

EXPRESS ON SUNDAY

06/05/01

**B**UT who is Greer? He is a 45-year-old medical doctor from Virginia who has spent eight years and \$5million of his own money putting together the evidence the Disclosure Project will begin to unveil next week.

It started for him at the age of eight, when he claims to have seen a UFO in broad daylight. His interest further developed when his uncle became a senior project engineer on the lunar module that took Neil Armstrong to the Moon. This gave him the insider knowledge he needed to pursue a lifetime of study into the possibility of extraterrestrial life.

Dr Greer and his small research team have spoken to witnesses all over the world, many of them high-ranking military personnel who have stated unequivocally that they have seen UFOs.

"Sceptics say they are deluded, or liars. But in any other circumstances they would be considered heroes of their country," Greer said.

"These are individuals in whose hands rest the nuclear arsenals of the world - launch control officers who we trust with the safety or destruction of our planet. Either these military men were hallucinating, or they saw what they saw."

The chilling truth, as Dr Greer sees it, is that the testimony of his military witnesses will show that the US and other countries have engaged "extraterrestrial vehicles" in armed attack.

"If there is even a 10 per cent chance that this is true, then this constitutes the gravest threat to world peace in human history," he says.

His witnesses are impressive. They include Britain's former Chief of Defence Staff, Admiral Lord Hill Norton, who states in his testimony, "...that 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. This should be the subject of rigorous scientific investigation."

The consensus among those in the know, says Greer, is that we

are not facing hostility from extraterrestrials. He is extremely concerned, therefore, about President Bush's announcement that he is going ahead with NMDS, the National Missile Defence System, a hi-tech space defence shield.

"Our visitors may be quite neutral but they may not be so happy about our military adventures," he says.

**A**CCORDING to Dr Greer, secrecy is preventing the world from entering into an informed debate about NMDS; not to mention environmental and energy issues. And he's talking about levels of secrecy that have even removed presidents from the loop.

"The buck supposedly stops at the Oval office, but it seems like it doesn't. Carter and Clinton were deliberately deceived - it's explosive, but we know this to be the case."

Dr Greer is aware he is making serious allegations. Why should anyone believe him? "I'm a licensed MD in two states. If I were perpetrating a hoax I would lose those licences and my livelihood. We have three attorneys here too - if they were hoaxers they would be disbarred. There's a lot at stake here."

A sceptic, Professor Archie Roy, Professor Emeritus of Astronomy at the University of Glasgow, says that although 80 per cent of UFO sightings can be identified as astronomical objects, satellites or conjunctions of planets, about 20 per cent cannot be explained away. "The whole UFO thing has developed very much but has been muddied by hoaxes," he says. "I'm not saying all cases are hoaxes but the Roswell mythology has made it pretty much impossible to get to the truth now."

So, just as the British Flying Saucer Bureau closes its doors, leaving

more than 100 similar UK groups to carry on, some experienced eyes will be turning to the USA this week.

Nick Pope, former UFO desk officer at the Ministry of Defence, says: "Those people who have genuinely been involved in government or military UFO projects undoubtedly have fascinating stories to tell. I

hope people will pay attention and realise that the UFO phenomenon raises some serious defence and national security issues."

Dr Greer hopes that "serious media interest" will provide the impetus politicians need to lobby for an official inquiry.

"All I'm asking is that we spend a fraction of the time on this that we

did on Monica Lewinsky. If only one of these witnesses is telling the truth, it's the biggest story in history."

There will be a live web cast of the press conference from 2pm on Wednesday, May 9 on [www.connectlive.com/events/disclosureproject](http://www.connectlive.com/events/disclosureproject).

● Additional reporting by Hamish MacKenzie.

SUNDAY PEOPLE

06/05/01

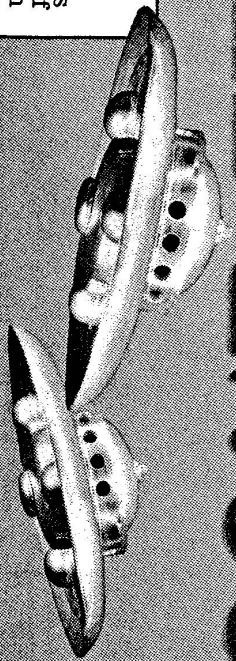
## Invasion of 600 UFOs

MORE than SIX HUNDRED flying saucers have been spotted in Britain's skies over the past three years.

Latest Ministry of Defence figures show that, in 1998, 193 UFOs were reported - with another 229 in 1998 and 210 last year.

- or not, as the unproven case may be!

# BLOODED ENBROOMTERS



Or why, after 49 years of dedicating his life to aliens, Denis Plunkett has now shut down the British Bureau for UFOs

USPICIOUSLY, it all looks terribly normal — an estate of Sixties houses and bungalows in a Bristol suburb, mostly with new plastic windows and porches. In his home, Denis Plunkett, 70, looks like an average pensioner. Neat grey hair, grey sweater, neutral trousers and brown lace-ups.

Looking normal is all part of a facade, he says laughing, but it's partly true. Denis, who once taught computer skills to the unemployed, has dedicated his life to tracking unidentified flying objects — UFOs. Outer space to him, is as well charted as his own back garden. He is certain that aliens exist and pay us visits. In fact, he is desperate for them to visit more often.

In 1952, aged 21, he founded in Britain what is now the world's oldest UFO society. However, yesterday he announced that it is closing due to lack of members prepared to turn out to meetings. They'd rather join UFO clubs on the internet than sit in draughty halls watching slides and, worse still, there's a lack of flying saucers to spot.

'We are in a trough,' he says. 'Sightings are half what they were in the Sixties. They just aren't coming here any more.' He means club members and aliens.

He takes me to his 'den', a narrow section of room next to the kitchen, where he records sightings and organised meetings. Book shelves are lined with titles such as: Flying Saucers Top Secret. We Are Not Alone, and 1956 UFO Arrival. This has chapters with headings such as White Discs At Windsor Crab-like Machine Over Long Island, Fish-shaped Object Over England, and Flying Bottle Over Kabul.

There are plastic models of aliens with the huge slanting eyes and tiny noses who rather resemble Ally McBeal and a few brightly-coloured paper spaceships made by some of his six grandchildren. As he talks, his wife Marian, 67, makes coffee. 'I've just lived with it,' she says smiling wryly. 'It's his hobby. I've got my three daughters and their children to see to.'

His phone keeps ringing. As he asks: 'Where are you speaking from?' you almost expect the reply to be Alpha Centauri or Sirius, the Dog Star.

HILE I was there, he received distressed calls from Bolivia, Belgium, Australia, and Wales. The whole world seems to be distraught that his little group, with its weekly gatherings in a Quaker meeting hall, is about to disappear.

The closing of those hall doors marks the end of an epoch, even if it is one that many of us were unaware of. After World War II, flying saucers were suddenly as common as magpies. They got their name in 1947 after an American airforce pilot reportedly saw 'skipping discs' — saucer-like shapes — in the sky.

When the US tested the hydrogen bomb a couple of years later sightings increased again because, according to UFOlogists, the blast could be seen from Mars, which alerted our extraterrestrial cousins to look at us more closely.

Between 1950 and 1960, particularly during the Korean War and throughout the later Vietnam conflict, the US airforce couldn't handle the thousands of reports of UFOs. There were more than 100,000 sightings, from 140 countries. 'The aliens came as



by Jane Kelly

observers over the battlefields,' says Denis. In 1989, especially when the Soviet empire began to implode, there was another surge of sightings. But now the Cold War is over the terrestrial, it seems being slightly voyeuristic, have buzzed off in their interstellar craft to view better scenes of death and destruction.

Indeed, there seem to be many possibilities why the little green men are now being so standoffish, or have reasons for non-contact', as Denis puts it. 'It could be just that their surveillance programme has ended. There might be a communication problem or they're afraid of destroying us,' he says. 'It's impossible to argue with any of those theories, and particularly his idea that they might also, with good reason, be reluctant to visit Earth in case they catch a disease. But, he says hopefully, when the time comes, they'll be back.'

He started his UFO group after seeing an advertisement in the Daily Mail placed by a man called Al Bender, who ran the International Flying Saucer Bureau in Connecticut. He wanted to establish representatives around the world. Denis answered his request and set up a group, but only just in time. Staffer forces were at work.

A few months later, Al was visited by three men wearing black, he says. 'They could have been aliens or men from the CIA. I don't know why, but Al lost interest overnight.'

Bravely, Denis's branch of the Flying Saucer Bureau carried on meeting at first in pubs, then in a hall at Bishopstone, near Bristol, every Thursday night, £2 at the door with tea and custard cream inclusive.

While Denis was away on National Service, his father Edgar took over. 'Strangely the men in black never once attempted to stop the meetings. We were a bit nervous, but too enthusiastic to stop,' he says. 'For 50 years all went well. We used to have very good evenings' he says sadly. 'They'd come by bus, even on wet nights, sometimes more than 400 a time. We couldn't get them all into the hall.'

Meetings were meant to last until 10 pm, but they would go on and on, which annoyed the caretaker. It is easy to imagine some of the members inside the hall going 'on and on'.

'Members were mostly men, we did have a few people in their hoodies up all evening. In the Seventies, there was a chap who used to wear card-board ears to ridicule us. But when he actually saw a UFO he took them off and apologised.'

SETTINGS were addressed by such luminaries as American George Adamski, co-author of the 1953 book, The Flying Saucers Have Landed. Adamski claimed to have been visited by two 'space brothers' from Venus, who invited him aboard their craft. He was the first man to take photos inside a mother ship, says Denis.

Following Denis's lead, more groups sprouted. 'There was rivalry,' he says. 'The Welsh groups always claimed that their sightings were better than ours.'

Denis's father had to reply to more than 30 letters a week from all over the world, bashing out lengthy replies on his old typewriter. He helped to run the group for 40 years until his death in 1992.

Denis believes he has seen a distinct change of attitude towards aliens over the past 50 years. 'In the Fifties, about 11 pc of people believed in them and thought they were big-eyed monsters with tentacles. But now more like 60 pc of people accept that they exist, particularly the young, and so they have a better image. This is reflected in films such as Star Wars and ET.'

But now more like 60 pc of people accept that they exist, particularly the young, and so they have a better image. This is reflected in films such as Star Wars and ET.'

Denis has only ever had one sighting himself. In the summer of 1966 he was just going to bed when he saw through his window nine lights hovering for an hour in the sky at the end of his garden, changing position slightly, but so quickly that he couldn't see them do it.

'I didn't take a photo as I was scared that if I looked away they would immediately disappear,' he says. 'And I was really quite transfixed.'

His obsession with UFOs really began on August 8, 1947, when his cousin Denis Harner, a radio operator on an aircraft, disappeared over the Andes 'in mysterious circumstances'.

His final message sent twice in Morse Code was 'Stendec'. Denis has interpreted this to be a corruption of the word St. Elmo, meaning St. Elmo's Fire, referring to glowing balls of electrical fire — or alien activity.

'That summer, UFOs had been seen in Chilean airspace at speeds in excess of 3,000 mph or 45 G-force,' he says. 'The idea that my cousin's death was to do with UFOs gave me the impetus to set up the club. I know that there are extraterrestrials and one day I will be proved right. 'The funny thing is,' he says,

'I've spent years quietly working away and now that I announce I am closing down I get more world-wide attention than ever before. Perhaps we should start up again. After all, for £2, you can have as much tea, talk and good company as you like — you can't get that on the internet, can you?'

Where have all the aliens gone? After a lifetime tracking them, Britain's chief UFO spotter, Denis Plunkett (above), is calling off the hunt

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From the week  
Magazine 24 Feb 2001 issue

# Best properties on the market

This week: houses within 90 miles of London

120

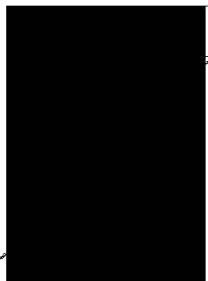
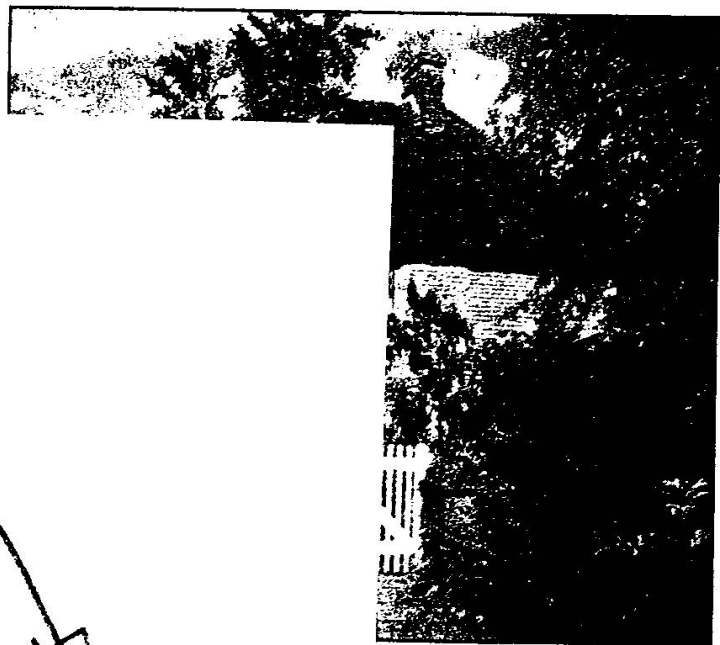


◀ **The Old Vicarage**, Kelvedon, Essex. A Grade II 18th century former vicarage, requiring some modernisation, standing in secluded gardens on the edge of the village. 6 beds, bath, 2 dressing rooms, 3 receps, kitchen, study, laundry, scullery, cloakroom, cellars, coach house, stables, outbuildings, paddocks, 4.18 acres. £450,000 Strutt & Parker 01245-258201.

