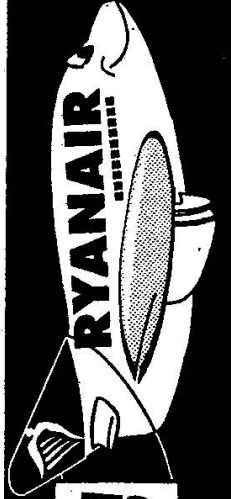


by **Michael Hanlon**

horizon. Birds, too, are a source of many UFO sightings. Jacqueline Mitton of the Royal Astronomical Society thinks that large flocks of migrating birds can, in the right circumstances, reflect sunlight like burnished metal.

The only UFO I have seen was even more dramatic: a vivid

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BY THE 1950s, MILITARIES WERE CONVINCED THAT EARTH WAS BEING VISITED REGULARLY BY ALIEN SPACECRAFT. THE AMERICAN AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS BEGAN THEIR INVESTIGATIONS.

Then there are man-made explanations. Weather balloons are the cause of an estimated 10 per cent of UFO sightings.

**S**ECRET aircraft are tested in the western states of America. The American Mach 5 Aurora spyplane is also rumoured occasionally to fly over Britain — and may be the source of the mysterious sonic booms heard off the coasts of south-west England even when Concorde isn't flying.

Such explanations account for perhaps 95pc of reported UFO sightings.

But the remaining 5pc? No one knows. They could be alien spacecraft, but then again they could be some new and unexpected phenomenon. They could also, of course, be clever hoaxes.

Some people believe UFOs have always been with us. Dick Taylor, secretary of the British Interplanetary Society, believes the UFO phenomenon is no more than the modern continuation of an ancient myth — that of angels and other creatures from the skies.

'We have always wanted to believe that we are not alone,' he says. Previously, these lights were thought to be manifestations of the divine. Now, in a technological society, they must have a technical explanation.

The working party was officially wound up in 1956, but the MoD continued to investigate UFOs.

Nick Pope, an MoD mandarin who until the 1990s was Britain's answer to the X-Files' Fox Mulder, maintains that although most of the cases he investigated could easily be explained, many could not.

The truth, it seems, is still out there — and Churchill's questions are no closer to being answered today than in 1951.

BY THE 1950s, MILITARIES WERE CONVINCED THAT EARTH WAS BEING VISITED REGULARLY BY ALIEN SPACECRAFT. THE AMERICAN AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS BEGAN THEIR INVESTIGATIONS.

One of the cases the British team looked at was a claim by a Flight Lieutenant Hubbard to have twice seen a flat disc, light pearl grey in colour, about 50ft in diameter flying over Farnborough in Hampshire.

The task force wryly concluded that in an 'air minded' district it was unlikely that a revolutionary flying machine could have gone unnoticed by so many people. Hubbard was the victim of an optical illusion, they reported.

Soon people were seeing more than just lights and flying discs: a large number were claiming to have been 'abducted' by aliens and returned.

There is often a strong sexual element to the abductions. Men report being forced to mate with female aliens, usually blonde and beautiful. Many American women claim erotic encounters with 'godlike' male aliens.

Ever since, interest in UFOs has waxed and waned. There are currently so few sightings over the UK that the British UFO society has been wound up.

But in 1989 and 1990, when the Soviet empire was collapsing, any visiting aliens would have found the skies over Eastern Europe very crowded indeed.

Extraterrestrials, it seems, visit during times of political upheaval — there was a rash of sightings during the Cuban missile crisis and the invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

So what is going on? Nearly 50 years after Churchill's plaintive request, are we any nearer to answering his questions?

First, UFOs, by definition, do exist. The night sky is full of strange lights and moving objects that cannot easily be explained. But the vast majority turn out to be natural phenomena.

Sometimes the planet Venus appears to be extremely large and bright against the western

weather balloons, or just plain hoaxes. After five years of investigation, the UFO phenomenon was dismissed as fantasy.

Case closed. Or so it seemed. The flying saucer craze had begun on June 24, 1947. U.S. pilot Kenneth Arnold, 32, was flying alone through the Cascade Mountains in Washington State. He claimed that nine mysterious objects, each as big as a large passenger aircraft, flashed into view about 25 miles in front of his plane, near Mt Rainier.

They travelled over the mountains with a peculiar weaving motion, 'like the tail of a Chinese kite,' he told reporters, and were crescent-shaped. They flew 'like a saucer would if you skipped it across water'. Thus the term 'flying saucers' entered the popular vocabulary, though the objects Arnold said he saw were not saucer-shaped at all.

**U**NIDENTIFIED flying objects had been reported before — in World War II, American bomber crews had claimed to see odd lights in the sky they called 'foo fighters' — but in the jittery post-war age, Arnold's sighting quickly became legendary.

One theory was that his UFOs were secret military aircraft on test, another that they were a natural phenomenon. Arnold himself suspected at first that they could be a flock of geese. But the theory which took hold was that the UFOs were alien spacecraft.

Then the floodgates opened. Within a couple of years, people were seeing strange objects in the sky all over the world — notably in the U.S., Britain and Sweden. Most were, inevitably, saucer-shaped — the sightings taking their cue from Arnold's misquoted description.

But UFOs were not all the same; a common description was of 'cigar-shaped' objects. What they were and where they came from remained a mystery.

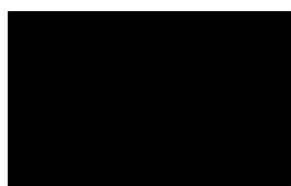


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Copy of article attached

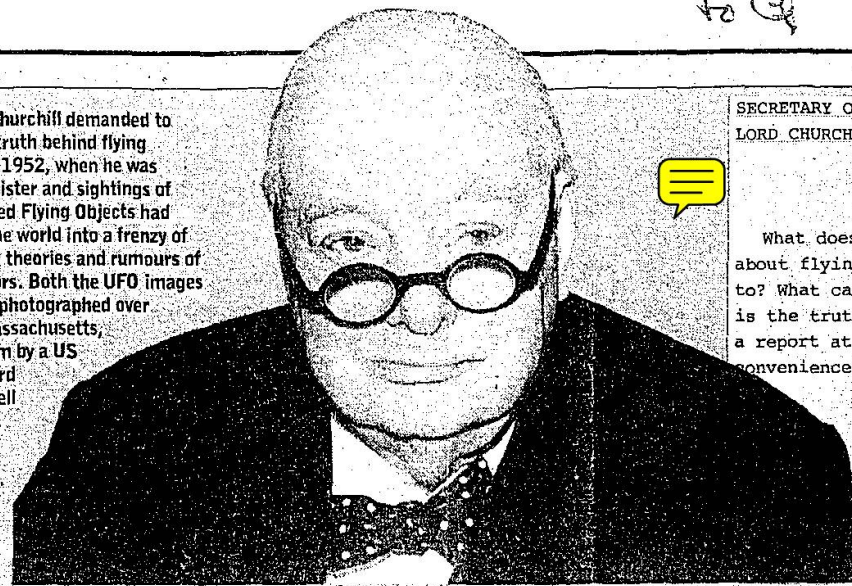
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to Q 2 OCT 01



Winston Churchill demanded to know the truth behind flying saucers in 1952, when he was Prime Minister and sightings of Unidentified Flying Objects had plunged the world into a frenzy of conspiracy theories and rumours of alien visitors. Both the UFO images here were photographed over Salem, Massachusetts, one of them by a US Coast Guard named Shell Alpert.

AP

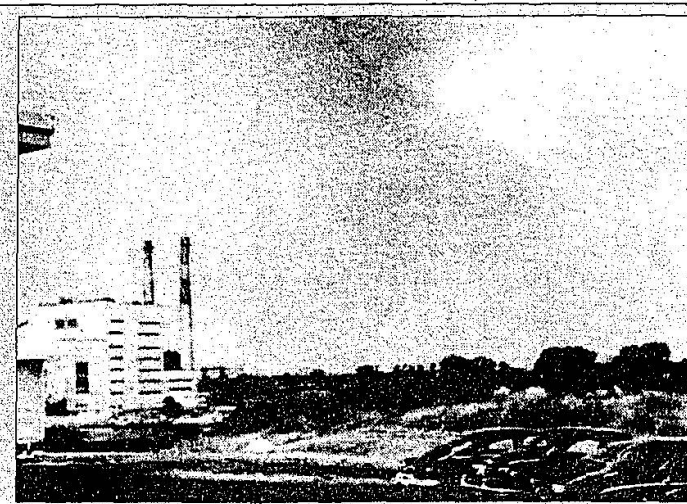


SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AIR  
LORD CHURCHILL

What does all this stuff about flying saucers amount to? What can it mean? what is the truth? Let me have a report at your convenience

W.S.C

28 July 1952



# How Churchill chased flying saucers

by Paul Harris

SCIENTISTS and generals drew up a top secret report on Unidentified Flying Objects and then decided to cover up a wave of rumours and sightings that swept Britain in the 1950s, *The Observer* can reveal.

The existence of the UFO report, written in 1951 and later used to brief Prime Minister Winston Churchill, was denied by the Ministry of Defence for almost 50 years.

But the six-page document has recently been unearthed by UFO historians Andy Roberts and David Clarke as they researched a book on UFOs and the Cold War. The report has been a 'holy grail' of British 'ufology' and details the conclusions of a shadowy panel called the Working Party on Flying Saucers. This group was the idea of Sir Henry Tizard, one of Churchill's most trusted scientific advisers during World

War II and a key figure behind the development of radar.

But anyone looking for an elusive 'X-file' that confirms the existence of aliens will be disappointed. The report concludes that all sightings were explainable by natural events, such as the weather or meteors, or were of normal aircraft.

But it does speak volumes about the scale of paranoia in Britain at the start of the Cold

War. From 1950 onwards, hundreds of UFO sightings were reported across Britain and were regular front page news. Leading public figures, including Lord Louis Mountbatten, came out with their belief that Earth was being visited by aliens.

The phenomenon terrified the top brass on both sides of the Atlantic. Generals were worried that reports of flying saucers could be used by the Soviet Union to disguise an

earthly attack or that the sightings were giving the Russians a clue that Britain's radar network was faulty and easy to penetrate - which was actually true but unknown within the Soviet bloc.

"This was a time of great paranoia and fear. The Government took a decision to throw a blanket over the UFO scare and say as little as possible about it," said Clarke.

"There certainly was a cover-up, but what was being

covered up was Cold War paranoia and our fears over our radar system. It was nothing to do with aliens."

Despite the official silence, the UFO scares did not die down. In 1952 Churchill fired off a memo to his advisers in the wake of fresh UFO sightings in the United States. "What does all this stuff about flying saucers amount to? What can it mean? What is the truth?" Churchill wrote.

Tizard's report was then

used to brief the Prime Minister on the perceived lack of real threat from UFOs in August of that year. A few months later an order went out expressly banning all RAF personnel from discussing sightings with anyone not from the military.

In trying to underplay the sightings, Britain was following the lead of the United States, which had conducted several studies into its own UFO sightings and also adopted a policy of official secrecy. When the British report was presented, a top CIA scientist travelled over to the meeting to make sure the conclusions of America's closest ally fitted in.

Even today, the report is unlikely to dispel the convictions of thousands of British UFO-believers, despite a collapse in the number of

sightings and the closure earlier this year of the British Flying Saucer Bureau. "Believers will say that this report is fake or a decoy and that the Government is still hiding something. You cannot win," said Roberts.

The explanation Roberts and Clarke offer for UFOs is more prosaic than the conspiracy theories of secret alien contact. It lies in mass hysteria. They believe the true importance of the UFO phenomenon lies in the fact that it was an urban myth that gained enough public power to panic the highest echelons of British government - all the way to Winston Churchill.

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# How Churchill chased flying saucers

by Paul Harris

16

SCIENTISTS and generals drew up a top secret report on Unidentified Flying Objects and then decided to cover up a wave of rumours and sightings that swept Britain in the 1950s, *The Observer* can reveal. The existence of the UFO report, written in 1951 and later used to brief Prime Minister Winston Churchill, was denied by the Ministry of Defence for almost 50 years.

But the six-page document has recently been unearthed by UFO historians Andy Roberts and David Clarke as they researched a book on UFOs and the Cold War. The report has been a 'holy grail' of British 'ufology' and details the conclusions of a shadowy panel called the Working Party on Flying Saucers. This group was the idea of Sir Henry Tizard, one of Churchill's most trusted scientific advisers during World

War II and a key figure behind the development of radar.

But anyone looking for an elusive 'X-file' that confirms the existence of aliens will be disappointed. The report concludes that all sightings were explainable by natural events, such as the weather or meteors, or were of normal aircraft.

But it does speak volumes about the scale of paranoia in Britain at the start of the Cold

War. From 1950 onwards, hundreds of UFO sightings were reported across Britain and were regular front page news. Leading public figures, including Lord Louis Mountbatten, came out with their belief that Earth was being visited by aliens.

The phenomenon terrified the top brass on both sides of the Atlantic. Generals were worried that reports of flying saucers could be used by the Soviet Union to disguise an

earthly attack or that the sightings were giving the Russians a clue that Britain's radar network was faulty and easy to penetrate - which was actually true but unknown within the Soviet bloc.

'This was a time of great paranoia and fear. The Government took a decision to throw a blanket over the UFO scare and say as little as possible about it,' said Clarke.

'There certainly was a cover-up, but what was being

covered up was Cold War paranoia and our fears over our radar system. It was nothing to do with aliens.'

Despite the official silence, the UFO scares did not die down. In 1952 Churchill fired off a memo to his advisers in the wake of fresh UFO sightings in the United States. 'What does all this stuff about flying saucers amount to? What can it mean? What is the truth?' Churchill wrote.

Tizard's report was then

used to brief the Prime Minister on the perceived lack of real threat from UFOs in August of that year. A few months later an order went out expressly banning all RAF personnel from discussing sightings with anyone not from the military.


In trying to underplay the sightings, Britain was following the lead of the United States, which had conducted several studies into its own UFO sightings and also adopted a policy of official secrecy. When the British report was presented, a top CIA scientist travelled over to the meeting to make sure the conclusions of America's closest ally fitted in.

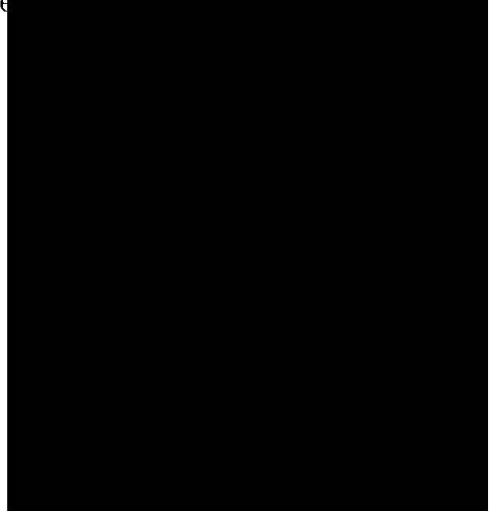
Even today, the report is unlikely to dispel the convictions of thousands of British UFO-believers, despite a collapse in the number of

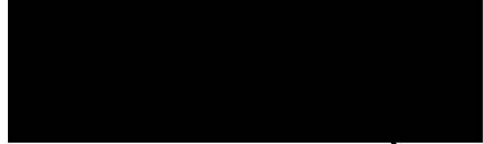
sightings and the closure earlier this year of the British Flying Saucer Bureau. 'Believers will say that this report is fake or a decoy and that the Government is still hiding something. You cannot win,' said Roberts.

The explanation Roberts and Clarke offer for UFOs is more prosaic than the conspiracy theories of secret alien contact. It lies in mass hysteria. They believe the true importance of the UFO phenomenon lies in the fact that it was an urban myth that gained enough public power to panic the highest echelons of British government - all the way to Winston Churchill.

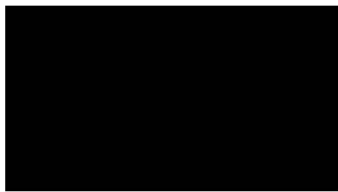
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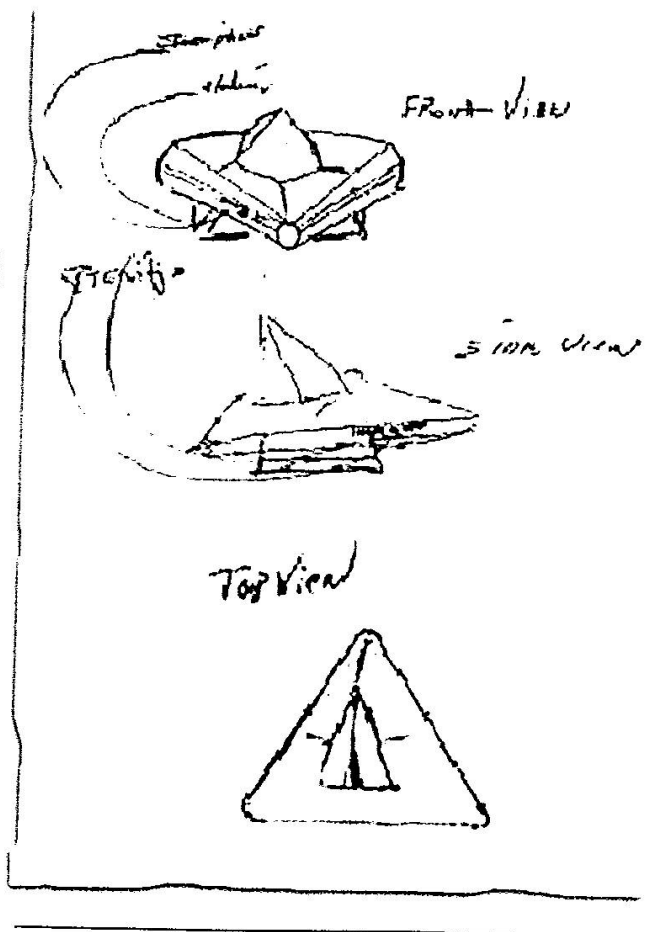
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# Rendlesham revealed

BRITAIN'S MOST FAMOUS UFO CASE OCCURRED ONE NIGHT IN 1980 WHEN SOME AMERICAN AIRMEN ENCOUNTERED A GLOWING CRAFT IN A SUFFOLK WOOD. **JAMES EASTON** BELIEVES THAT RECENTLY RELEASED GOVERNMENT PAPERS SHOW THE UFO BELIEVERS WERE WAY OFF THE MARK ABOUT RENDLESHAM.