▼ **Wayside Cottage**, Higham Hill, Lower Raydon, Suffolk. A Grade II country cottage dating back to the 15th century, situated in a preservation area within the Brett Valley. 4 beds, bath, shower room, drawing room, dining room with stone-flagged floor and fireplace, kitchen/breakfast room, study, gardens. £325,000 FPD Savills 01473-234800.



▲ **Bushy Lawn Lodge**, Brigstock, Northants. A Grade II Georgian house situated on an old drover's road within a private deer park. 5 beds, bath, dressing room, 2 receps, kitchen, cellar, outbuildings, listed barn with planning permission for residential conversion, 1 acre. £325,000 (whole) Strutt & Parker 01858-433123.



on, Kent. A Grade II planning landscaped gardens m, and views to the receps, kitchen, utility room, dining with games room, vation, stabling, 21 acres. 227-451123.

## Country Matters



The golden eagle is set to return to the Republic of Ireland for the first time in a century, reports The Sunday Telegraph. This June, conservationists plan to transplant chicks from their nests in Scotland to Glenveagh National Park, Co Donegal, in the hope of re-establishing a breeding

population. Once there, they will be fed animal carcasses, before being released into the wild six weeks later. Ireland is the only country where the golden eagle has become extinct, due to shooting and egg collecting; the last breeding pair died in Co Mayo in 1912. Experts with the Irish Raptor Study Group hope that the birds will move into abandoned, century-old nest sites, and plan to transplant 15 eaglets from Scotland every year until 2005.

The Scottish town of Bonnybridge has become the UFO capital of Britain, says the Sunday Express, after 60,000 sightings of the flying objects were reported here in the last decade. Last week local councillor Bill Buchanan spoke with the mayor of Roswell, New Mexico, the American town synonymous with UFOs, about twinning this small Stirlingshire town with it. There are also plans for a hi-tech UFO theme park, said Buchanan.

[redacted] file

[redacted] gave me this copy of  
an article on UFO's which appeared  
in Metro this morning. It looks like  
something is due to appear in Pilot  
Magazine this month as well.

[redacted]

# My close encounter of the blurred kind

BY PRAVIN CHAR

IT may seem like pie in the sky. But a pilot is convinced that this blurred image is a UFO that nearly crashed into his light aircraft.

David Hastings, 67, and his co-pilot David Patterson said they thought they were going to die when a mysterious black shape headed straight for them and then veered overhead.

Seconds later they became aware of an object moving on the port side of their six-seater aircraft.

Mr Hastings from Salhouse, Norfolk, grabbed his camera and took two pictures out of the window of his twin-engined Cessna Skymaster.

When he got the film developed he was astonished to see the cigar-shaped object hovering clearly in one of the snaps. Mr Hastings who has been

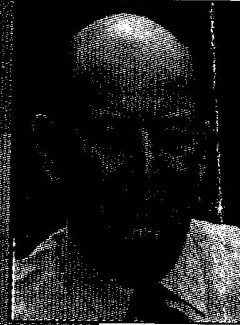
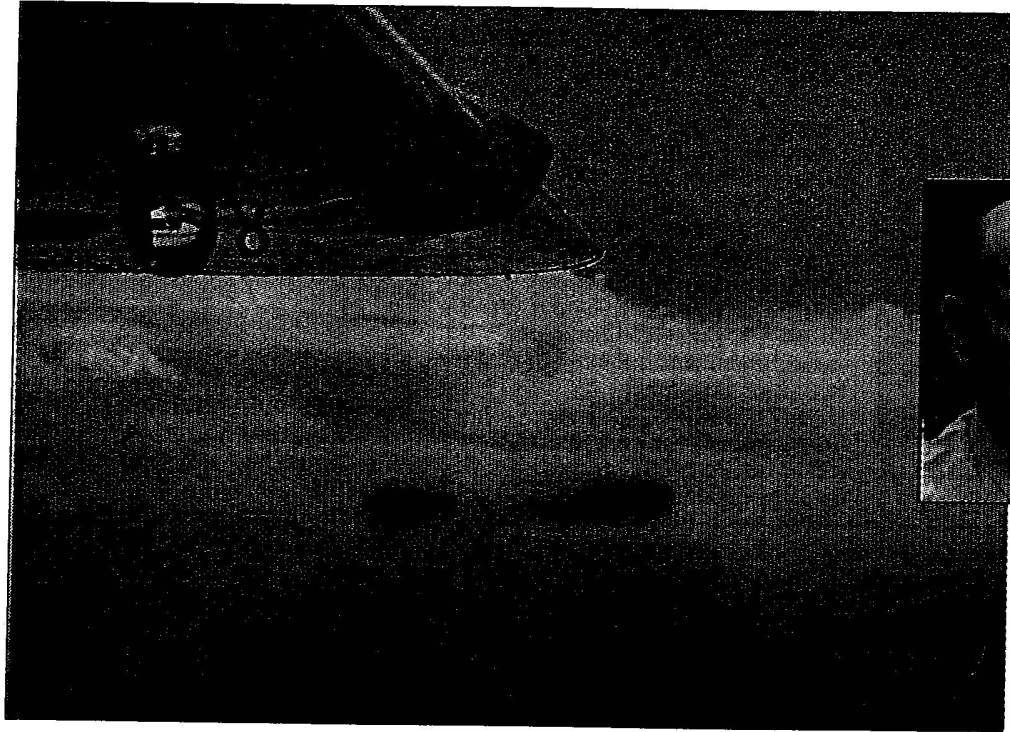
## 'All of a sudden the cockpit went black'

flying for 40 years said: 'There is no doubt in my mind that we had an encounter with a UFO - and I have got the picture to prove it.'

'It appears to have heat coming out of it because it was creating an air flux in the same way that you get a distorted wavy view of a road on a hot day.'

The incident happened as Mr Hastings and Mr Patterson, a former World War II pilot, were flying at 10,500ft over the Mojave Desert in California.

The pair were on the way from New



Pilot David Hastings, above, and the UFO pictured from his aircraft

York to Mr Patterson's home in San Francisco after attending a convention for veterans of the US Army Air Force Second Air Division.

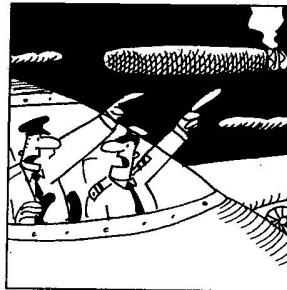
Mr Hastings, chairman of the division's memorial library in Norwich, Norfolk, said: 'We realised there was something heading straight for us. All of a sudden the cockpit went black as the object appeared to fly overhead, blocking out the sun.'

He showed the print to US Navy officers and said: 'They asked to keep

the picture for a while and when I picked it up a few days ago I asked them what they thought it was.

'They refused to say anything and simply answered: "No comment".'

Mr Hastings took the picture in June 1998 but only allowed it to be published when he was interviewed for this month's edition of Pilot magazine. He said: 'Quite a few airline pilots see UFOs while they are flying - but I have never heard of one being photographed like this.'



'Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is it a slim panatella?'

## The two greatest shows on Earth?

TWO neighbouring freak shows are going shrunken head to shrunken head in a bitter battle to pull in the punters. It began when Bobby Reynolds, curator of the Believe It You're Nuts exhibition, installed a two-headed baby - at 30p a peep - at the building where Dick Zigun's Sideshowes by the Seashore museum is based. Soon after, Mr Reynolds' red-and-yellow tent was put up nearby, amid colourful giant banners touting Siamese twins, a miniature frog band and a fire-eater. Mr Zigun claimed that his rival was stealing his customers on New York's Coney Island with a second-rate exhibition made up of waxworks and toys. In response he poached Mr Reynolds' nephew to perform as a sword-swallower. Mr Reynolds now plans to hit back by displaying the body of a dead alien he claims to have bought from the government.

## LONDON FACTFILE

In the 18th century Green Park, SW1, was a popular place for duels. It was here that Count Alfieri fought his mistress's husband Lord Ligonier. After the fight, the count returned to the Haymarket Theatre with a sword wound in his arm and sat through the last act. The park was also much frequented by highwaymen.

## Cybersex and the City - by e-mail

THE creator of racy TV show Sex and the City is to turn her talents to cybersex and the computer. Candace Bushnell is to write a set of new stories under the title The Morning After which will be sent to subscribers through their e-mails. Deborah Davis, vice-president of US company Email Shows, which is producing the project, said Ms Bushnell's 'notoriously dishy' writing style was considered a perfect match for the medium of e-mail literature because it provided 'a voyeuristic reading experience'. The show will consist of e-mails written by Ms Bushnell and her manager, Clifford Streit, about their lives. The writer's book, Sex and the City, inspired the US show which is shown on Channel 4.



Dury: Love, fame and drink

## Dury leaves ten reasons to be cheerful

IAN DURY'S musical career is to continue from beyond the grave. Ten previously unknown songs recorded by Dury shortly before his death from cancer in March will be released as an album early next year. Pop star Robbie Williams is also bidding to record an unfinished love song written by Dury called You're The Why. Williams was a friend of Dury's and has taken up his mantle as a celebrity

ambassador for Unicef. The revelation that Dury had a stockpile of unpublished material has surprised many of his fans. All of the tracks were written and sung by Dury in the months prior to his death. Dury's manager Andrew King said: 'They are very up, funny and full of life even though he knew he was near death. They all have Ian's vocals.' The tracks include songs about love, fame, getting

drunk and children. Dury, who caught polio when he was seven, battled with cancer for several years. He is best-known for his hits with The Blockheads, including Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick and Reasons To Be Cheerful. Dury's life will also be celebrated in a memorial concert featuring Madness, Kirsty MacColl, Kathy Burke and Mark Lamarr in London this week.

**METRO weather**

FAO

# Britain's UFO sec

118

05 JUN 00

### Scientist's pressure for information opens up hidden government files on strange sightings in the sky

by Antony Barnett  
Public Affairs Editor

ON 15 February 1999 an air traffic controller in Scotland noticed something strange on his radar screen. A bright blip on his screen suggested there was a very large object travelling at 3,000mph over the Scottish coastline heading south-west to Belfast.

The size of the blip suggested the object was 10 miles long and two miles wide. Two minutes later the object disappeared from the radar screen.

Three months earlier, MoD documents record that a commercial pilot flying over the Midlands reported an unusual object travelling at 'very high speed' with a very bright strobe light flashing once every 20 seconds.

Although the two incidents were unrelated, both were reported to a little-known

department in the Ministry of Defence, known as Secretariat (Air Staff) 2a. This is the secretive section in Whitehall which collates reports of unidentified flying objects that cross British airspace.

Whitehall has traditionally treated reports of UFO sightings as highly classified and only released information to the public after 30 years. But the parliamentary Ombudsman insisted that the MoD hand this information to Colin Ridyard, a research chemist from Wales.

Dr Ridyard had been seeking information relating to UFO sightings by pilots or radar operators between July 1995 and July 1999. Initially the MoD refused on the ground it would be too expensive. But after the intervention of the ombudsman, Michael Buckley, the MoD agreed to release the information as a one-off exercise for



At the insistence of the parliamentary Ombudsman, the Ministry of Defence has released

£75. The Ministry handed two reports to Ridyard, yet official information from the Civil Aviation Authority suggests there had been additional sightings. During the same period the CAA said it reported two more UFO sight-

ings to the MoD, neither of which the Ministry disclosed. According to official CAA reports, in the same month that a radar picked up an enormous object flying across Scotland, a pilot flying over the North Sea became star-

bled when illuminated by a 'high speed' light aircraft in the form of a ball of fire. Controllers reported no strange

# The more you w the more you g

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
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5 JUN 2000  
FILE

# 9 secrets revealed



...man, the Ministry of Defence has released classified details of 'close encounters' reported recently.

...the MoD, neither of  
...Ministry disclosed.  
...ing to official CAA  
...n the same month  
...adar picked up an  
...object flying across  
...a pilot flying over  
...h Sea became star-

...tled when his aircraft became  
...illuminated by an 'incandes-  
...cent' light. Three other air-  
...craft in the area reported see-  
...ing a ball of light moving at  
...high speed. Air traffic con-  
...trollers reported there were  
...no strange aircraft in the

...area, but five minutes later an  
...operator at a weather station  
...picked up a fast-moving  
...object on his radar.

The other incident which  
...CAA reported to the MoD  
...occurred in June 1999 when  
...the pilot of a B757 flying over

the North Sea reported an  
...unidentified military-looking  
...aircraft passing close by in  
...the opposite direction. Noth-  
...ing was seen on the plane's  
...radar or by air traffic con-  
...trollers. The MoD told the  
...Authority that there were no  
...military aircraft known to be  
...in that area at the time.

Although an MoD spokes-  
...woman would not discuss  
...individual sightings, she said  
...all these events had perfectly  
...normal explanations. 'Some-  
...times radars have spurious  
...readings caused by military  
...aircraft in the vicinity, and  
...radar-jamming facilities and  
...bright lights on the underside  
...of aircraft can be caused by  
...events on the ground.'

In a letter to one of Rid-  
...yard's local MPs, Defence  
...Minister John Spellar said:  
...'My department has no inter-  
...est or role with respect to  
...UFO/flying saucer matters or  
...to the question of the exist-  
...ence or otherwise of extrater-  
...restrial life forms - about  
...which we remain open-  
...minded.'

However, declassified gov-

ernment documents in the  
...Public Records Office from  
...June 1965 reveal that 'it was  
...official MoD policy to play  
...down the subject of unidenti-  
...fied flying objects and to  
...avoid attaching undue public  
...attention or publicity to the  
...subject... as a result we have  
...never had any political pres-  
...sure to mount a large-scale  
...investigation'. Other docu-  
...ments from that time state:  
...'The press are never to be  
...given information about  
...unusual radar sightings...  
...and [unusual visual] sight-  
...ings are in no circumstances  
...to be disclosed to the press.'