## SUSPICIONS WERE THAT THE MOD NOT ONLY KNEW THE TRUTH BUT WAS COVERING IT UP

Jim Penniston claims he drew these UFO sketches at the time of the incident.



AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY  
**JAMES EASTON**

has reinvestigated many classic UFO cases, including the Kenneth Arnold sighting (FT137:34-39), and runs the Internet-based discussion forum - the 'UFO Research List' - focusing on military black projects.

On two nights in December 1980, just after Christmas, strange lights were seen in Rendlesham forest, Suffolk, adjacent to the RAF Bentwaters and RAF Woodbridge airbases. The twin-base complex was operated by the American military as part of NATO's front-line defences. On both occasions, American personnel left the Bentwaters base to investigate the mysterious lights in the belief that an aircraft might have crashed. Disoriented and puzzled, their testimony, given sometime afterwards, has contributed to a widespread belief that the airmen had a close encounter with a UFO.

While it was known that the Deputy Base Commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Halt, had sent a memo to the Ministry of Defence (MoD) about the disturbing incidents, he never received any official reply and the Ministry's subsequent denial of - or at least silence on - the incidents fuelled suspicions among UFO believers that the MoD not only knew the truth about UFOs but was covering up prominent cases. The Rendlesham encounters and Col Halt's memo, they argued, established that definitively.

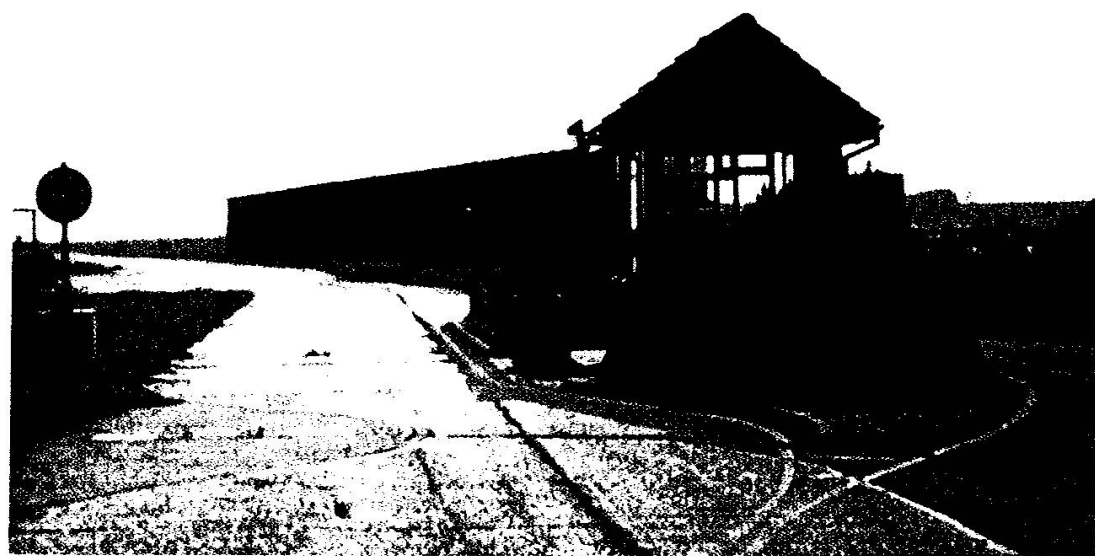
At long last, the Ministry of Defence has released its file on Rendlesham; in 155 pages, it chronicles the Ministry's own investigations of what happened on those two December nights 21 years ago. Unfortunately, for both conspiracy aficionados and UFO buffs, what is revealed by the MoD's internal documents could not be further removed from the 'cover up' of an alien visitation.

The 'close encounter' first made headlines in 1983 when American researcher Robert Todd discovered the existence of Col Halt's memo to the MoD and informed the UFO community. In the United States - where ufologists have had a long and successful run of requesting the release of government and military documents under their Freedom of Information Act - Todd decided, in 1983, to make a speculative enquiry about the Rendlesham incidents. In time, he received a response from the 513th Combat Support Group (CSG), which provided document management services to the Third Air Force; they had located a copy of the 'Halt memo'. As the USAF's own copy had been "properly disposed of in accordance with Air Force Regulations," the copy now provided to Todd had been obtained by the CSG directly from the British government. <sup>1</sup>

In April 1983, when British ufologist Jenny Randles and fellow investigators put questions to MoD department DS8, it was confirmed to them that "USAF personnel did see unusual lights" at RAF Woodbridge, but they were ambivalent about the existence of the memo from the commander of an American base on British soil - a document whose existence DS8 could not confirm or give Jenny permission to view, and yet here was Jenny in the MoD waving a copy she had obtained from Todd. This silence - or at least, reticence - was interpreted as a denial, giving rise to the view that 'something' was being concealed.

However, the MoD was indeed keeping a file on Rendlesham and now, thanks to the diligence of UFO historian and forerunner researcher Dr David Clarke, it was released to him in May 2001. Clarke explains: "Towards the end of the year 2000, an application was made under the present Code of Practice on Access to Government Information for a copy of the file, assembled by

JAMES EASTON



EAST GATE: The guardhouse. Below: Col. Halt

Secretariat Air Staff 2a (the successor to DS8) on the Rendlesham Forest UFO incident. In addition, a search was requested of other files that might contain documents relevant to the report from RAF Bentwaters."

"According to the Ministry, the majority of the papers contained within came from one file that was assembled some time after the alleged event that opened with Halt's memo and largely consisted of correspondence. Because the file appeared incomplete, the MoD carried out a search to identify any other relevant papers from 'UFO' files covering the same period, 1981-2. This search located a number of other documents relating to the incident that have now been placed within the original file opened in 1982."

In his memo, Halt describes the two events from his own recollection. On the first occasion, he writes, three patrolmen were given permission to investigate a possible air crash "outside the back gate" of the Bentwaters base, adjacent to Rendlesham Forest. The patrolmen, Halt says, reported encountering a "strange glowing object in the forest," which was "metallic in appearance and triangular in shape, approximately two to three metres (7-10ft) across the base and approximately two metres high." The object, according to Halt, "had a pulsing red light on top and a bank(s) of blue lights underneath" and was "hovering or on legs." As the patrolmen approached, the object "manoeuvred through the trees and disappeared."

The next night, Halt and others witnessed more "strange lights" they could not explain. "A red sun-like light was seen through the trees. It moved about and pulsed," he wrote. As both incidents centred on Rendlesham Forest and as this was outside the jurisdiction of the US Air Force, Halt says it had been deemed a matter for the Ministry to investigate. Halt never received any confirmation of receipt or further instructions.

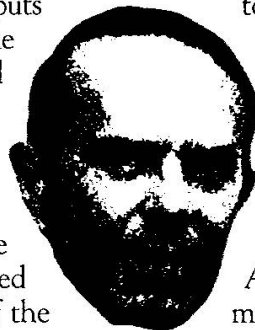
In the following years, the Rendlesham case received enormous publicity, being endlessly cited in a stream of books and TV documentaries as a 'double whammy', evidence of both the existence of UFOs and of a high-level cover-up. However, as time went by, a growing number of ufologists became

## A RED, SUN-LIKE LIGHT WAS SEEN THROUGH THE TREES

convinced this 'most famous British UFO case' was fundamentally flawed.

The first impression given by the newly-released MoD file is that it puts paid to the accusation that the British government was engaged in a 'UFO cover-up'. This historic, official 'UFO' file – containing over 150 'secret' documents, demonstrates that the MoD did in fact spend some time investigating those purported 'Rendlesham forest UFOs' even if the results seem pretty lacklustre.

One of the first and most important results is independent confirmation of the dates of the two 'UFO' incidents: the first beginning at around 0300 on the morning of 26 December and the second in night/early