But Ridyard said: 'This is  
...not about little green men,  
...but about freedom of infor-  
...mation. It is clear there are  
...many strange incidents that  
...happen in the British skies  
...that are kept secret. There  
...may be issues of aircraft  
...safety or natural phenomena,  
...but by keeping this informa-  
...tion secret these incidents  
...cannot be scrutinised by the  
...public or the scientific com-  
...munity.'

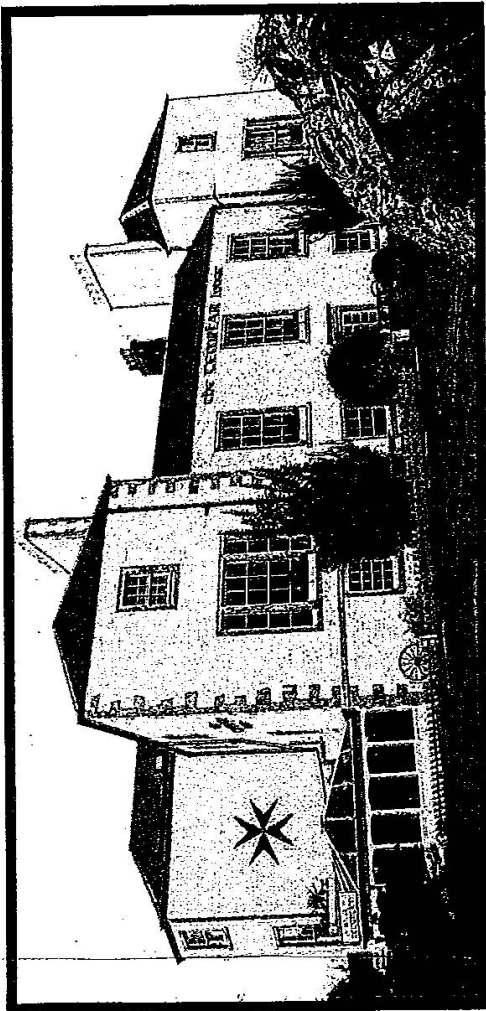
One of the most infamous  
...incidents relating to a UFO  
...sighting in Britain only came  
...to light through US freedom  
...of information legislation.  
...This revealed that in Decem-  
...ber 1980 three security patrol  
...men investigating a potentia  
...air crash near the US Air  
...Force base in Suffolk saw:  
...strange glowing triangular  
...object hovering in the fores  
...near the base which had:  
...'pulsing red light on top and  
...blue lights underneath'.

An official report by Lieut-  
...enant-Colonel Charles Hall  
...the deputy base commander  
...included a description of the  
...events and stated that the  
...next day three depression  
...were found in the fore:  
...where the object was disco-  
...vered which showed radiatio  
...readings. Later that night  
...three star-like objects were  
...seen in the sky movin  
...'rapidly in sharp angul  
...movements'.

# ou want, you get.

# The great Scottish UFO mystery

A piece of 'alien' cloth, strange lights in the sky, a rock from outer space; all the ingredients of an extraterrestrial mystery. But what is really going on in a Scottish village? **Ann Treneman** finds out



The Templar Lodge Hotel: a place of ghosts, knights and other strange, unworldly sights

I had come to Scotland to investigate a UFO mystery. Flashing lights had been seen over two extinct volcanoes in East Lothian. Japanese tourists were amazed to see a ball of fire hovering in the air. An American golfer had seen a similar lights show and, after going to investigate, uncovered the strangest piece of material. This was now being called a possible alien artefact and the Japanese were going to mount a six-month, non-stop UFO watch of the Lothian sky. And, to top it all off, there were reports of a rock falling to earth from outer space.

I am not making this up. There have been stories, some of them lengthy, about this in national and Scottish newspapers and radio and television coverage too. But there was something fuzzy about it all.

cluding Muirfield, near by. People here probably think extraterrestrial is a special kind of sandtrap. I ask a few people walking down the street about UFOs. "You know, I don't know any Martians myself and so haven't been able to discuss that," said one man without a smile. Had he heard about the alien artefact? "No," he said.

The Templar Lodge Hotel is a white and rather grand looking building that stretches along Gullane's main road. Until two years ago it was called the Queen's Hotel and was thought to have dated from the 18th century. The only conspiracy theories discussed then were those that involved little white

The cloth is very weird like the

fellrunner. This explains why we more or less ran up that mountain. I was gasping but Mr Taylor, who is very engaging if a bit hard to follow, had more than enough breath for his tales.

The first was about the artefact. Last autumn an American and his wife came to Templar Lodge for a golfing holiday. He was a middle-aged businessman who had been in the military. He and his wife had an early supper at the hotel and went for a walk. They saw some sort of strange light show on top of

Berwick Law and drove over to investigate. They climbed to the top and, at the back of a derelict stone hut, found a piece of material. Later, they gave the cloth to Stephen Prior because they were embarrassed to take it home. They insist on anonymity.

By this time we are at the inn and



ASHLEY COMBES/TOM

Hotel researcher Richard Taylor and the 'alien' material: "It is very delicate. Definitely not synthetic. Like a puffball but not like a puffball" (though all attempts to reach Pharo have failed). Mr Prior says there is no link other than that he has asked Pharo to handle the artefact. And who was Pharo? He says it is a

information must have been lifted from the Templar Lodge site. But it is much more complex than that. Pharo says that its investigation into alien visitations is just one part of the Templar Lodge's work.

see that you have no way of triangulating your facts," he adds. What? He laughs and says he has an academic background. At about this point what had been a strange day camera on the hotel roof. The hotel said it will not charge and the crew is to arrive in March. The cameras will monitor for UFOs 24 hours a day and provide a live feed to the Internet. The filming will continue for



### SILENT KIU LEAUER but with spores that come out when you tap it

Templar Lodge in Gullane. Its marketing manager, Stephen Prior, was quoted. "The cloth is what really fascinates me. It is very weird, like the softest kid leather but with spores that come out when you tap it. It's like nothing I've ever seen."

Mr Prior was also going to be the host for the Japanese film crew. Traditionally, Bonybride had been the main site in Scotland for UFO sightings. Now, it seemed, that could change. One headline described Loftham as a "UFO hotspot". Mr Prior confirmed there had been many sightings of lights over the hills. "There is a long Celtic tradition of fairies on the hills. Traditionally, you wouldn't take your baby up there for fear of it being turned into a changeling." But since space became fashionable, he said, people attributed it more to UFOs.

I went with a sceptical but open mind. The stories seemed fantastical, but also amusing. Plus, unusually for these kind of tales, there was something real to be reckoned with. In fact there were three real things: a Japanese television company; a piece of material, and a rock. So it really was a mystery and an interesting one too. Everyone makes fun of UFOs but there is a huge curiosity. The Internet is full of it. One count shows 414,055 web pages on the subject. Clearly we are intrigued. But it wasn't long before I began to feel uneasy about this particular UFO mystery. This was not awfully walk on the wild side; it was complicated and almost creepy. At one point I even wondered if it was all linked to a fledgling cult.

It was cold when I arrived in Gullane in the south shore of the Firth of Forth. It was also lunchtime and so everything was shut. It is that kind of place. Gullane is devoted to golf and there are five courses, in-

now?" I shout. We huddle in a corner of the stone ruin. He produces a CD case and inside is a small and ragged yellow piece of material. It looks like a supple kind of parchment. "It is very delicate. Definitely not synthetic. Like a puffball but not like a puffball," he shouts. Mr Taylor says a national newspaper was having the cloth analysed at Heriot-Watt University.

We head back. Rummaging down a mountain turns out to be harder than running up one. I ask about the Japanese. He says this is completely separate event. Last autumn a group of Japanese tourists saw a ball of light over nearby Traprain Law. Mr Taylor says the Japanese love both aliens and golf and so it only seemed natural when a Japanese film company called to ask how much it would cost to put a

grassroots movement which is also known as the Cultural Millennium Bug and that he had been "tracking it" since 1994. "It is all about post-modernism," he said.

The movement is two-pronged, taking in revelations both as in the Bible and as in Oprah Winfrey. The words "fire without flame or smoke" sum it up. I have no idea what Mr Taylor is talking about. Later, back at the hotel, he hands me a two-page brief called *What is Revelatorism?* This includes 16 separate entries, written in rather elegant gobbledegook, including this: "Revelatorism has a strong comic element which incorporates irony and self-referencing beyond post-modernism. For example, the Revelatorist mantra 'I Hate Bigots' pokes the finger at political correctness. In a similar manner, oxymoronic statements such as 'I Love Bigots' are a part of the enjoyment of paradoxes."

Mr Taylor, who is 34, is tremendously earnest about this. He says it is linked to something called Apocryphal History, which seems to be historical fact stripped of politics and propaganda. This is what his exhibition is all about. He sees the artefact as just such a fact. It seemed to me that the artefact was somehow linked with Revelatorism. What is really going on here?

The answer can be found on the Net. Mr Taylor had said the Japanese were represented in the UK by something called Pharo and that I should have a look at its website. I do and find a series of inter-linked articles on the Berwick alien artefacts, the filming, Templar Lodge, and Revelatorism. Pharo is even selling "I Hate Bigot" bumper stickers for \$5.50 or £3.50 each.

What is the connection here? "I just think they were looking for a theory to hang their documentary on," says Mr Taylor. He says the in-



The rock from outer space: analysis revealed it to be iron and barium

the site occurs. As part of an investigation into Revelatorism — the new and popular mood more commonly known as the Cultural Millennium Bug — our production team would like you to provide us with your views on a wide range of subjects and, if possible, make yourself available for interview. Website visitors are urged to send in their names, addresses and further details.

The website includes two catalogues. "Since an important aspect of this television production involves the co-operation and recogni-

### Earlier I had asked Mr Taylor if anyone had ever said all of this was mad. He barks out a laugh

tion of its participants, Pharo is offering an exclusive range of stickers, clothing and accessories." Orders for these (T-shirts £12, polo shirts, £23, baseball caps £11, jogging pants £22 etc.) can be sent directly to Pharo.Com, Templar Lodge, Gullane, Edinburgh.

Somehow I am not surprised when Mr Taylor turns out to be Pharo's representative over the artefact. So now Pharo is representing the Japanese and the alleged alien artefact. I think it is time to talk to Stephen Prior. Mr Taylor says he is not allowed to give me the number. I say that is very strange for a marketing man but Mr Prior does ring me within the hour anyway. I note that both he and Pharo have phone numbers in Leatherhead in Surrey

much about it but thinks it is a genre. But I think there might be another word for it. Earlier I had asked Mr Taylor if anyone had ever said all of this was mad. He barks out a laugh. "I hear you. Mad you say? I actually think this is one of the sanest projects I've ever come across. Why?" Because this is all about relating to the truth.

Well, there is truth and truth. Joyce Cook at the Heriot-Watt University textile testing laboratory says the artefact is not alien. "There is a perfectly reasonable explanation. It is an old degraded piece of leather. It had been in the water a long time," she says. Similarly, an analysis of the rock from outer space shows it to be made up of iron and barium. I have no more luck verifying the existence of the Japanese film crew.

I ask Mr Prior if the whole story is wishful thinking. "No, no, no. I find that offensive. I've told you that is not the case. It is not a story that serves us from a commercial point of view. It's too time consuming and airy-fairy quite frankly." He says he does not believe in UFOs and insists he only wants to attract golfers to Templar Lodge, not New Age types. "My fear is I'm going to get labelled as a nutcase," he says.

We discuss the artefacts. He does not agree that it is an old piece of leather and says we don't know all the facts yet. "I am the ultimate sceptic but at the same time I don't know what kind of hide of an intergalactic pig served at a restaurant at the edge of the universe looks like," he says. He says he is joking. He says that Pharo does seem to be using Templar Lodge as an address for its merchandise but there is no other link. He says that if I don't believe him, then I shouldn't write the story. But I consider my UFO mystery to have been solved.

## A meteoric rise

Continued from page 37  
nordmandane: for five years he was diligent collector of informers and political intelligence in a second-rank post in Dresden. It was in 1990 that Putin made his cleverest career move, accepting a job as assistant to his old professor, Sobchak. "I had to make a choice," he said — between the KGB and democratic politics. St Petersburg was the crime capital of Russia in the early 1990s and under Sobchak, Putin attracted his fair share of scandal. A bid to investigate his allocation of export licences was dropped, but he was able to build a \$500,000 "cottage" outside the city. It burnt down in 1996, and he personally rescued his two daughters, Masha and Katya, from the flames. Now 13 and 14, they attend a private German school in Moscow.

His wife, Lyudmila, survived too, but image-makers wary of Russians' distrust of women in public life have kept all three strictly in his shadow. Putin has never run for elective offices, but he has a sure and ruthless politician's touch. Yeltsin's daughter, Tatyana, and Pavel Borodin, who hired him, have been ousted from their offices. As first deputy prime minister he has appointed a former finance minister, Mikhail Kasyanov, well-known in the West, and yesterday he urged the Duma to pass long-delayed land reforms. Some have cast Putin as an authoritarian child of the KGB — an enemy of press freedom at best and a nuclear sabre-rattler at worst. He will probably prove far less alarming, but the truth is no one knows. ● **Leading article, page 23**

### Frank Skinner

It is so depressing it is hard to know where to start. After Chris Tarrant's £1.5 million, Carol Vorderman and Cilla Black's £2 million each and, of course, the trillions recently netted by Chris Evans, Frank Skinner, the moderately amusing West Bromwich wag, has scooped a £3 million deal from ITV. Three million pounds! Just to sit on a sofa next to David Baddiel dropping double entendres and rolling your eyes. He will also be getting £6 million for a chat show. It is rather sad to think of those chat-show greas such as Michael Parkinson and Russell Harty in the Seventies, with their brown suits and flimsy sets being terribly polite to their guests for a normal wage, and then to think of a new century that pays six million quid to an idiot to be rude to Spice Girls and make fart jokes.