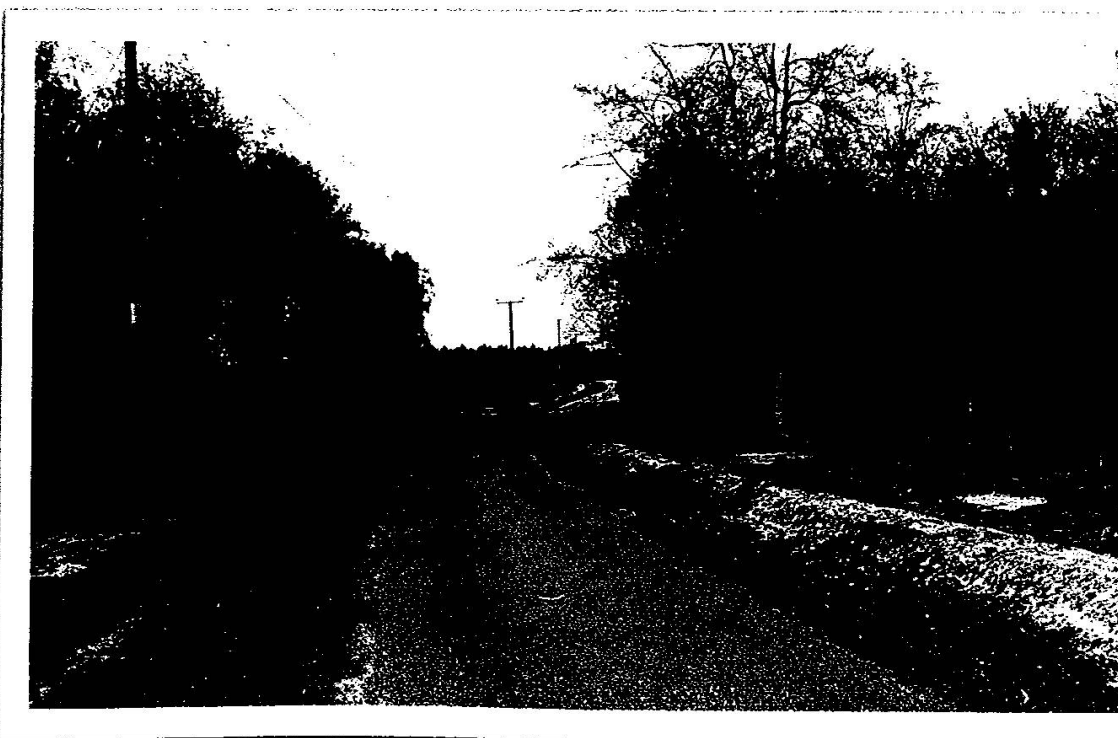


morning of 27/28 December. (Halt erroneously records these as 27 and 29/30 December respectively.) Astonishingly, the file includes a letter from science writer and astronomer Ian Ridpath to DS8 in 1983 alerting them to the fact that Col Halt had recorded erroneous dates in his memo – dates that could have been confirmed, as Ridpath had found, from local police records. When DS8 wrote to an RAF officer at the base to check Ridpath's claim, the officer chose to accept Halt's dates over Ridpath's. As Dr Clarke notes: "The MoD's assessment that the UFO events reported to them by Lt Col Halt were of "no defence significance" was flawed because their analysis of radar data was concentrated upon incorrect dates!"

How could Halt have been so mistaken? It's a question which I may be the only person ever to have raised, albeit by proxy. On 13 May 1997, American journalist Salley Rayl interviewed Halt and kindly asked on my behalf: "We received an e-mail earlier in the day from a fellow by the name of James Easton who lives in Scotland and apparently has been researching this case during recent months. One thing that he mentioned, and a question that I would like to pass on to you, is why have there been variances in the dates given for both incidents? Your memo claims that the dates were on the evening/early morning of the 26th/ 27th and 29th/30th of December, respectively. But elsewhere, in interviews, the dates have been given as 25 to 26 and 28 to 29, he says. So why, why are there differences in those dates?"

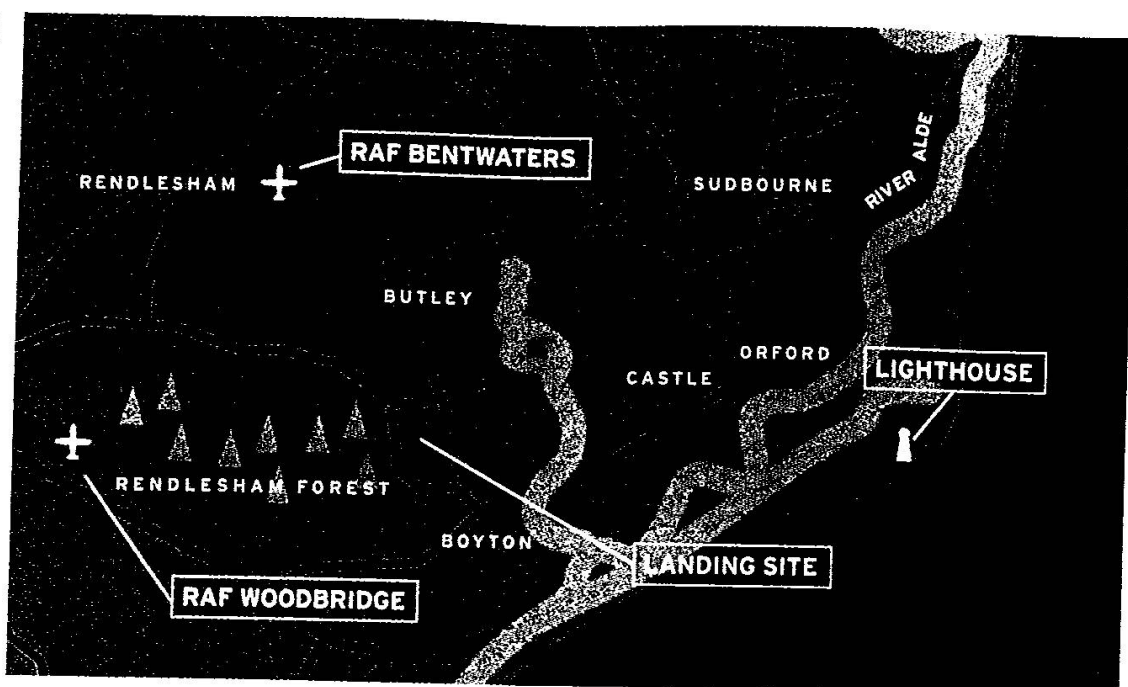
Halt replied: "Well, I tried to go back and recover the police blotter and the security blotter – I think I mentioned to you earlier – to reaffirm the dates. Keep in mind, I wrote the memo several weeks later. And it was not a really important memo. The date was not critical. The critical portion was, you know, what happened and are you interested? And how about getting involved and let's investigate this. It's possible that I, I put the date down wrong. But I don't believe so. I tried to verify later and the police blotters had been taken

COURTESY QUEST INTERNATIONAL



ALIEN HIGHWAY: The main road through Rendlesham forest just before it reaches 'East gate'.

JAMES EASTON



Unexplained Lights  
RAF/C

1. Early in the morning of 23 Dec 80 (approximately 0300), two USAF security police patrolmen saw unusual lights outside the back gate at RAF Woodbridge. Thinking an aircraft might have crashed or been forced down, they called for permission to go outside the gate to investigate. The on-duty flight chief responded and allowed three patrolmen to proceed on foot. The individuals reported seeing a strange glowing object in the forest. The object was described as being metallic in appearance and triangular in shape, approximately two to three metres across the base and approximately two metres high. It illuminated the entire forest with a white light. The object itself had a pulsing red light on top and a bank(s) of blue lights underneath. The object was hovering or on legs. As the patrolmen approached the object, it manoeuvred through the trees and disappeared. At this time the animals on a nearby farm went into a frenzy. The object was briefly sighted approximately an hour later near the back gate.

2. The next day, three depressions 1 1/2" deep and 2" in diameter were found where the object had been sighted on the ground. The following night (29 Dec 80) the area was checked for radiation. Beta/gamma readings of 0.1 milliroentgens were recorded with peak readings in the three depressions and near the center of the triangle formed by the depressions. A nearby tree had moderate (.05-.07) readings on the side of the tree toward the depressions.

3. Later in the night a red sun-like light was seen through the trees. It moved about and pulsed. At one point it appeared to three off glowing particles and then broke into five separate white objects and then disappeared. Immediately thereafter, three star-like objects were noticed in the sky, two objects to the north and one to the south, all of which were about 10° off the horizon. The objects moved rapidly in sharp angular movements and displayed red, green and blue lights. The objects to the north appeared to be elliptical through an 8-12 power lens. They then turned to full circles. The object to the south was visible for two or three hours and beamed down a stream of light from time to time. Numerous individuals, including the undersigned, witnessed the activities in paragraphs 2 and 3.

*[Signature]*  
CHARLES L. HAIT, Lt Col, USAF  
Deputy Base Commander

NOWT SO QUEER AS SUFFOLK: a map indicating the various locations involved in the Rendlesham incident. Right: The 'Halt memo'. Below: Staff-Sergeant Jim Penniston, the patrolman who claimed he saw a 'metallic object'

from the repository, probably by a, how shall I say, curiosity seeker..."

Halt didn't take statements from any of the witnesses until a full week after the events. He told Sally Rayl that this delay was due to the holiday period: "Around New Year's Eve, I took statements and interviewed the men who had taken part in the initial incident." I acquired these statements in 1998 and revealed them first, exclusively, on the Internet.<sup>2</sup> Four of the five statements agree and verify the date of the first incident as 26 December, so there should never have been any confusion. If, as Halt stated to Rayl, he attempted to substantiate the correct dates before sending his memo, why did he not refer to the testimonies he had personally obtained from the witnesses?

In his memo, Halt informed the Ministry that following a sighting of "unusual lights outside the back gate at RAF Woodbridge" a patrol was allowed off-base to "check it out." He wrote: "Thinking an aircraft might have crashed or been forced down, they called for permission to go outside the gate to investigate. The on-duty flight chief responded and allowed three patrolmen to proceed on foot. The individuals reported seeing a strange glowing object in the forest."

**A**ccording to the statement of one of the three patrolmen, Airman Ed Cabansag, it seems the "strange glowing object" was a farmhouse. The group had entered the forest thinking "it had to be an aircraft accident" and walked at least two miles (3.2km), trying to get to a vantage point that would clarify this light in the distance. "Our route through the forest and field was a direct one, straight towards the light," he continues. "We figured the lights were coming from past the forest, since nothing was visible as we passed through the woody forest. We could see a glowing near the beacon light, but as we got closer we found it to be a lit-up farmhouse."

Indeed, it was the same 'glowing farmhouse' at Capel Green which alarmed Halt during the second incident. When the 'UFO' was reported again the next night, he ventured into Rendlesham forest in search of



JIM PENNISTON

## THE WINDOWS WERE ALL BRIGHT RED AND FLICKERING

it. As he recalled in the interview with Salley Rayl: "We had also noticed that the farmer's house appeared to be glowing, as though there were a fire inside. All the windows were bright red and sort of flickering and I was quite concerned for the occupants of the house."

During the past year, local researcher Robert McLean managed to retrace, on more than one occasion, Halt's route from the microcassette notes Halt made in the forest that night. McLean easily located the same farmhouse and was able to see for himself the 'house on fire effect'. It is, he says, "quite an effective illusion" but is only a result of local lighting conditions.

Halt's memo goes on to describe the "beacon light": "The object was described as being metallic in appearance and triangular in shape, approximately two to three metres across the base and approximately two metres high. It illuminated the entire forest with a white light. The object itself had a pulsing red light on top and a bank(s) of blue lights underneath. The object was hovering or on legs. As the patrolmen approached the object, it manoeuvred through the trees and disappeared. At this time the animals on a nearby farm went into a frenzy. The object was briefly sighted approximately an hour later near the back gate."

The testimony of the three security patrolmen seems to be at odds with Halt's account. Not one of them describes a 'triangular-shaped' object in their statements. Staff-Sergeant Jim Penniston was the only one who claimed to have seen what he believed to be a metallic object, associated with the 'lights'. His original written account describes

how he was never able to get closer than 50 metres (160ft) to the elusive source, which his accompanying sketch clearly showed to be 'box-shaped'. Penniston's account changed radically after he underwent 'regressive hypnosis'. Contrary to his earlier testimony, he began to claim the 'object' was 'triangular-shaped'.

Significantly, however, the final member of that patrol, Airman First Class John Burroughs, was adamant they never observed a 'craft', merely some lights which implied an object was there. Cabansag's statement refers only to some unfamiliar lights, the origin of which was never resolved, except for the "beacon light" – quite a different scenario from the one outlined in Halt's memo. (When I contacted him recently, John Burroughs still maintains they saw only some anomalous lights.)

In popular retellings of the Rendlesham encounters, the lights are said to manoeuvre through the trees before disappearing. But, as explained in Burroughs' statement, the patrolmen saw the lights next to a farmhouse before they were lost from sight: "We got up to a fence that separated the trees from the open field and you could see the lights down by a farmer's house. We climbed over the fence and started heading towards the red and blue lights and they just disappeared. Once we reached the farmer's house we could see a beacon going around, so we went towards it. We followed it for about two miles before we could see it was coming from a lighthouse." Then, said Burroughs, "We had just crossed a creek and were told to come back when we saw a blue light to our left in the trees. It was only there for a minute and it just streaked away. After that, we didn't see anything so we returned to the truck."

Conspicuously absent in Halt's memo is the story of how that lighthouse played a role in those first and formative 'UFO' perceptions. The "blue light" which seemed to "streak away" is the sole basis for Halt's contention that, "The object was briefly sighted approximately an hour later near the back gate." If the Ministry had also been advised by Halt that the tiny pulsating light (confirmed by Halt to Sally Rayl) he personally observed within Rendlesham forest, was seen again "clear off to the coast" (documented in his microcassette recording), the entire context

of these 'UFO' alarms might have become more evident.

In the memo, Halt also drew attention to radiation readings taken at what was believed to be the first night's 'UFO landing site'. We can now see from the MoD's file that they wasted time on this. It's long been demonstrated that the levels were minuscule. In fact, Halt himself records incidental 'radiation readings' from a nearby field which were higher than most of the 'landing site' readings.

Understandably, Halt's 'official UFO report' created much excitement and optimism in the 'UFO community'. Ostensibly, it threatened to blow apart the MoD 'UFO conspiracy', and the speculation was fuelled by Penniston's increasingly elaborate recollections under 'hypnotic regression'. He now claimed to have examined a landed 'craft' at his leisure for 20 minutes. In contrast, his fellow patrolman John Burroughs resolutely maintains: "I never saw anything metallic or anything hard." Again: "We did not see a structured 'craft'... all we saw were lights that seemed to imply a structure of some kind."

This divergence in the eyewitness testimony rarely featured in the more enthusiastic media reports. The story's factual genesis was confused further by the publication of *Left at East Gate* (1997) by ex-USAF airman Larry Warren, who claimed to have been directly involved with others in a dramatic 'close encounter' during the UFO incursions. Halt and Penniston were, however, scathing of Warren's assertions; in Warren's original account he claimed only that he had heard about the 'UFO' tales while stationed on the base, but later, after 'hypnotic regression' he too was claiming a closer contact.

Warren referred to his designated UFO 'landing site' as momentous physical evidence of UFO visitation. The photographs in his book describe the location as: "Capel Green, site of the incident. Craft's point of contact clearly visible as discolored area..." and "Capel

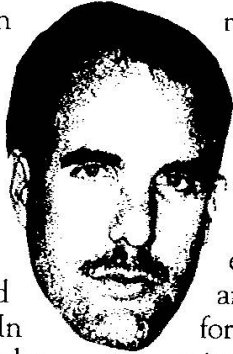
Green, 1995, showing landing site still blighted 15 years after Larry Warren's experience."

Robert McLean has been able to locate Larry Warren's purported landing area, using the visual clues in Warren's CD, also called *Left at East Gate*. McLean also obtained aerial shots of the locale and one of these, taken by the RAF, depicts Warren's 'UFO landing site' in detail. It shows some discoloured areas – one of which appears to be circular – in the field. However, this RAF aerial photograph was taken in 1953 (27 years earlier) and the marks are interpreted by experienced aerial reconnaissance folk as typical patterns in crops caused by underground ruins... not evidence of an alien spaceship landing.

In a new development, there's a possible explanation which seems to account for UFO-like impressions experienced by Burroughs, Cabansag and Penniston. Ultimately, the catalyst for all that followed was the 'UFO' they witnessed, and the source of those enigmatic lights was found near a farmhouse. Recall Burroughs' statement: "We got up to a fence that separated the trees from the open field and you could see the lights down by a farmers house. We climbed over the fence and started heading towards the red and blue lights and they just disappeared."

In a sketch which depicted the triangular-shaped light formation, Burroughs clarified that the top red light, which resembled a beacon, was "red and orange." Especially prominent was white light which projected downwards from the source. It occurred to me that I had seen something similar... the field lights used by a

## IT WASN'T UNTIL IT MOVED OFF THAT WE SAW IT WAS A TRACTOR



tractor at night. As it moved around a large field, delivering food to cattle in an otherwise dark landscape, the numerous top and side lights created a spectacular display and on top was an amber beacon 'warning' light.

Former Senior Airman Kenneth Greene, stationed at RAF Bentwaters, recently told me about the 'UFO' which he and a fellow servicemen encountered, in 1978, on their way to Bentwaters one night for the midnight shift. "I was living off base at the time in a small town called Darsham, near Saxmundham, Suffolk. My room mate and I were on a small country road and as we came round a curve there was a small triangular object, about eight feet (2.4m) in height, stopped in middle of the road. This object had a small flashing orange beacon on top and bright white lights emanating from it at various points."

"Our immediate thought was that it was a UFO, but it turned out to be a very small farm tractor. The top width was shorter than the bottom width and the two sides slightly angled up toward the top. This shape was actually the operator's compartment. However, viewing this at night when the white lights were on created an initial impression of a 'triangle'. It wasn't until the operator extinguished some of the lights and moved off the road that we realized it was a tractor."

Could this have been what was witnessed by the USAF patrol, stressed after their long chase through the dark forest, by the glowing farm, sparking off the UK's most famous 'UFO' affair?

We may never know for sure. However, in the first book written about this case – *Sky Crash* (1984) co-authored by Jenny Randles, Brenda Butler and Dot Street – Jenny writes of Butler and Street's visit to the site, within a couple of months of the UFO events: "Brenda and Dot were directed to see a Mr Brown, who owns a house about three quarters of a mile [1,200m] further down the path which skirts the field... He had a large pink house with plenty of old huts around the back, and a tractor standing idle... He abruptly pointed out that he knew nothing about a UFO."<sup>3</sup>

In fact, he might have known a lot more about it than he realised! [7]

### NOTES

1. Larry Fawcett & Barry Greenwood, *Clear Intent* (Prentice Hall, 1984, pp 217-218).
2. James Easton, *Rendlesham Unravalled* (1998). See: [www.rendlesham.com](http://www.rendlesham.com)
3. Jenny Randles, Brenda Butler & Dot Street, *Sky Crash* (Neville Spearman, 1984, p 47).