### Mike Tyson

The celebrity rapist and ear-biter touched down this week in our green and pleasant land, and how nice it is to have

## That'll do thanks There are some things in life that we can happily do without. Here is this week's selection

him here. We are now the proud hosts to the world's two nicest men — Mr Tyson and General Pinochet. Tyson's arrival was particularly charming, with his entourage including Steve Crocodile Fitch, the minder who has done time for manslaughter and threatened to cut Frank Bruno's throat, and Darryl Francis who has done time for assault. Francis is Tyson's best buddy and is employed to relieve his boredom, which is presumably what he was doing when he killed a ferret at Tyson's home and upset animal welfare groups. As Tyson punches bags and prays and spits bile and venom in the run up to the fight in a few days time it is just possible that we will get sick of these celebs stopped pretending that they

### Celebrity Drug Confessions

If the media went out to investigate every single famous person in the world to see if they had ever sucked on a joint, they would have to publish separate supplements just to get all the names in. Mo Mowlam was a student when she smoked this notorious spiff. She probably not only smoked joints but got drunk, told fibs to disguise the fact that she hadn't done her essay, lived exclusively on pasta, and didn't wash her clothes much except when she went home. But it would make a nice change if these celebs stopped pretending that they

hadn't enjoyed their drug experiences. Whether it is the coke busts of Tom Parker Bowles and Freddie Windsor or the joint smoking of Jack Straw's son, Bill Clinton or Mo Mowlam, they always claim that they didn't like it. Why not be honest, say that they won't do it any more because of their careers?

### Dome Grumbling

From the very moment this project was announced it was going to be rubbish. There was never any other possible outcome. It had that whiff of school outings on rainy Wednesday afternoons to an expo centre in Telford or Slough. It was always going to be a large municipal builders' cabin, full of things nobody cared about in a post-industrial wasteland. But there is no point grumbling now. As each new gripe is aired we get more and more fed up with the whingers. We don't need to hear how stupid it is. Those of us who do not live in Greenwich can just forget about it. The rest of you can move.

AS MINISTERS PLEDGE TO RELEASE TOP SECRET UFO RESEARCH...

DOCUMENTS and photographs detailing UFO investigations in Britain over 50 years are at last being made available for public scrutiny under New Labour's policy of greater openness in Government, according to reports at the weekend. Here, NICK POPE, the Ministry of Defence official formerly responsible for investigating extra-terrestrial visitations, previews the eagerly awaited contents.

OFFICIAL interest in UFOs has always had more to do with the Russians than any impending visit from Martians.

But in keeping an eye out for the Soviet aircraft that routinely probed our air defences during the Cold War, it soon became clear that there were other more exotic craft operating in British airspace.

There has been a steady stream of UFO reports sent to the Ministry of Defence over the past 50 years - between 200 to 300 each year. They fill more than 200 files, files to which I have had access. It and when they are made available publicly, I can promise some exciting revelations.

For three years it was my job in Secretariat (Air Staff) 2A at the MOD to investigate such reports, to determine any potential threat to the UK. I found explanations for 99pc of sightings, which turned out to be misidentifications of ordinary objects or phenomena: aircraft lights, satellites, meteors and airships.

However, there has always been a hard core of sightings that couldn't be explained in conventional terms, where trained observers such as police officers and pilots have seen unidentified craft doing speeds and manoeuvres way beyond our capabilities.

Britain's most sensational UFO case occurred in 1980 in Rendlesham Forest, near the USAF/RAF airbase at Woodbridge in Suffolk. UFO activity was witnessed over a series of nights, then on December 26 at 2am two patrolmen on a tour of the camp perimeter saw bright lights among the trees and went to investigate. Initially, they thought an aircraft had overshoot the runway, although there was no accompanying noise. But what they saw was like no aircraft they had ever encountered before: a large metallic, triangular object which they chased before losing it among the trees.

USF two nights later, there was a similar sighting. This time the deputy base commander USAF Lt-Col Charles Halt, led a team out to investigate. He submitted a report to the MOD, describing the UFO as 'metallic in appearance and triangular in shape'.

There is also an eerie 18-minute tape, which reveals conversations between Halt and his men as they moved to within 150 yards of the moving red and yellow lights.

The report says that suddenly the lights appeared to explode. Immediately, Lt-Col Halt observed three objects in the sky, like stars, but giving off red, green and



Britain's X-Files (and yes, the truth is on this page)



by NICK POPE

blue lights, darting off in all directions in sharp, angular movements. The objects were visible for two to three hours, occasionally flashing down beams of light or energy. Radiation taken from the landing site in the forest and were found to peak in the three indentations where the craft had touched down in a clearing.

There are a number of intriguing aerial encounters in Britain's so-called X-files, too. One of the earliest took place in August 1956 when a UFO was tracked on radar systems at RAF Bentwaters and RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk.

Two RAF jets were scrambled to intercept the mysterious craft, and an energetic game of cat and mouse ensued as the pilots attempted to lock-on to the target. But the UFO was too quick and agile, and managed to elude the pilots, who eventually ran low on fuel and were forced to return to base.

Almost 40 years later, a number of RAF Tomado jets were overtaken by a UFO over the North Sea in November 1990. No adequate explanation was ever forthcoming.

Last year, also over the North Sea, a 900ft UFO was pursued by two fighter jets before it took off at 17,000mph.

More disturbing are the reports to the MOD that detail near-misses between UFOs and civil aircraft. There were two such cases in 1991, both over Kent.

In 1996, the pilots of a Boeing 737 encountered what they described as a brightly lit UFO while on their approach to Manchester Airport, and

believed that it had passed only yards from their aircraft. This incident was investigated by the Civil Aviation Authority but remains a mystery.

One of the most fascinating cases that I investigated related to an incident that occurred in the early hours of March 31, 1993.

There had been a wave of UFO sightings that night, culminating in the direct overflight of two military bases, RAF Cosford and RAF Shawbury in Shropshire.

The UFO was described by one of the military witnesses as being a vast, triangular craft only marginally smaller than a jumbo jet. It flew slowly over the base at a height of 200ft, firing a narrow beam of light at the ground, before flying off at high speed. These then, are the sorts of incidents to be found in the MOD's UFO files.

But the files also contain reports of alien abductions, the appearance of crop circles and animal mutilations, all of which have been linked with UFOs.

HE MOD was drawn into the crop-circle debate in 1985 - five years after they first started appearing - when a farmer in Middle Wallop, Hampshire, found a quilltipjet of crop circles and blamed the local Army air corps base.

Lt-Col Edgecombe investigated and submitted photographs and reports to the MOD, a routine procedure but one which gave credence to the UFO link and allegations that then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had asked for a report on the phenomenon.

I have reviewed all the theories about crop circles and, while many are hoaxes, there are those which have yet to be explained. For example, why do crop samples taken

from these 'genuine' circles show distinct cellular changes. Some details of UFO sightings in Britain have, of course, already been made public under the 30-year rule which applies to sensitive documents, but by releasing files from more recent years the Government clearly hopes to end speculation that it has been covering up the truth about the phenomenon.

Unfortunately, releasing the files is a tactic that some people think could backfire. A similar initiative in the US, simply fueled interest in the subject, and led to accusations that other more highly classified papers were still being withheld.

The US government's denial was not helped by the claims of a former US army colonel, Philip Corso, who said that the so-called Roswell incident from 1947 - in which alien corpses were allegedly seen at an air force base in New Mexico - really did involve the crash of a UFO.

Colonel Corso claimed that he'd seen the bodies, and that his job at the Pentagon involved finding ways to use the technological secrets gleaned from the debris of the craft. He died of a heart attack shortly after going public with these claims, so look the secrets to his grave.

Conspiracy theorists love this sort of thing, and are unlikely to be satisfied by any release of papers that doesn't support their own theories. But there really isn't any cover-up in the UK, although a letter sent from the MOD to the US government in 1965 admits that MOD policy is to play down the subject of UFOs.

My three years of official research into the UFO phenomenon changed my life for ever. I'd come into the job as a sceptic, but came to believe that some UFOs might well be extra-terrestrial. If these files are to be made public, I think people are in for

a big surprise, and I believe that, like me, they will come to see that this is a serious subject which raises important national security issues. As far as these files are concerned... the truth is in there!

NICK POPE'S latest book is Operation Thunder Child (Simon & Schuster, £9.99).

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WHY USE YOUR HOME PHONE? OFF PEAK NATIONAL CALLS ONLY 1p! 50 MINS FREE EVERY DAY. LINE RENTAL ONLY 50p PER DAY. FREE NOKIA 3210e DUAL BAND. FREE 50 MINUTES OFF PEAK CALLS EVERY DAY. FREE PORTABLE KIT. FREE HANSDS-FREE KIT. FREE LENSER SCARY CASE. FREE 3 MONTHS INSURANCE. FREE NEXT DAY DELIVERY. FREE ITEMISED BILLING. FREE 24 HOUR PAID BY PHONE. FREE 24 HOUR PAID BY PHONE. FREE 24 HOUR PAID BY PHONE.

# KIDNAP TERROR

A YOUNG mystery woman was at the centre of a kidnap scare last night after a blood-stained van she was bundled into was found abandoned.

Two men had earlier roughly dragged her screaming across a garage forecourt at Reading, Berks, during the rush-hour.

She was viciously beaten and thrown into the van. A witness told police the woman, aged about 20, suffered facial injuries.

Detective Superintendent Trevor Davies said: "We are extremely worried. If this woman can get in touch with us she should."

A team of detectives were trying to identify the woman and scouring missing person reports. The CCTV footage from the garage has been seen by police.

## WEIRD

LEE Si Chung, 26, who tried to save his Beijing-to-London fare by POSTING himself, got caught short in the sorting office and was jailed for four weeks.

## WORLD

# MODEL ROBBED

A GANG of Rolex robbers pounced on Andrea Faulkes, the QVC Shopping channel model, as she parked her car in the early hours.

The 29-year-old blonde was grabbed by the throat by one man while another snatched her £2,500 Cartier watch and a £200 necklace. Then they flung her to the ground and made off in a silver car with her bag containing £300 in cash.

The attackers, said to be black and in their 20s, struck as Andrea pulled up in Sloane Square, London.

## WEIRD

COPS smashed into a car in Lyons, France, to rescue a man collapsed inside — and discovered a blow-up dummy used to fool car-jackers.

## WORLD

# MURDER OF BABY

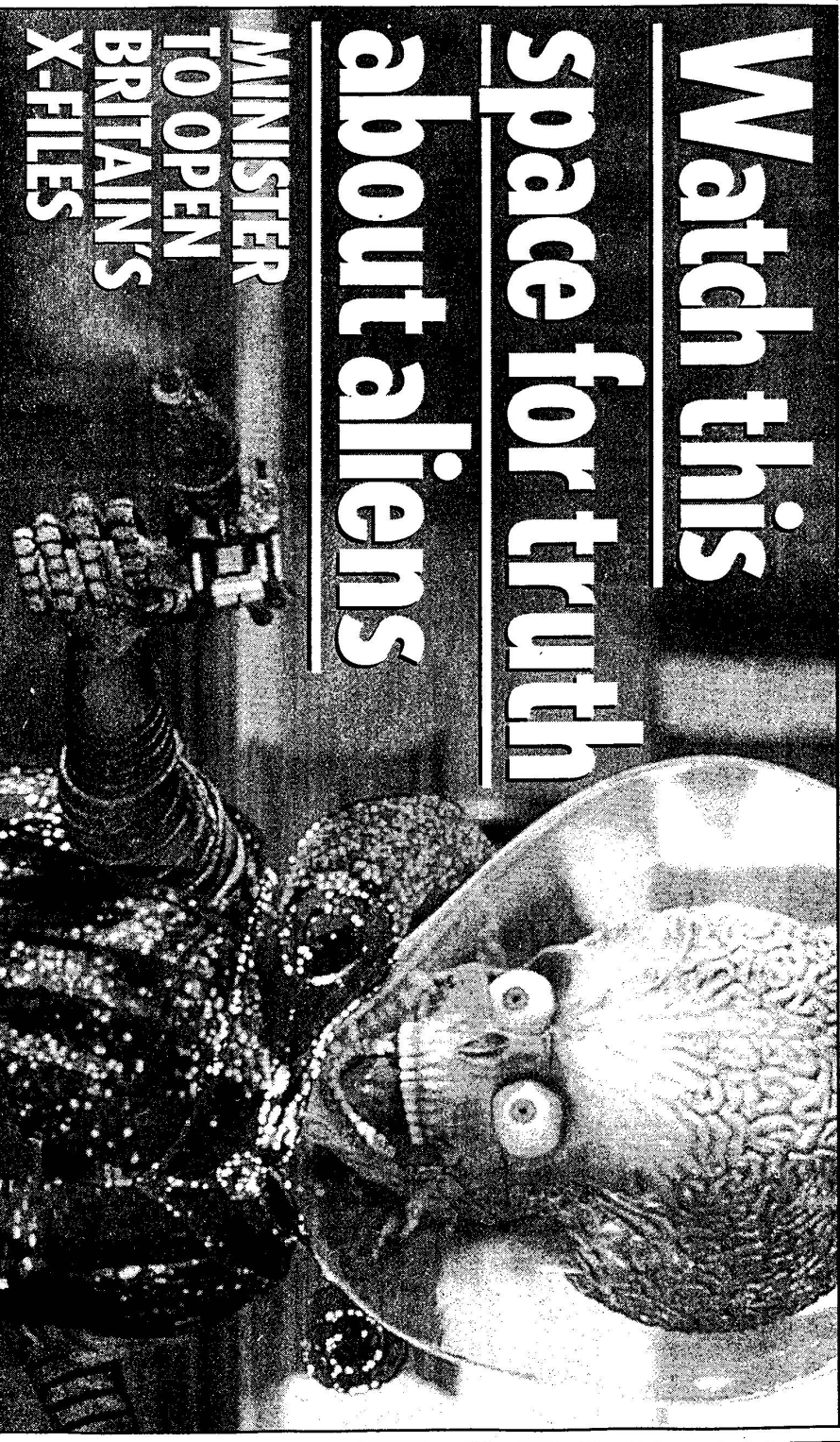
AN eight-week-old boy was murdered in his home yesterday by a frenzied attacker.