### RESOURCES

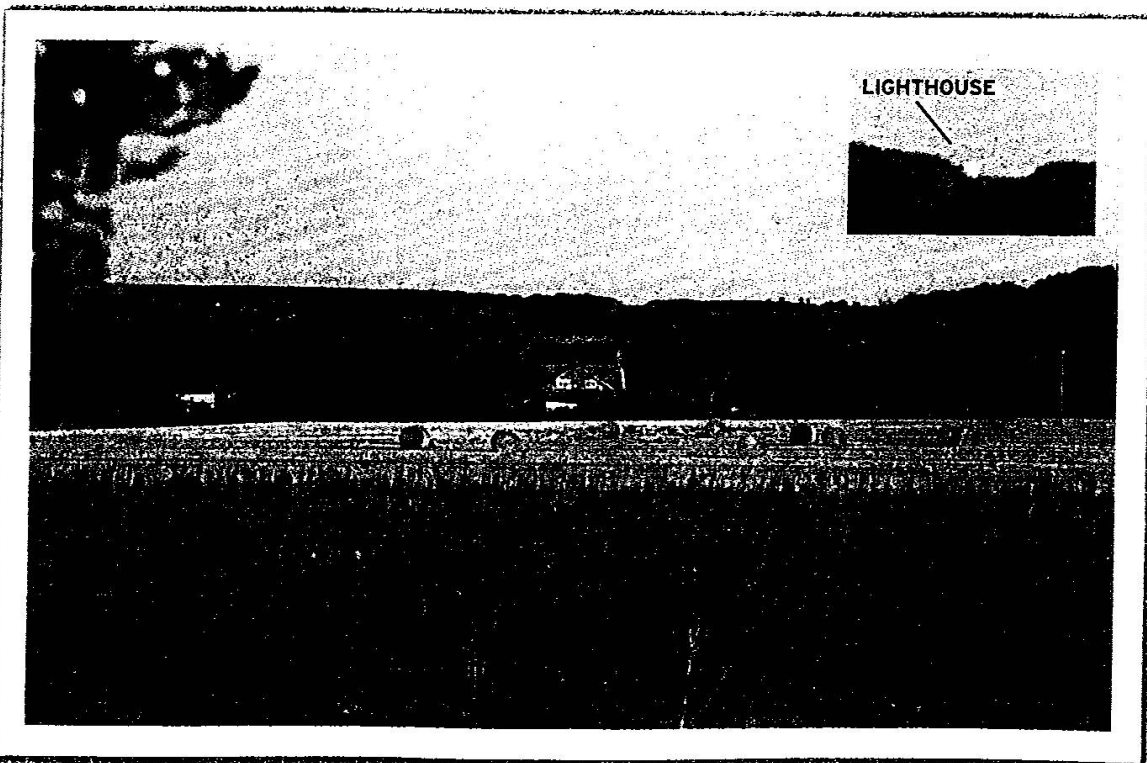
#### ● RECOMMENDED READING

SKY CRASH: A COSMIC CONSPIRACY (1984)  
Brenda Butler, Dot Street and Jenny Randles

AND NOT SO RECOMMENDED...  
LEFT AT EAST GATE (1997)  
Larry Warren

#### ■ RECOMMENDED SURFING

[www.rendlesham.com](http://www.rendlesham.com)  
James Easton's definitive website on the subject



TO THE LIGHTHOUSE: A view from the forest edge near where Col. Halt saw a flashing 'UFO'.  
Top: John F Burroughs - saw anomalous lights.

# TELLING THE PEOPLE

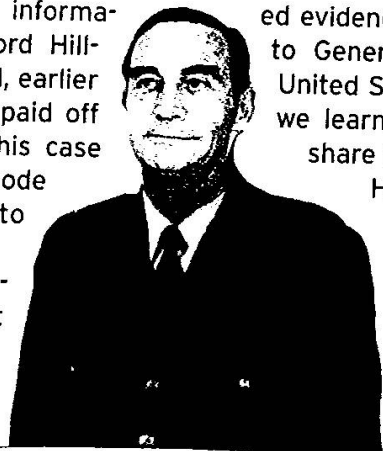
THE ISSUES RAISED BY THE RENDLESHAM CASE HAVE SPLIT THE UFO COMMUNITY. WHILE JAMES EASTON REPRESENTS A PRAGMATIC VIEWPOINT BASED UPON THE FACE VALUE OF WHAT FEW FACTS CAN BE ESTABLISHED, THERE IS A THRIVING OPPOSITION WHICH BELIEVES THE SAME DATA SUPPORTS THE THEORY THAT UFOS HOVERED OVER THE NATO INSTALLATIONS FOR ALMOST FIVE HOURS AND LANDED IN THE NEARBY FOREST. GEORGINA BRUNI BELIEVES THAT MEMBERS OF THE USAF, STATIONED AT THE TWIN RAF BASES IN SUFFOLK, DID ENCOUNTER UFOS DURING THAT CHRISTMAS WEEK IN 1980.

Unlike most UFO reports, there is official evidence in the public domain to prove that the Rendlesham Forest incident was genuine. The first real evidence emerged in 1983, when an American research group obtained a document released through the Freedom of Information Act. This was a memorandum authored by Lieutenant Colonel Charles Halt, the Deputy Base Commander, himself a witness to one of the events. The document, which was sent to the MoD soon after the incident, described how military witnesses encountered a triangular-shaped object in Rendlesham Forest, on the perimeter of RAF Woodbridge, and explained that radiation readings were taken at the landing site.

More evidence surfaced in 1984 when Colonel Sam Morgan, the then base commander, sent copies of a tape recording to British researchers. The tape, which was made by Halt during one of the events, confirmed that radiation readings were taken at the landing site, that indentations were found in the ground where an object was said to have landed, and that the patrol encountered UFOs. During research for my book *You Can't Tell The People: The Definitive Account of the Rendlesham Forest UFO Incident* (Sidgwick & Jackson, 2000), I located USAF photographs taken at the landing site the morning after the initial event. These photographs feature USAF personnel and British police examining the ground indentations as described in Halt's recording.

I've worked on this case for five years and have been frustrated by the way in which the MoD and USAF have played down the incident, claiming it was of "no defence significance". I'm not alone in my frustration. Former Chief of the Defence Staff Lord Hill-Norton (below) has been trying to get answers since 1983. He has tabled 16 Questions in Parliament this year: Questions that concern the case as presented in my book. The answers were not convincing, even though great pressure was put on Baroness Symons, Minister of State for Defence Procurement, to release information on the case. But Lord Hill-Norton did not give up and, earlier this year, his persistence paid off when the MoD's file on this case was released under the 'Code of Practice on Access to Government Information'.

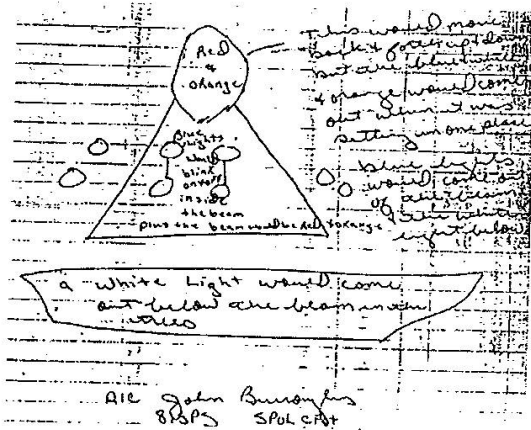
There are numerous documents in the file, the most important of which are the



BIG CHIEF: Hill-Norton



SCORCHED EARTH: A Police officer and Capt. Mike Verrano examine the landing site. Bottom: John Burroughs' UFO drawing.



## TAPE RECORDED EVIDENCE WAS HANDED TO THE CHIEF OF THE USAF IN EUROPE

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Although there are a number of missing documents and no further information concerning what transpired once DIS became more involved, I consider the file to be extremely important. Nick Pope - who worked in Secretariat (Air Staff) for three years - agrees. He told me: "These revelations are sensational, and I'm sure there will be pressure for an inquiry into both the incident itself and the subsequent actions of both the MoD and the USAF."

It's unlikely there will ever be a Public Inquiry, but efforts are being made to obtain more information, both from the MoD and the USAF.

### COMPETITION

Thanks to the kind folks at PAN MACMILLAN we have 10 copies of *You Can't Tell the People* to give away. To win one, just tell us WHEREABOUTS IN SUFFOLK (AND NOT FAR FROM RENDLESHAM FOREST) WAS A MERMAN ONCE CAUGHT?

Send answers on a postcard to: RENDLESHAM COMPETITION, *Fortean Times*, IFG Ltd, 9 Dallington Street, London EC1V 0BQ



# TELLING THE PEOPLE

THE ISSUES RAISED BY THE RENDLESHAM CASE HAVE SPLIT THE UFO COMMUNITY. WHILE JAMES EASTON REPRESENTS A PRAGMATIC VIEWPOINT BASED UPON THE FACE VALUE OF WHAT FEW FACTS CAN BE ESTABLISHED, THERE IS A THRIVING OPPOSITION WHICH BELIEVES THE SAME DATA SUPPORTS THE THEORY THAT UFOS HOVERED OVER THE NATO INSTALLATIONS FOR ALMOST FIVE HOURS AND LANDED IN THE NEARBY FOREST. GEORGINA BRUNI BELIEVES THAT MEMBERS OF THE USAF, STATIONED AT THE TWIN RAF BASES IN SUFFOLK, DID ENCOUNTER UFOS DURING THAT CHRISTMAS WEEK IN 1980.