Police found little Bradley George being cradled by his sobbing mother. He died four hours later in hospital from head injuries.

The tot's mum Samantha George, 20, and brother Christopher, five, also suffered head injuries in the attack at the two-bed council house in Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales.

Neighbour Jeannette Hussey said: "I heard a woman screaming and a young boy crying. Samantha came out with her face covered in blood and was taken away in an ambulance."

A 26-year-old man was arrested by police at the house and was being questioned yesterday.



# Watch this space for truth about aliens

## MINISTER TO OPEN UP TO PUBLIC GAZE BY DEFENCE

THE truth about whether aliens have ever visited Britain is to be revealed at last.

Top secret government X-Files on thousands of 'spaceship' riddles will be opened up to public gaze by Defence Minister Peter Kilfoyle.

They will include photos and details of every UFO investigation in the past 30 years. Every year, around 300 alien sightings are reported.

Plans by military experts for action in the event of an alien invasion of London will also be unveiled.

The files, stored in a nuclear bomb-proof bunker deep below Whitehall, should be released in three months.

The move, part of a government drive to end unnecessary secrecy, is sure to send UFO spotters into a frenzy. They will hope to learn secrets about:

- A MASSIVE craft spotted flying in zig-zags off Britain's North Sea coast last year. The 900ft UFO shot off at 17,000mph when pursued by two fighter jets.
- CLAIMS that seven UFOs have crashed in Britain since World War II.
- SIGHTINGS of a triangular three-legged spaceship in Rendlesham Forest, Suffolk, in 1980.

## HOVER

US airmen from two nearby bases claim the object rose hovering out of the trees, then blasted into space at an incredible speed. RAF investigators cordoned off the area, but their findings are still a closely-guarded secret.

Some details of UFO sightings in the Fifties and Sixties have already been made public under the Thirty-Year Rule applied to the famous 1962 incident in which 16-year-old Anne Hession was sworn to secrecy after she reported seeing a star-like object shooting out red and green flames above her home in Tannock, Somerset.

Ten years earlier, RAF Flight Lieutenant John Kilburn saw a shining object in the sky above a West Yorks air base. When jets were scrambled to investi-

## EXCLUSIVE

BY IAN KIRBY

POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

gate, the UFO took off at an incredible speed. But the facts about most later mysteries are still locked away.

They include the truth about claims by former defence chief Lord Hill-Norton that RAF Feltwell in Suffolk uses its space-age radar, built by the US Air Force, to track UFOs.

He quizzed ministers about the base, but never got a satisfactory answer. Several sightings in 1990 of a bright light above the Thames in London could also be explained.

The pledge to open up our X-Files follows similar moves in America. The Yanks recently released a report of the notorious Roswell incident in 1947, in which alien corpses were allegedly seen at a secret New Mexico air base.

"They explained the 'bodies' were dummies from a secret weather balloon, but UFO theorists still believe there has been a cover-up."

## Crank

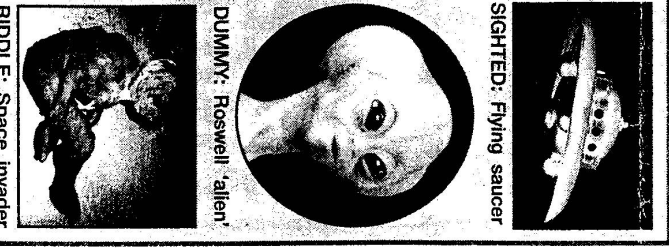
Britain's files were prepared by the MoD's hush-hush Aircraft Section, set up to investigate UFOs. Amazingly, its one-time boss Nick Pope believes HE was abducted by aliens while driving in Florida. He kept mum while in his job for fear of being labelled a crank.

But after leaving the secret unit, he wrote a series of bestsellers about alien incidents. He said: "My experiences convinced me that UFOs are a real and threatening phenomenon. We are not alone."

Since 1959, the MoD has heard of 9,000 UFO sightings, though that's probably only the tip of the iceberg.

Defence Minister Mr. Kilfoyle has told colleagues that, after a careful review of the files, he is "not convinced" about the existence of aliens.

But MoD staff say he wants people to be able to make up their own minds. A source said: "These files are of huge public interest. They paint a fascinating picture of how UFO reports were investigated—and what would happen if aliens ever did land in Britain." Our View: Page 22



TERROR RUNS IN THE FAMILY

THE RAGE

CARRIE 2

UNITED ARTISTS PICTURES PRESENTS A RED BANK FILMS PRODUCTION "THE RAGE" CARRIE 2. EMILY BERGLI  
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## What are the most urgent problems facing Britain today?

Poor schools that aren't teaching children properly? The crisis in our health service which means people are waiting longer and longer for treatment?

The desperate paralysis on our roads and public transport? Rising crime that makes none of us feel safe on our streets? The flood of bogus asylum seekers? The daily selling-out to Brussels on issues like British beef?

These are what I think are the urgent problems facing Britain today. You probably agree with me. If next week's Queen's Speech was setting out the programme of the next Conservative government, I'll tell you what would be in it. Education would be right at the heart of the speech.

There would be a law to guarantee to parents the power to do something about bad schools by sacking school managements. And there would be a law to turn every primary and secondary

# 'We'll stop Britain being a pushover'

## WILLIAM HAGUE Opposition Leader

school in the country into a Free School where teachers could get on with improving standards.

Then we'd give patients in the NHS a unique guarantee. Patients with the most serious conditions would get a maximum waiting time based not on party political targets but medical need.

We would introduce a tough law to make sure unemployed people who can work take the jobs that are offered to them—or lose their unemployment benefit.

A revolution in crime-fighting would make sure criminals serve the sentence handed down in court, teaching prisoners what it's like to work, dealing out life sentences to drug dealers who

away enough of this country's powers and rights to Brussels. The next Conservative government will make sure Britain is in Europe but not run by Europe.

So what is our Prime Minister doing about the issues? Nothing. If you don't believe me, just wait to see what the government announces in the Queen's Speech. It is likely to propose:

A NEW law about how political parties are run, a new law on the organisation of local government, a new law on motorway tolls and car park taxes, a new law creating a Right to Roam.

None of these laws will do anything to tackle the main problems that actually matter to the majority of people.

This week you will see a Labour government that is pursuing its own obscure political priorities instead of rising to the challenge of the real problems.

The next Conservative government would not duck the challenge. Our Queen's Speeches would turn the commonsense of the people into commonsense policies for the country.

# 'We'll make Britain richer and fairer'

## TONY BLAIR Prime Minister

getting the Health Service right. But that's why we're putting in the extra £21 billion investment over the next three years, recruiting the extra doctors and nurses, building new hospitals and introducing new services.

You didn't expect miracles from New Labour. You knew how much was wrong. But what you wanted was a government to start moving us in the right direction. Nothing is more important for a government than running the economy well. And nothing has a greater impact if the government fails.

I believe we have gone a very long way to burying those memories and the doubts they fuelled. And Gordon Brown, a brilliant, radical and reforming chancellor who deserves credit for that. We

inherited an economy devastated by the two deepest recessions since the war. Where Tory boom was all too quickly followed by Tory bust. A Government spending £28 billion a year more than it had.

Now inflation's low and on target. Government borrowing is under control. Employment is up by 700,000 since the election.

We're creating a climate where business can succeed and in turn create jobs and prosperity by boosting skills.

And we're also creating a fairer country by extending opportunities to all, tackling poverty and increasing support to families through measures like the New Deal, the minimum wage and the Working Families Tax Credit—all of which the Tories would scrap.

It's what we mean by enterprise and fairness. They are the guiding principles of this government, and the driving force behind Gordon's package.

track of their movements and tipped off the law at the crucial moment.

Then the careless coppers shopped the brave pair by broadcasting their names over the police radios, from which they were picked up by the Yardies' scanners.

Now mother and son continue to live in fear of their lives, for their tormentors, released because of 'legal complications', have launched a terrifying campaign of revenge.

Thames Valley police must round up and jail the thugs.

**And this time they can't expect the public to do the job for them.**

## Aliens - the truth

THE government is to throw open its top-secret X-Files on UFOs and aliens.

Ministers have looked at them and decided that there is nothing too sensitive to hold back.

Enthusiasts are hoping at last to learn the truth about all the incidents reported over the last 30 years.

**Cynics think it will all turn out to have been pie in the sky.**

## Thugs mar glory

A GREAT game it wasn't. A determined first half at Hampden was followed by a dull second.

But it did manage to focus for 90 minutes or so the combined passions of soccer fans the length and breadth of Britain.

Then, despite their victory, came the pointless violence when 400 English fans went on the rampage in the streets of Glasgow.

**It's a poor omen for Wembley on Wednesday.**

64/5

115

...to reveal his surname and  
said Mr. S, who

# Riddle of UFO at Heathrow

A PASSENGER jet's close encounter with a mysterious, fast-moving craft seconds after taking off from Heathrow had experts baffled yesterday.

The crew of an MD-81 reported an object 'like a bright light' passing within 20ft of them at 3,500ft.

Air accident investigators were unable to shed any light on the mystery as radar records show there were no other planes in the area at the time.

A dossier on last month's incident is thought to have been passed to the MoD to see if the UFO could have been a radar-invisible foreign spy plane or stray British test craft.

enc 115

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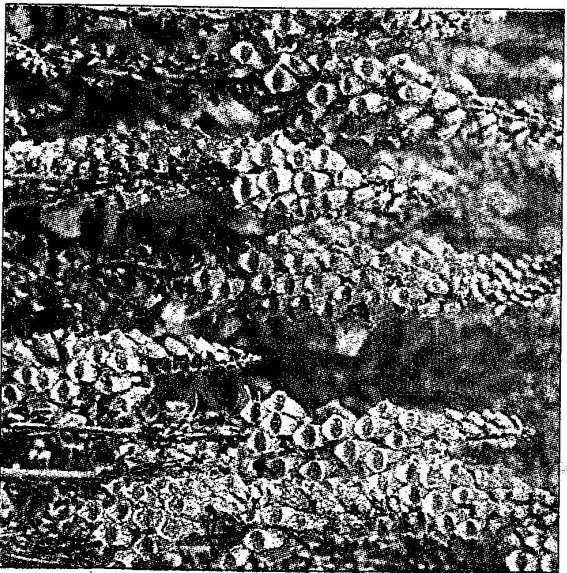
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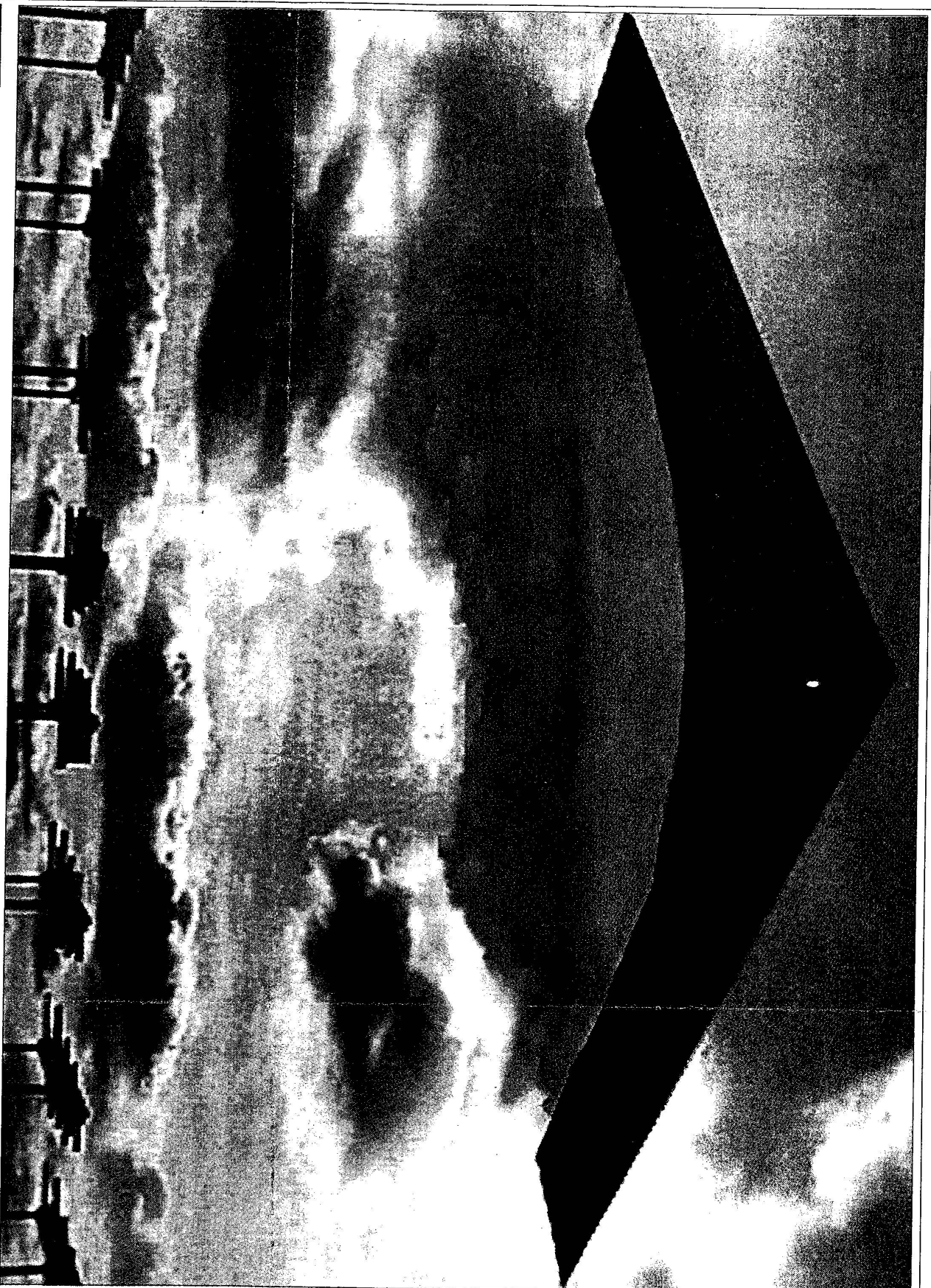
The Guardian Thursday September 30 1989