Unlike most UFO reports, there is official evidence in the public domain to prove that the Rendlesham Forest incident was genuine. The first real evidence emerged in 1983, when an American research group obtained a document released through the Freedom of Information Act. This was a memorandum authored by Lieutenant Colonel Charles Halt, the Deputy Base Commander, himself a witness to one of the events. The document, which was sent to the MoD soon after the incident, described how military witnesses encountered a triangular-shaped object in Rendlesham Forest, on the perimeter of RAF Woodbridge, and explained that radiation readings were taken at the landing site.

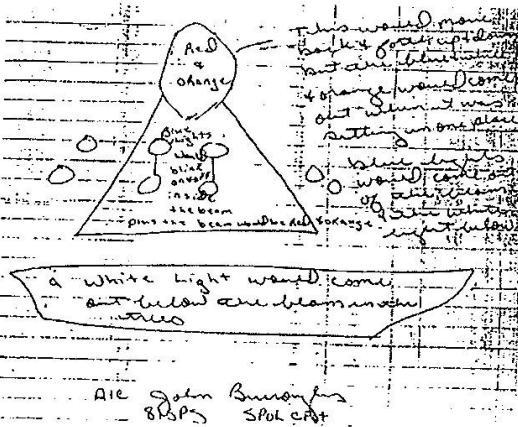
More evidence surfaced in 1984 when Colonel Sam Morgan, the then base commander, sent copies of a tape recording to British researchers. The tape, which was made by Halt during one of the events, confirmed that radiation readings were taken at the landing site, that indentations were found in the ground where an object was said to have landed, and that the patrol encountered UFOs. During research for my book *You Can't Tell The People: The Definitive Account of the Rendlesham Forest UFO Incident* (Sidgwick & Jackson, 2000), I located USAF photographs taken at the landing site the morning after the initial event. These photographs feature USAF personnel and British police examining the ground indentations as described in Halt's recording.

I've worked on this case for five years and have been frustrated by the way in which the MoD and USAF have played down the incident, claiming it was of "no defence significance". I'm not alone in my frustration. Former Chief of the Defence Staff Lord Hill-Norton (below) has been trying to get answers since 1983. He has tabled 16 Questions in Parliament this year: Questions that concern the case as presented in my book. The answers were not convincing, even though great pressure was put on Baroness Symons, Minister of State for Defence Procurement, to release information on the case. But Lord Hill-Norton did not give up and, earlier this year, his persistence paid off when the MoD's file on this case was released under the 'Code of Practice on Access to Government Information'.

There are numerous documents in the file, the most important of which are the



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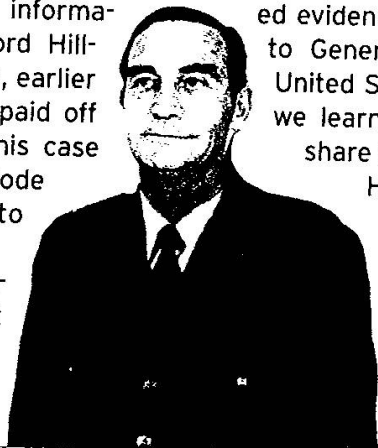


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BIG CHIEF: Hill-Norton

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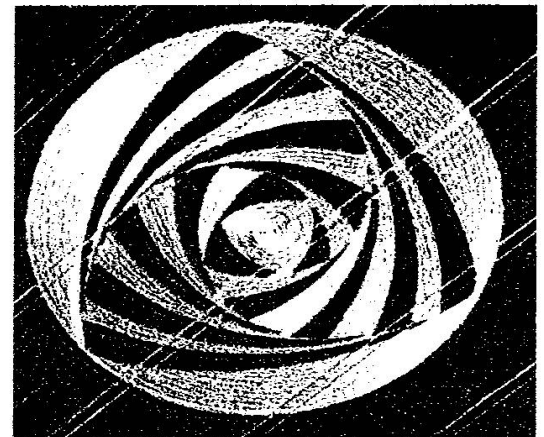
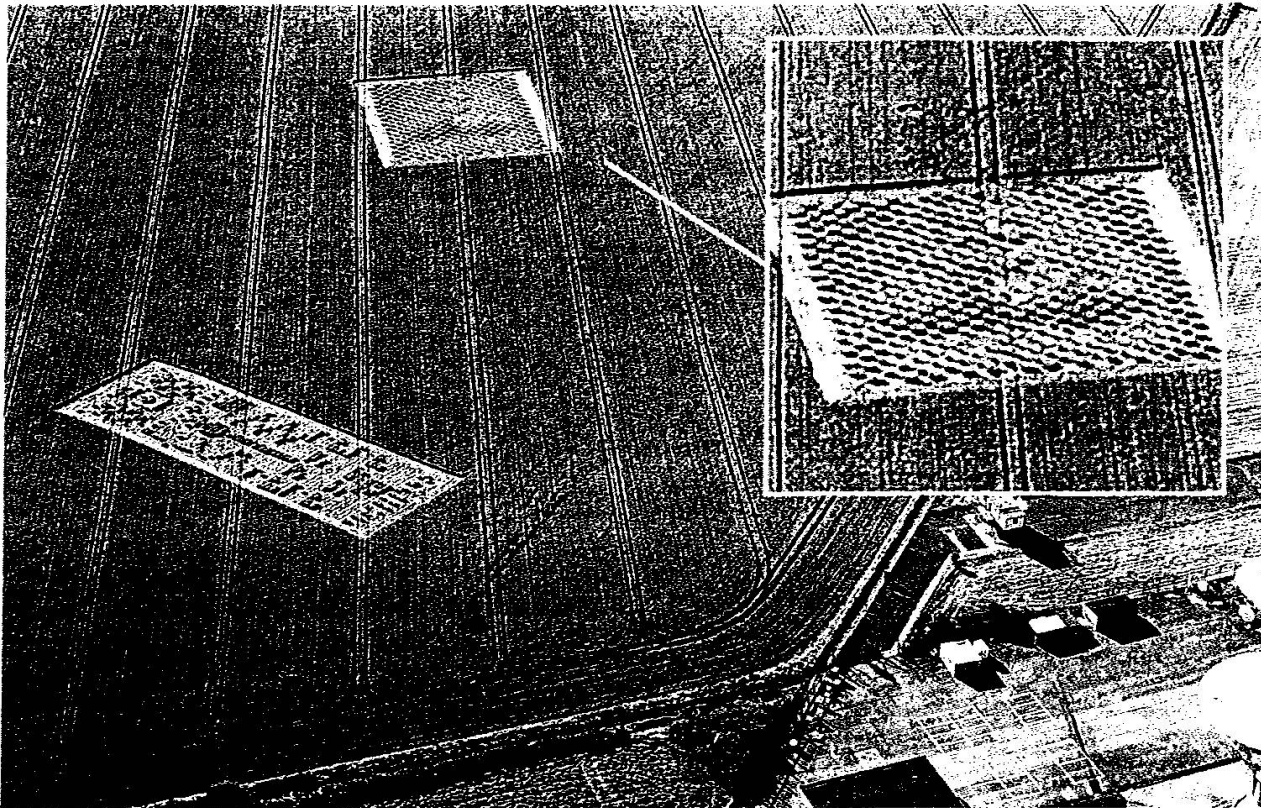
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# AHEAD OF THE FIELD...

MARK PILKINGTON REVIEWS THE PICK OF THIS SUMMER'S LATE CROP OF CIRCLES. PHOTOS BY STEVE ALEXANDER.



Above - BARROWDEN, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE: One of the year's other impressive creations.

Left - CHILBOLTON, HAMPSHIRE: The Aricebo formation sent the nation's press into a circle frenzy.

Right - MILK HILL, WILTSHIRE: The megaglyph, also known as the Galaxy. It has been called the "mother and father of all crop circles" and is almost a thousand feet in diameter.

As another summer fades, so another crop circle-making season closes. This year, however, things have been rather different, with initial apathy turning to awe and a resulting media frenzy not seen since the heady days of the early 1990s.

Things got off to a fairly bleak start. Restrictions imposed due to the Foot and Mouth epidemic saw any determined circle artistes facing fines of several thousand pounds – a deterrent considerably more potent than the £100 paid by Matthew Williams, who exposed himself to the law last year. Compounding the situation was the month-long delay in planting crops after one of the wettest winters on record. April, usually the month in which the season's first daubings appear, was formation-free.

The year's first circle, an impressive six-fold flower, appeared not in Wiltshire, but in a field of oil-seed rape outside Zierenberg in central Germany on 15 May. As if in immediate response, a simple concentric circle design appeared in Hampshire the next day – at last the season had begun! 25 May saw F&M restrictions lifted in Wiltshire and Hampshire, with a few relatively straightforward creations popping up in the usual places, as well as one in Bournemouth, Dorset,

conveniently situated between a theme park and the local airport.

The year's first dazzlers, a Meso-American-style maze and an intriguing, curved pyramid lens, landed in Barrowden Northamptonshire, and Berwick Bassett, Wiltshire, in the first few days of June. From then on it was a circle summer much like any other until, on the torrential night of 11-12 August, something incredible appeared on the top of Milk Hill – at 900 ft (247m) up, the highest point in the surrounding area – the first time it had been visited by the circle-makers.