A rich field for study Page S2



5 pages of classified

Lapping laptops Page S3



# The truth is up there...

There's a government cover-up over the latest wave of UFO sightings, reports **David Hambling**. However, it's not infiltration by aliens that's being disguised but America's latest flying sorcery

In the late 1950s there was a rash of sightings of silver craft flying at extreme altitude. Many put these down to flying saucers, a belief which was not discouraged by the CIA. This was not part of a

Roswell-style cover-up, simply an effort to maintain the secrecy around the new U-2 spyplane. Changing the metallic finish to a matt one caused the sightings to tail off. The SR-71 Blackbird, another secret plane,

triggered UFO stories when it first streaked across radar screens at Mach 3; and in the 80s witnesses mistook a prototype B-2 stealth bomber for something from another world. So when there are reports of strange, silent,

boomerang-shaped craft, perhaps we should start looking closer to home than Zeta Reticulus. The reports are certainly consistent. A wave of sightings over Williamsburg included accounts from some

35 witnesses. What they described was triangular or boomerang-shaped, about 60 metres across and flew silently or with a low rumbling sound. It was very slow — some thought it paused to hover — and after

some minutes it seemed to melt into the night sky. This would all be quite inexplicable, except for a trail of evidence leading to a secret, "black" aircraft called — since nobody will admit that it exists, **Page S3** ▶

# plants

biotechnology industry. Since the dawn of agricultural practices 10 to 12 millennia ago, farmers have constantly tried to get the best yield from their crops. Biotechnology can be thought of as an evolution of traditional agricultural methods and can be used to overcome factors like drought, pests, weeds and wind which normally adversely affect plant productivity.

Conventional plant breeding involves the crossing of plants and "shuffling of genes" over many generations to improve certain qualities. However, while obtaining beneficial traits, toxins or allergenic proteins may be an unwanted side-effect that creeps in. Genetic modification, on the other hand is an efficient way of precisely enhancing a specific quality. By combining modern technology with old practices, farmers will be able to produce crops more efficiently and cost effectively. Plants have been

genetically modified to produce drugs and edible vaccines. Vaccines in vegetables and fruit are being developed to reduce infant death from hepatitis, cholera or diarrhoeal disease in developing countries. Bananas are inexpensive to produce and can be eaten raw, they are native to many developing countries and are one of the first foods eaten by infants. Packaged inside the banana, the vaccine is easy to store and distribute without the need for refrigeration. Perhaps a banana a day will keep the doctor away. Certain crops which are highly susceptible to plant viruses, such as melons, squash and cucumbers, can be given a genetic vaccine to help reduce the spread of crop disease and the need for chemical sprays. Many foodstuffs contain allergens. Peanuts cause a severe and often fatal allergic response in some people. Rice is a major food in Asia but there is a high rate of rice allergy in the population. But biotechnologists are identified the part of rice that causes the allergic response using the creation of allergen-free products. Some species of aquatic plants like duckweed naturally mop up heavy metal contaminants from air-water habitats. Furthermore, these tiny plants are able to convert a metal from a toxic to a more benign form. Plants

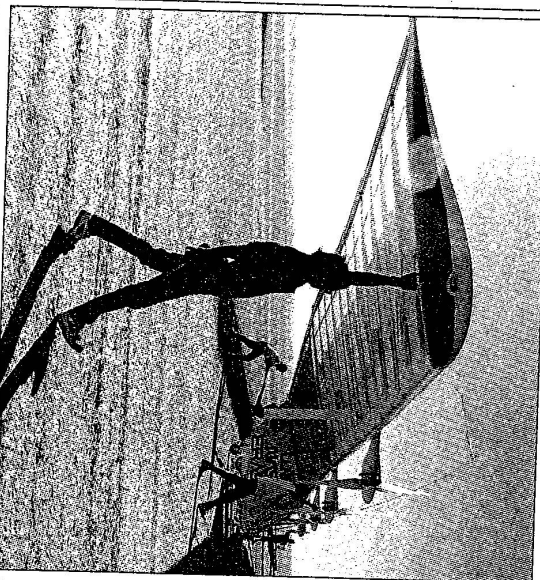
can also be genetically engineered for bioremediation to take up pollutants and break them down into less hazardous by-products. Worldwide, large amounts of soil and groundwater are contaminated with organic pollutants, such as the areas around ammunition production, processing and test-sites. As many of these compounds are toxic, this poses a significant potential health risk to humans and wildlife.

Dr Neil Bruce's group at the Institute of Biotechnology in Cambridge has engineered transgenic plants to produce a microbial enzyme that completely degrades explosives such as TNT into harmless compounds. This technique - phytoremediation - is becoming a reality. Plants are highly adaptable to their environment and have evolved to survive extreme environments such as the desert. They can be genetically modified to withstand low-temperatures and flooding or to be more tolerant to salt and metals in the earth.

## Even nature's poisons have medicinal and cosmetic roles

These improvements allow crops to be grown in areas where previously they could not survive. With increasing world population and loss of suitable land for farming this is a hugely beneficial application of biotechnology. With the global population set to reach more than 8 billion people by 2050, plant biotechnology could help to alleviate hunger world-wide through the development of crop varieties with increased yields and requiring fewer fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides. Their contribution to the development of new drugs for human and animal health is of huge importance, particularly with the rise of the antibiotic-resistant superbugs. Plants are our green gold and have the potential to be the biofactories of the future. Surely this is food for thought.

*Dr Claire Cockcroft is a molecular biologist at the Institute of Biotechnology in Cambridge.*



Sun seeker: NASA's first solar powered plane

## The truth is up there

↑ **page S1** we will invent a name for it - Solaris. In 1981 Solar Challenger became the first solar-powered aircraft to cross the channel.

There was little commercial interest, but the military recognised its potential. An unmanned version could stay up as long as sunlight lasts. Given rechargeable batteries it could, in principle, stay aloft indefinitely. This was the intention when NASA secretly constructed Halesol, a solar-powered drone with a 60 metre wingspan. It flew well enough, but was shelved because of technological limitations.

Nine years later Halesol was made public and turned over to civilian use under the name Pathfinder. It now forms part of the NASA's Environment Research and Sensor Technology program. Lockheed assisted NASA with another classified project, Solar Happ (High Altitude Powered Platform); the goal was a craft capable of staying in flight for a year at a time. The project shifted from

Lockheed Missiles & Space to Lockheed Aeronautical Systems, the arm of the company known for black projects.

No hardware was officially built, but the end of the program coincided with the start of Maginot which projected a very large high-endurance drone.

Then there was Raptor. Not to be confused with the F-22 aircraft which took the Raptor name later, this one was a science-fiction concept put forward by the Ballistic Missile Defence Organisation.

It was a solution to the allied failure to track down mobile Scud launchers in the Gulf War. Solar powered, Raptor would stay permanently on patrol, scanning the ground with eagle eyes and intercepting Scuds with tiny Talon missiles.

Whichever program gave rise to Solaris, what distinguishes it from its white cousins like Pathfinder is stealth. Like the B-2 bomber, it has a flying-wing configuration with the engines concealed behind raddar-baffling grilles. Electrical power means there is no visible contrail to worry

about, and no hot exhaust plume for infra-red seekers to spot. It's quieter than any jet too.

It can be visually stealthy as well. Flying at Pathfinder's ceiling of over 50,000 feet, Solaris might just be visible as a dot swimming in the blue on a clear day. Then again, it might not.

Austrian tests with translucent aircraft coverings in 1912 produced planes which were impossible to locate at 400 metres. These were never robust enough for use in the field.

Interestingly, Halesol's wings are also translucent: it actually benefits from sunlight reflected from below as well. The USAF has also reportedly experimented with chameleon skins that can change the luminosity of an aircraft to match the background.

Conventional batteries are too heavy for a solar sailplane, but fuel cells offer an acceptable energy-to-weight ratio. In daytime water is electrolysed and the hydrogen stored in a series of bladders in the

will efficiently self-destruct leaving few clues for would-be Mulders to examine. The design has its limitations. Solaris is painfully slow by military standards, and though it is big, it is as light as any glider and the payload does not exceed 500 kilos. This is a fraction of what spy planes like the U-2 and the Global Hawk drone carry, and not enough for most reconnaissance missions.

What Solaris can do is nocturnal snooping. By day it stays out of sight at high altitude; at night it descends to a few hundred metres. Low stall speed and quiet engines allow Solaris to loiter close to suspect installations, sniffing out trace emissions that signal nuclear, biological and chemical warfare activity. Numerous sightings of the silent craft near nuclear power stations would suggest that equipment for detecting the presence of nuclear material is being tested, possibly by monitoring neutron emissions.

Is Solaris more than a flight of fancy? It is difficult to prove; like the U-2 and SR-71 before it, it will remain under wraps as long as it is flying clandestine missions. Apart from industry rumours, there are two reasons to believe that it is real.

One is the continuing series of sightings in the US and elsewhere of huge flying triangles. Another is the emergence of the AeroCraft in NASA's new Revolutionary Concepts program which utilises technology from the black world to build X-Planes.

The AeroCraft is a hybrid aircraft/airship in a flying-wing configuration, designed by Lockheed-Martins Skunk Works. It is not something they just knocked up: the advanced design points to a spin-off from an existing project.

The truth is up there, out of sight. And it won't be coming down for some time.

## Science update

### Crystal flips

If you hear your laptop gently tapping, don't worry, it's working fine. Physicists at Pennsylvania State University have found that the liquid crystals in the display screen can vibrate the surrounding glass, causing a quiet sloshing sound. The crystals are organic molecules that reflect different amounts of light when flipped by an electric field: when the researchers applied 30 volts to liquid

### Lucky stars

Nottingham University researchers have sent a clover into orbit. The experiment, they say, is to cast light on the mutual help plants and soil bacteria give to each other: microgravity should cause changes to the normal structure of the clover seedlings and affect the way in which bacteria colonise their roots. The research could lead to the introduction of plants as life support systems for long-distance

### Fat chance

It's not a good time to be a fat molecule: there are few places left to hide. Researchers at Millennium Pharmaceuticals and the Whitehead Institute in Massachusetts have now identified a protein - labelled FATP4 - that is involved in transporting fatty acid molecules from the intestine into the body. FATP4 is abundant in the lining of the intestine, and, when added to other cells, dramatically increases the

manned flights. Ensure the clover has four leaves, however, and astronaut's might be even keener to have it on board. NASA have yet to confirm whether the replacement Mars weather probe will also carry an experiment to study the effects of microgravity on a rabbit's foot.

uptake of fat. But when the researchers stopped the protein working, less fat was taken up. They believe the breakthrough may lead to new treatments for obesity.

Meanwhile, Oregon Health Sciences University researchers have pinpointed a "fat thermostat" in the brain. By using tiny electrodes to trace the activity of neurons, they found two pathways that appeared to be linked with the body's control of appetite and metabolism. One pathway to the fat thermostat stimulates feeding, while the other maintains metabolic rates, and both are connected to a small area within the hypothalamus. The researchers are hoping that they will now be able to design a drug that resets the thermostat to a lower level, making weight loss easier. *Michael Brooks*

# G2

## Interview

Sheena McDonald:  
back from the  
brink  
4



## In today's

# guide

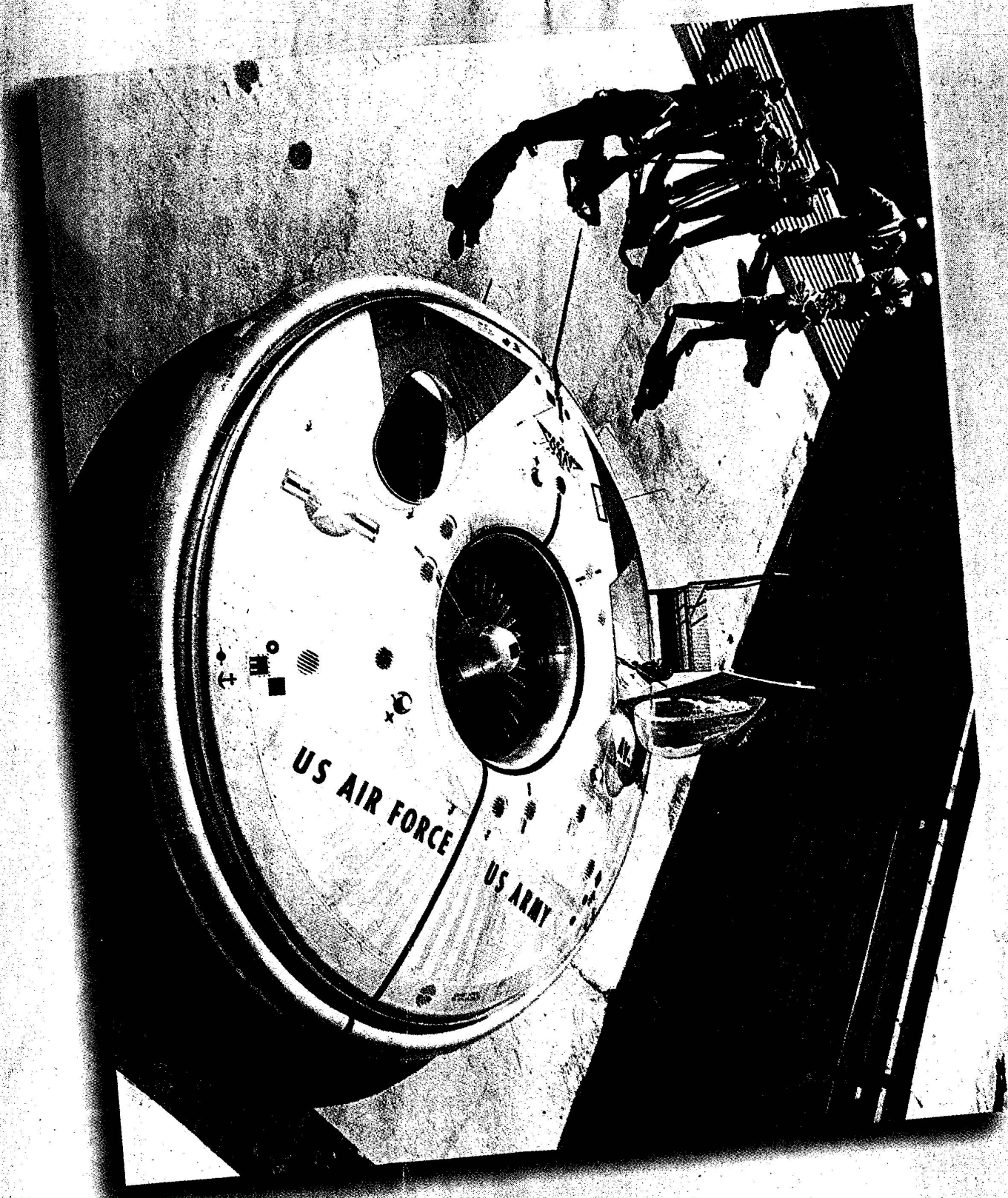
Mark Lawson's  
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## Plus

# media

Ginny Dougary —  
the woman who got  
Portillo to talk  
**And hundreds of jobs**

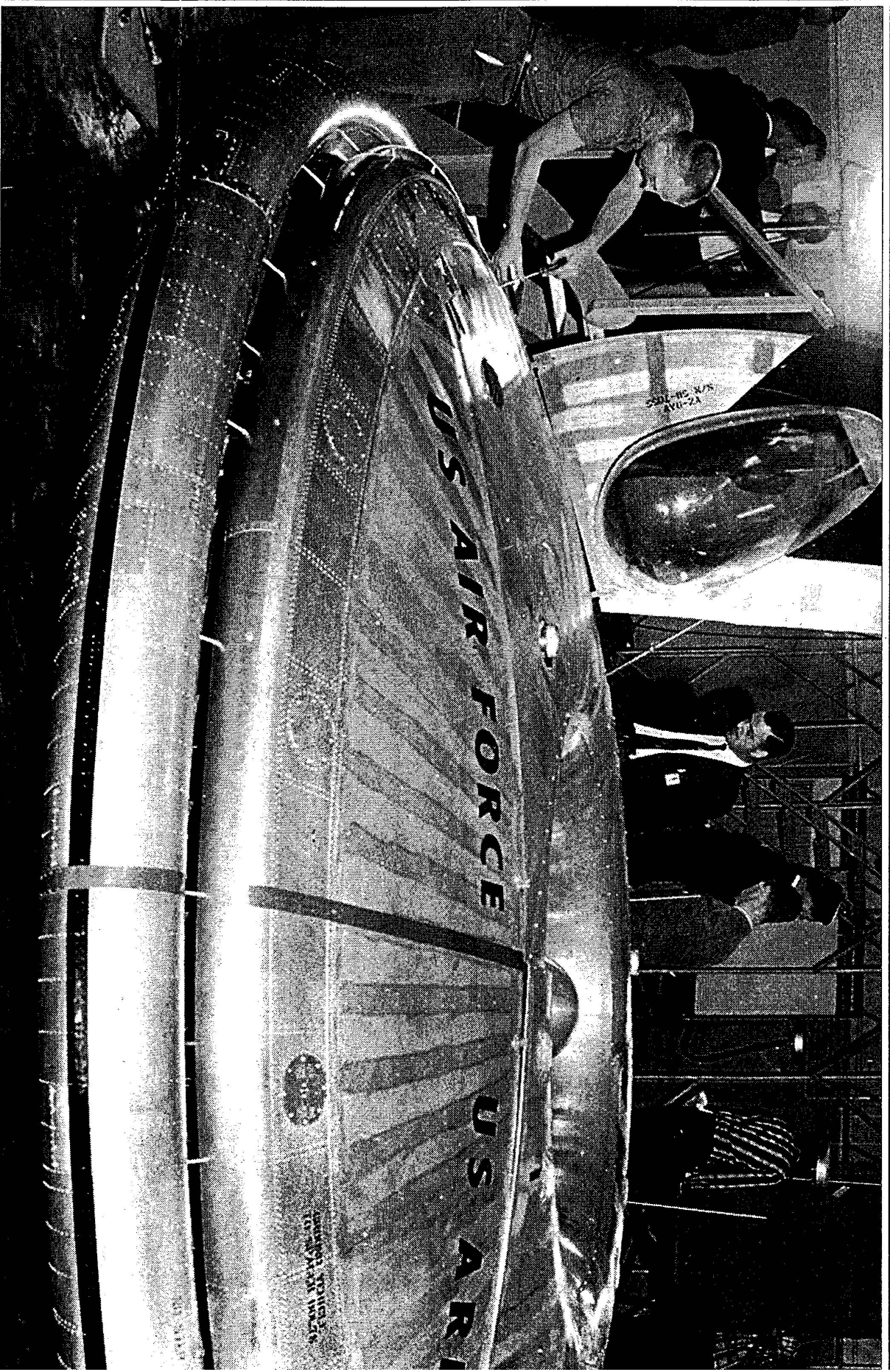
The Guardian Monday September 13 1999 ● Women 6 ● Portrait 8 ● Wheels 10 ● Arts 12-15 ● LA confidential 16 ● Crossword 23



# Identified Flying Object

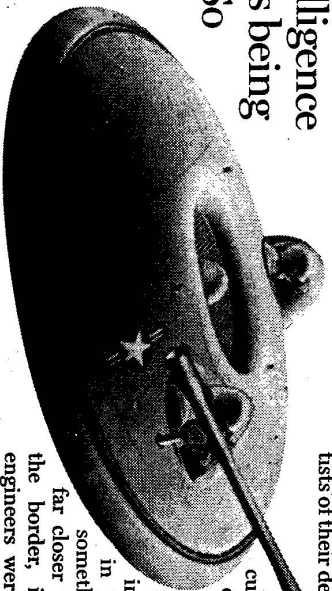
This is a photograph of one of the strangest and most secret craft ever created, a jet-powered saucer built by a British aviation genius for the US military. Julian Berger unravels the Cold War mystery of Project Y





# It came from outer Toronto

In 1954, a memo was fired off to CIA department heads demanding intelligence on new 'saucer-like' flying machines being developed by Britain and Canada. So began the race to develop the most unlikely weapon of the Cold War. **Julian Borger** on the quixotic brainchild of a British engineer



**T**he year was 1952 and the cold war was at full chill. Joe McCarthy's Un-American Activities Committee was looking for reds under beds, and UFO sightings were spreading like an epidemic across the United States. Even air-force pilots reported being pursued by flying saucers. The sense of dread was turning to frenzy and the CIA decided something had to be done.

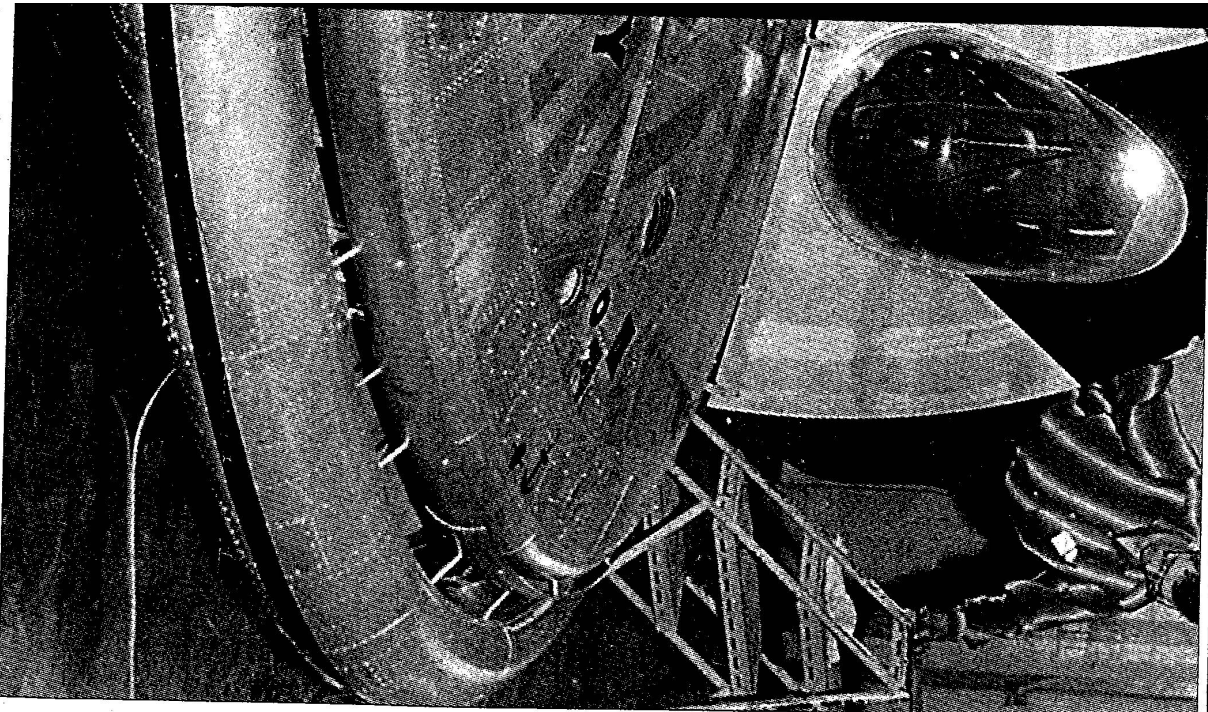
In one of his many memos on the subject, H Marshall Chadwell, the deputy head of the agency's Office of Scientific Intelligence, declared that "something was going on that must have immediate attention". He and others in the CIA were concerned that the Soviet Union was developing a secret weapon based on the "flying discs" the Nazis were rumoured to have constructed in the last months of the war.

Recently released documents from the CIA archive are full of accounts by former German scientists of their desperate work to save the fatherland with revolutionary circular aircraft supposedly capable of enormous speeds. But when the CIA set up a study group to look into the phenomenon in 1952, it discovered something extraordinary far closer to home. Just over the border, in Canada, British engineers were in the process of

building a flying saucer of their own. It was called Project Y - a joint British-Canadian venture into the unknown which was, for much of the 50s, perhaps the most secret aviation project in the western world. A half-century on, the Project Y story remains a remarkable forgotten chapter in the history of aerial design, an idea that came tantalisingly close to breaking all the rules of the sky, before collapsing in bitter disappointment for lack of money and faith.

Back in the 50s, the news that British boffins were building a saucer set-off alarm bells at the CIA. Was the US being left behind by its staunchest allies in the race for a technological edge? And if Britain and Canada could build a flying saucer, then surely the Soviet Union would be far ahead.

Chadwell wanted answers. The sense of urgency is tangible in a memorandum he sent in June 1954 to his department heads, demanding reports on "the use by any foreign power or nation of non-conventional types of air vehicles, such as or similar to the 'saucer-like' planes presently under development by the Anglo/British Canadian efforts".



The search for the holy grail... so secret that sketches were put in special garbage bags after use

vertical take-off and high speeds.

The experiments turned out to be extremely difficult and involved many casualties," the professor observed drily, clearly rueful that the spinning top experiments had not come to fruition before the arrival of the Red Army.

He concluded: "The future will show whether the flying discs are only the products of imagination or whether they are the results of a far-advanced German science which possibly, as well as the nearly finished atomic bombs, may have fallen into the hands of the Russians."

Some of the Luftwaffe's top engineers did indeed end up in Moscow, while a handful, such as Werner von Braun and Dr Miethe, were spirited away to the west. Dr von Braun, of course, became the father of the US space programme. No one seems sure what became of Miethe.

In his own work at Malton, John Frost seemed to be groping his way. He was in search of the aeronautical holy grail of the age, the vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) craft, but began his research on a spade-shaped craft before settling in 1953 on a disc. The original concept called for a single flat turbo-jet to draw air in from above and force it out through nozzles around the edge of the craft. It would be kept aloft by a cushion of air and pulled upwards by the Coanda effect.

The early work was carried out in total secrecy. Only a handful of Avro workers were told what was going on, and even some of the engineers fashioning individual components were not informed what they were for.

It was so secret that when Frost would come to the welding shop, he would sketch the piece he wanted on some paper, and when he had finished he had to put the sketch in a special garbage bag. Alex Raeburn, Avro's workshop superintendent at the time, recalled:

Verne Morse, the company photographer, was made privy to the secret only once it had already begun to take shape. "There was a stupid rumour going around the plant that we were building a flying saucer, and everybody was laughing about it," he said. "Then one day I was called in by security, and I was told I need clearance because we were building a flying saucer."

"My first impression was that this was ridiculous," he said, but when he was taken past the guards, through Project Y's double doors and saw the smooth metal disc taking shape, he was speechless. "It was a sense of 'Wow! Just real awe.'"

But Project Y's first year was proving troublesome. The jet engine blew

so hot it melted the steel structure of the craft, and its violent shaking would pop the rivets. When the gentlemen from the USAF arrived in September 1953, the Canadian government, having spent \$400,000 on the project, was glad to hand over the reins to a bigger sponsor. AV Roe, having failed to squeeze funds out of the British government, also welcomed the Americans with open arms.