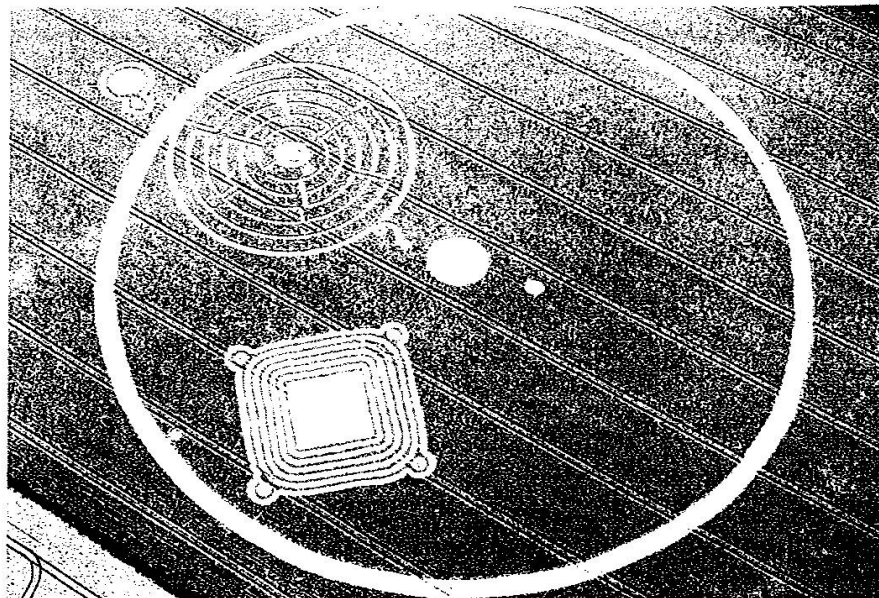
The formation, known as the 'Megaglyph', was a relatively

straightforward fractal spiral but was, at around 900 ft (274m) across, simply enormous, consisting of over 400 individual circles, some of them over 70ft (21m) in diameter. Writing in the *Guardian*, John Vidal called it "boring and predictable", but the cropy community was ecstatic. "The formation that has brought the phenomenon back to the people," cried Stuart Dike on *Crop Circle Connector*, the cropyes' online focal point, "it is the mother of all crop circles." Even veteran circle-maker John Lundberg was blown away: "I was well and truly godsmacked, I just kept returning to the image and

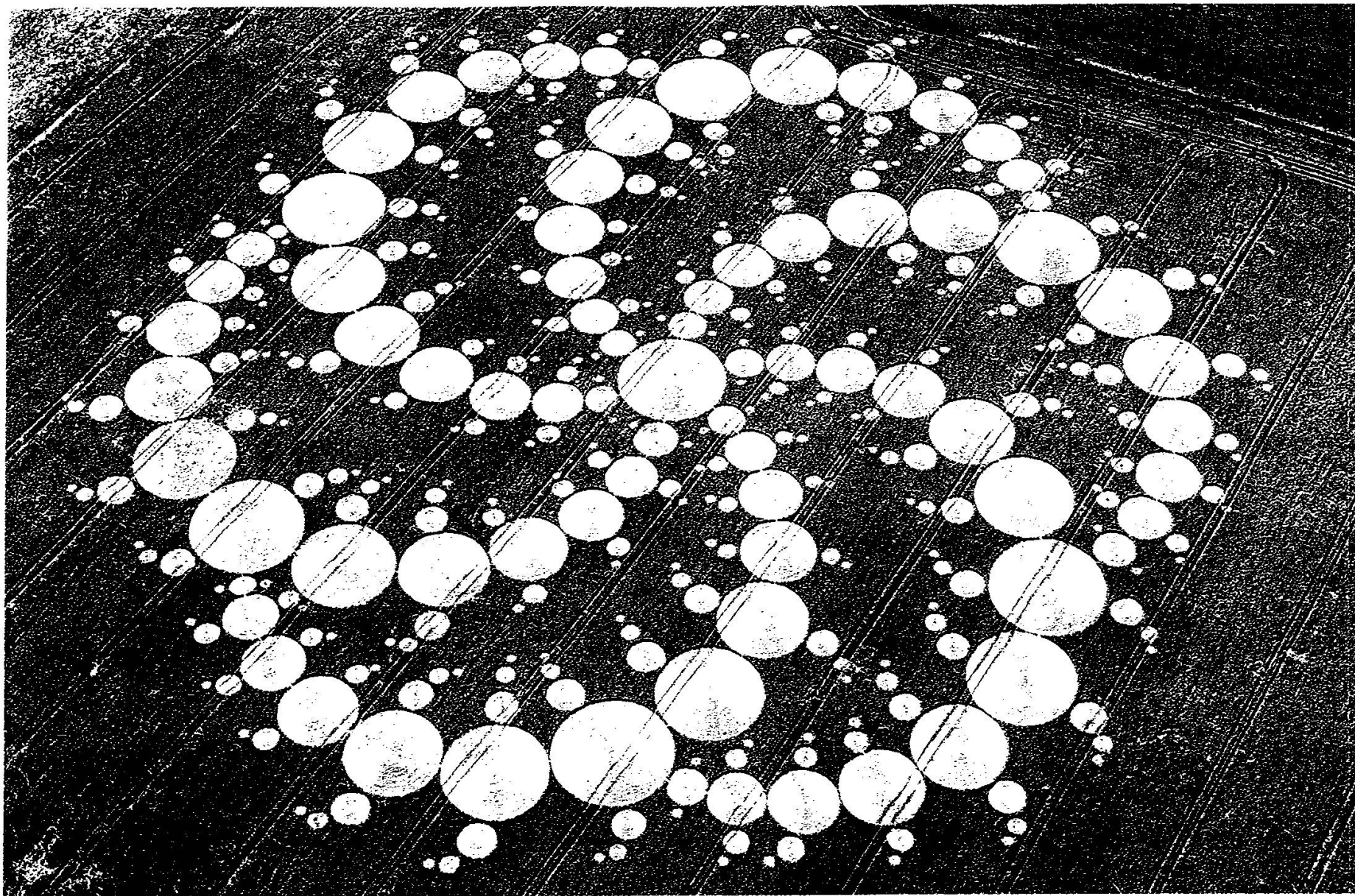
staring at it. The size of the formation was unlike anything else we'd seen in the fields before, if was off the scale!"

Perhaps the design's somewhat "retro" flavour, which harked back to the heyday of 1995/6, had something to do with the hero's welcome it received. The print and TV news media, which had ignored the phenomenon until now, were clearly overjoyed at being able to fill pages with new circle speculation. It was almost as if the past few years had never happened.

As the media onslaught continued throughout the following week, someone – or something – laid down a perfect riposte, this time in Chibolton, Hampshire, beside a radio telescope that has hosted formations several times before. One showed a humanoid face, not unlike the 'Face on Mars'. The other, dubbed the 'Aricebo Response', almost replicated the binary signal designed by astronomers Frank Drake and Carl Sagan and beamed to the star cluster M13 in 1974, from the Aricebo Observatory in Puerto Rico. The key differences were the humanoid figure's enlarged head – perhaps a reference to its supposed ET origins – and a few misplaced pieces of DNA. Naturally



GREAT SHELFORD, CAMBRIDGESHIRE: An asymmetrical formation in wheat.



these served as cues for intensely detailed analyses from croppies, even one self-professed geneticist, and, more surprisingly, a bemused response from SETI astronomer Seth Shostak. Shostak admitted to admiring the circlemakers' work, but pointed out several problems with the image, and one with the notion of a reply in itself. "M13 is 25,000 light-years distant, which means that the message will not reach its target for another 250 centuries... The crop circles are decorative, impressive, and provocative, but not informative. We can expect better from true extraterrestrial intelligence."

These formations also drew the admiration of John Michell, fortune author and ex-editor of *The Cereologist*, who pointed out the delightful proximity of the 'Aricebo Response' to the nearby interstellar observatory at Chilbolton, where some SETI programmes are carried out. "By any standards," Michell told *FT*, "the 'Face' is a great work of art, beautiful, subtle, witty, enigmatic, provocative, awesome and wonderful. It outclasses everything done by modern artists in the medium of landscape, including Smithson, Fulton, Christo, Long and Goldsworthy."

Such was the excitement surrounding these new formations that several websites had to close down as bandwidth demand far exceeded the limits of their service providers. Even the mighty Crop Circle Connector was forced to close its doors temporarily, upping its allowance from 50MB to a costly 150MB for August.

After a slowish start, it's been a remarkable year in circlemaking, with a respectable 88 formations in the UK (compared to 134 last year) and another 30 as far afield as Poland, Serbia and Israel. Veteran researcher Colin Andrews was clearly moved as he appeared on Art Bell's radio show: "There's never been a better season, this is by far the pinnacle of the last 20 years... there have been times in my work where I have privately cried to myself; it sounds extraordinary I know, but it's just so special." Thank you Colin. The phenomenon has, it seems, come full circle.

#### SOURCES

*The Guardian*, 21 Aug; *The Independent*, 26 Aug 2001;

Crop Circle Connector  
[www.cropcircleconnector.com](http://www.cropcircleconnector.com)

Circlemakers  
[www.circlemakers.org](http://www.circlemakers.org)

SETI Statement  
[www.seti.org/general/ao\\_message\\_crop.html](http://www.seti.org/general/ao_message_crop.html)