In 1955, Project Y became the US defence department weapon system 606A, and a white USAF star was painted on the prototype's fuselage. Millions were now being poured into the project, and the cult of secrecy deepened yet further.

Alex Raeburn recalled the day in 1959 that the US navy came to take the prototype away for wind tunnel tests near Los Angeles. "We loaded it on a flatbed truck in the middle of the night. The police shut off all the traffic right down to Toronto harbour, and they put it on a US tugboat. They even had one of our men sworn in to the US navy so he could go with it, along the Erie Canal, along the New York inter-coastal waterway, and through the Panama Canal."

With the help of the US funding, Frost had redesigned the original concept, placing three small jet engines around a central fan which would suck the air in through a circular intake at the centre of the disc. The pilot would sit in a little oval cockpit to one side under a perspex bubble.

But the wind tunnel tests suggested that secret weapon 606A had severe stability problems and was in constant danger of flipping over like a stiff pancake once the throttles were opened on its jets. Frost and his assistants tinkered away at the problems for another year, but had still not mastered them by the winter of 1960 when Spud Potocki, a former Polish air-force flyer, took the prototype for its first flight.

Ernie Happe, another British engineer, was one of the few allowed to watch. "We were standing around it, and it was tethered with three cables to stop it flipping. It just went up a couple of feet off the ground, and Potocki was sitting in the cabin fiddling around with the controls, trying to make it do what it was supposed to."

Over the next few months, as Potocki attained a feel for the delicate controls, he was allowed to roam around the Avro compound free of his tethers, dodging in and out of the hangars. Raeburn would often look out of his workshop window and see it floating by.

"He would go up and down and hover over the concrete apron and look in the doors of the hangars. I remember the wind would blow

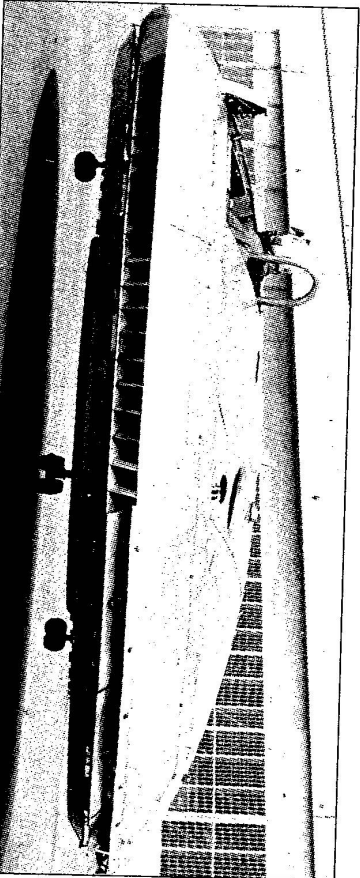


# Pass Notes

No: 1480  
Tom Jones

**Age:** 59  
**Appearance:** If it's wearing leather and if your gran dreams about it, it's Jones.  
**Now that you mention it, I can't stop thinking about him:** It's not unusual.  
**So, what's he doing at the moment?** You mean what's new, pussycat?  
**Enough already with the lyrics. What is the grandfather of Wales up to?** His new single, *Burning The House Down*, is out today.  
**Shouldn't he be hanging out in a cardigan, with his pipe and slippers, by now?** Close. He's hanging out with *the* Cardigans. No word on the slippers though.  
**Excuse me?** Fluffy Scandinavian pop group, the Cardigans, join the swivel-hipped one on the new single, a Talking Heads cover.  
**Speaking of covers, doesn't Jones have a bit of a reputation?** I hope you're not hinting at extra-curricular activities.  
**Not at all. I meant musical covers, not bedtime ones.** Apologies. Kiss?  
**That's a bit forward.** No, Kiss was the cover he did with the *Art of Noise*, on the song by the artist formerly known as Prince.  
**Pants?** Wondered when you'd bring that up. What Jones refers to as the Underwear Situation started in 1968 when his brow got rather hot playing at the Copacabana Club, New York. Having run out of napkins to pass her idol, one of the "ladies" in the audience removed her knickers. Which Jones used and returned. Before you could say "personal hygiene" a trend was born.  
**Don't mention:** The tax collector. Rumours of a £4m windfall for the Inland Revenue circulated a couple of years ago when Jones, who earns an estimated £10m a year, was planning to move back to Blighty for good.  
**Most likely to say:** "Does this come in leather?"  
**Least likely to say:** "Pass the Viagra."  
**Not to be confused with:** Aled Jones. Erogenous zones.

The Guardian Monday September 13 1999 • 3



Onwards and upwards... former Polish airforce flyer Spud Potocki would dodge in and out of the hangars at the Avro compound as he tried out the US defence department's secret weapon, 606A

include the "e" from Roe), which was in turn part of the legendary aviation group, Hawker-Siddeley. During the war, its engineers had been famous for the Hurricane fighter and the Avro Lancaster bomber. Now, under the lens of the cold war, they were trying something completely different.

After the war, Malton was the place to be for hotshot aircraft designers fleeing Britain's doomed aviation industry. Among them was a jolly spoken, supremely talented 31-year-old called John Carver Meadows Frost, who had already earned a reputation for unorthodox design with the sleek De Havilland DH.108, a swallow-shaped research plane and arguably one of the most beautiful aircraft of all time.

Frost was brought to Avro-Canada by a contract to design a new fighter, a pugnose design he never really liked. He soon became beset with far more radical departures from orthodoxy. It is unclear whether he drew inspiration from the increasingly widespread popular legend of alien-piloted flying saucers skimming through the post-war skies or how much he relied on previous research.

He would have known about the "Coanda effect", named after a French Romanian inventor, Henri Coanda, who experimented with the first rudimentary jet engine early as 1910. Coanda found that a hot jet would not only provide thrust. By sucking in air, it could also create a vacuum above the wing and thereby produce extra lift.

There is a lot of evidence that in

# Now I'll say what I want to say . . .

**Simon Fanshawe** feels for Michael Portillo. He too has been dogged by vile rumours

**A**ll my public life I have been the victim of slurs, stories that I am sure many people took for the truth. Ugly rumours have dogged me throughout my career. There have been photographers who have claimed that I was seen in "straight" night clubs. There have been people who said that they saw me in Mothercare. Others who have claimed that I was uneasy discussing interior decoration or facial treatments. That I have, in late night conversations, expressed trenchant, pro-marriage opinions.

That when I was at Sussex University, I spent time socialising with women and was not the dashing, handsome, attractive, flamboyant, full-lipped, sexually ambiguous Flashman character that I appear today. Instead, that I was dull, unattractive and destined for a career in engineering. In other words, it has been suggested that I was of the man-on-top-get-it-over-with-quick, marrying-kind.

These suggestions were vile untruths which I have been prepared to go to court to challenge. Have I ever slept with a woman? Well, I will say what I want to say. I had some heterosexual experiences as a young person. But I want to make it perfectly clear that all the time I have been in public life there has been nothing of that sort whatsoever. No women. None at all. Not even a close and prominent colleague who has been the victim of a similar whispering campaign.

Why have I been dogged by these stories, you ask? I think that they became so widespread because people set out to pass around the most damaging stories about me that they could think of. The fact that they were true makes the rumours no less vicious. They were unfounded slurs on my character, even though they were based on fact and I never told you all about them before. They were rumours because I did not come clean about them. Of course they happened, but that's no reason for people to go round making them up.

Now is the time for truth. You may say that telling the truth is an absolute, that there is no right time and wrong time. But, believe me, if you had seen the state of the Labour party in the early Seventies, when being straight was as close to being on the management of the National Coal Board as you could get, saying I was having "experiences" with women would have been tantamount to hanging up my Save The Whale badge, packing away my dungarees, starting to eat meat again, getting off the dole and acquiring a job. I don't even have got elected to the parish council, let alone fulfil

my historic destiny as a radical gay comedian.

We live in more tolerant times now, times in which people are perfectly able to cope with double standards and lying about one's past. People understand that now, apart from being on television, getting elected is the only sure sign that one exists. Yes I campaigned for single parents and against marriage but I took the view that heterosexual sex was more traumatic for a young man of 16 than gay sex. It certainly was for me. But coming clean about who I am now - even though I haven't ever done it again promise, promise, cross my heart and hope to die - even though all my friends went to such great lengths to say that I was never involved with women, shows just how brave I am. Now I am prepared to stand up and fight for my values even though many open heterosexuals risked ridicule for years to make it possible for me for me to be straight with you now.

I know that for decades millions of them have put up with attacks and snide remarks that they were stiff-wristed or too masculine and always wanted to dress in dowdy and unflamboyant clothes. I have no regrets about that. I cannot believe that about that happened a generation ago could be big news. After all, there are many married members of the cabinet now and some who, in a moment of madness, have even had children. I was keen to put to rest the rumours. In my youth I was straight. But I am happily in a relationship with a man. And it's all behind me now.



**Have I ever slept with a woman? All the time I've been in public life there has been nothing of that sort**

He's been a comedy diver, an escape artist and Portrait Pipe Smoker of the Year. But Trevor Bayliss will always be best known for his ingenious inventions. **Tim Radford** on the man and his memoirs

# The father of invention

**T**revor Bayliss the inventor has a swimming pool just inside his front door and a hot tub on his upper deck. The Thames flows past him, just feet away. He always has a dog called either Monty or Rommel (the latest is Monty) and he has pictures of himself all over the house.

He also has a set of files marked Ego 1, Ego 2, Ego 3, and so on. He has an ego as big as a truck. "You know me," he says. "I've got an ego as big as a truck." He could talk about himself all day, but he doesn't. A conversation meant to be about him tends to turn to people less fortunate, or to people he admires - other British inventors. "The one word that seems to be common to them all is 'poverty'. Usually when the money rolls in, the inventor is rolled out. That hasn't happened to me." He certainly hasn't suffered financially, like some. Not that it made a difference to how he lived, he says. He has lived for 30 years on Bell Pie Island, an inhabited sandbank in the Thames near Twickenham. "What would I be doing in the Cayman Islands with my bucket and spade?"

As all the world should know by now - because Trevor Bayliss can bend an ear with the best of them - this ebullient former stunt man with a training in structural engineering and a modest domestic swimming pool business heard some TV talk about the difficulty of issuing warnings about Aids in Africa because, without power or batteries, radios were useless. So he

invented a clockwork wind-up radio: twist the handle for 60 seconds and you can hear the whole of the World At One and The Archers too. It wasn't easy, or quick, and once he had immense difficulty persuading anyone to take him seriously. But then he got mentioned in a BBC programme and suddenly the angels arrived.

The clockwork radio is being built in Africa, by disabled people. Around 120,000 machines are made every month. There was a meeting with Nelson Mandela and an OBE from

**You see, 'he says returning to his theme, 'we are surrounded by spivs, crooks and vulture capitalists'**

the Queen. There are his spots on the Big Breakfast show on Channel 4. Believe him, though as a secondary modern schoolboy (faded) from Hendon with an estuary accent, he has had his problems with the smooth ones in suits. Turned him over like a turkey, they did, first time he thought of something to help the disabled. So he wants to do something to help all the inventors less lucky than him. He wants to create an Academy of invention, in the form of a limited company, to help the innocent innovator through the

thickets of patent law and the jungles of venture capital.

"No way José are you going to sell your product - because they are always looking at the inventor, not the invention," he says. "We do all the stuff you can't do for yourself, on the understanding that we can share in your success. Then we sell you to the highest bidder. We make sure your Ming vase hasn't got a crack in it. We will try and see that UK plc has first stab at it, but if UK plc doesn't come up with the reserve - rather like a Ming vase has a reserve on it - we can offer it overseas. We are trying to get the best for the inventor."

Bright ideas get sucked up by industry all the time, but the people who had them often end up with brass farthings. Bayliss doesn't want to see the same thing happen to the lonely, frustrated men and women inventing things in Britain today. Women? Yes, like Irene White of Essex, who invented a talking potty: "Her daughter had a kidney and potty-training was a problem, so she put a chip, literally, in the bottom of the potty. When young Tyrone sits on the pot and has a piss it goes. Well done, Tyrone!" There's another girl called Damini Kumar who has made a non-drip teapot. She's had all sorts of problems. She's a great woman engineer. She's all the things that an engineer is not supposed to be. An engineer is supposed to be a bloke covered in oil, and if you saw Damini, you'd think, "Blimey!" Then there's Laura Wollen of Hampshire who, with her husband,

# It came from outer Toronto

**page 3** suck the ice off the puddles and they would float around in the air-like plates of glass," Raeburn said. Avro's management was overjoyed to see their flying saucer take to the air. The publicity department began designing brochures to capitalise on the aircraft's boundless potential for the day when the shroud of secrecy would drop away. It was to be called the Avrocar, and it would spawn a string of civilian and military spin-offs.

There would be an Avrowagon for the family of the future, an Avrowangel (an air ambulance that would zip to the scene of an accident and land on the spot) and an Avropelican for air-sea rescues and anti-submarine warfare. Ken Padfrey, a draughtsman on the project, remembers Frost's own far-reaching hopes for his project. "He was planning to make one four times as big, to move troops in and out of battle, like helicopters do now."

The giant troop carriers would lurk under the enemy radar, drop their passengers and then zip into the stratosphere before the other side even spotted them. Hapke recalls Frost excitedly visualising the craft bouncing off the upper layers of the atmosphere, crossing continents in a single bound. The reality was more mundane. The Avrocar hovered happily close to solid ground but became dangerously unstable at heights much over eight feet, however much Spud Potocki struggled with the controls. The USAF wanted to fit it with a tailplane to test whether that would correct the problem, but Frost, a design purist, refused to countenance the idea. "He wouldn't have it. When the