

Baylis... wants to help budding inventors, such as the woman who thought up the talking potty
PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

He had a bad experience with a groping clergyman in 1943, but some pretty good experiences with his mum and dad, with his friends, with his mates in National Service, with his career, with a procession of girls, with machines, with sport (he just missed the Olympic swimming team in 1956) and he tells it all in his lively new autobiography - which, he volunteers quite frankly, is ghosted. But it's written in language which connoisseurs will recognise as pure Baylis: a mixture of unashamedly dated references and wholeheartedly awful jokes.

During the war his mum discovered a new use for stale old food, he says: "We ate it." His idea of a perfectly balanced diet? A bacon sandwich in each hand. He had started doing comedy diving to sell PVC-lined swimming pools, he ended up as an underwater escapist called *Ramesses II* in a Berlin amphitheatre. In between, he submerged himself beneath Peter Cook and Dudley Moore in one or two of their watery acts. He persuaded the young Austin Mitchell (yes, the Labour MP) to go swimming with a killer whale called Cuddles. Once he'd got through to the right people with his wind-up radio, he dived into the media circus. This is *Your Life, The Big Breakfast, A One-2-One* advertisement that paired him with Frank Whittle, jet engine inventor. Pipe Smoker Of The Year. An invitation to debate at Oxford. He loved it all. But he also uses words like "posh" and "la-di-da" as if the English class system still rankled.

"I've learned something in my 62 years," he says. "I don't mind anybody looking down on me, as long as they don't expect me to be looking up. If someone's got a problem with me, it's their problem. They say, 'You're eccentric.' Well, if being eccentric means you live in a house with an indoor swimming pool, a hot tub out the front, well, let's be eccentric. I do genuinely believe convention is an obstacle to progress. You give a conventional person a problem, they'll come up with a conventional solution. But if you look at it in a completely bizarre way, go out into your dreamworld, that's where the solutions to your problems are. But people think you are out of the trees. Conventional people can't handle unconventional behaviour."

Clock This, Trevor Baylis's autobiography, is published by Headline, price £18.99

one would want to see it and warns me not to get too close lest I be abducted by aliens.

The burnished metal disc, about 15 yards across, is lying unsung and forlorn under the wing of a second world war Black Widow fighter. The perspex bubble over the cabin has been removed, its instrument panel is lying in a cardboard box somewhere else. But you can still see where the edges were charred in the effort to get John Frost's flawed vision off the ground.

Jack Walker is getting impatient and shaking his head. We are lingering too long in a cul-de-sac of aviation history and there are other more important aircraft to see. "I'm not an aeronautical engineer," he shouts over his shoulder. "But no way was that ever going to fly."

has made a squeezebox: "It's so elegant. You have to squeeze the top to make it open, then you can put your hand in. When you drop it, it snaps closed so it stops you dropping your chips and fish pieces all over the floor. Cardboard engineering - they've been through all sorts of problems bringing it to the marketplace, because they don't have all the skills or all the connections. You see," he says, returning to his theme, "we are surrounded by spivs, crooks and vulture capitalists."

As he sees it, if you can solve a problem, you are on the way to becoming an inventor. The solution might be different enough to be protected by a patent. Doing that is expensive, and tricky. If you tell everybody about your invention, you've lost it. That's called disclosure. "Now if you can't talk to anybody, who do you talk to? You talk to yourself? The first stage of madness. The frustrations come in and then you become paranoid. You also don't know how good your invention is, because it might be crap."

He says it's a hell of a thing: you have to be an entrepreneur; you have to have ability, confidence, skills, wit, charm and the right showmanship. Not all of us have those qualities, he says, charmingly, and with the confidence of a natural showman. He grew up in wartime London, and traces his passion for making things back to a box of Meccano which he liberated from a pile of scrap.

of leaving his job, he died. He was 63.

The legend of Project Y lives on in the web pages of committed UFOlogists. Some speculate that it had in fact been a stunning success, and the sad litany of design errors and disappointments recalled by Avro veterans was merely a cover story. Others believe the whole project was merely a smokescreen for the Pentagon's "real" flying saucer project being masterminded in secret bases such as Roswell, perhaps by mysterious super-annated Nazis like Dr. Miché.

As for secret weapon 606A, the prototype is gathering dust in a corner of a Maryland warehouse which serves as a storage facility for the National Air and Space Museum. Jack Walker, a veteran pilot who shows visitors around, cannot understand why any-

commercial planes. But it was small beer compared to the cosmic ambitions of Project Y, and the sense of betrayal was as keen as ever when he finally retired in May 1979.

In his valedictory interviews, Frost told the local press that he had been robbed of credit for inventing the hovercraft by Sir Christopher Cockerell. The irony was that at Malton, Frost's eyes had been so set on the skies he failed to spot the Avrocar's ground-hugging potential under his nose. Within a few days

Americans suggested that, it was about the only time I ever saw him angry," Palfrey recalls.

Frost insisted he could fix the problems, but the US military was rapidly losing interest. After spending \$7.5m, the defence department pulled the plug at the end of 1961, killing both the Avrocar and inflicting a final fatal blow to Avro, which struggled for a few more years before finally collapsing in 1965.

Frost left the country a bitter man in 1961. "He was completely fed up," Palfrey said. "It was a sad story. He was a fine guy. A gentleman."

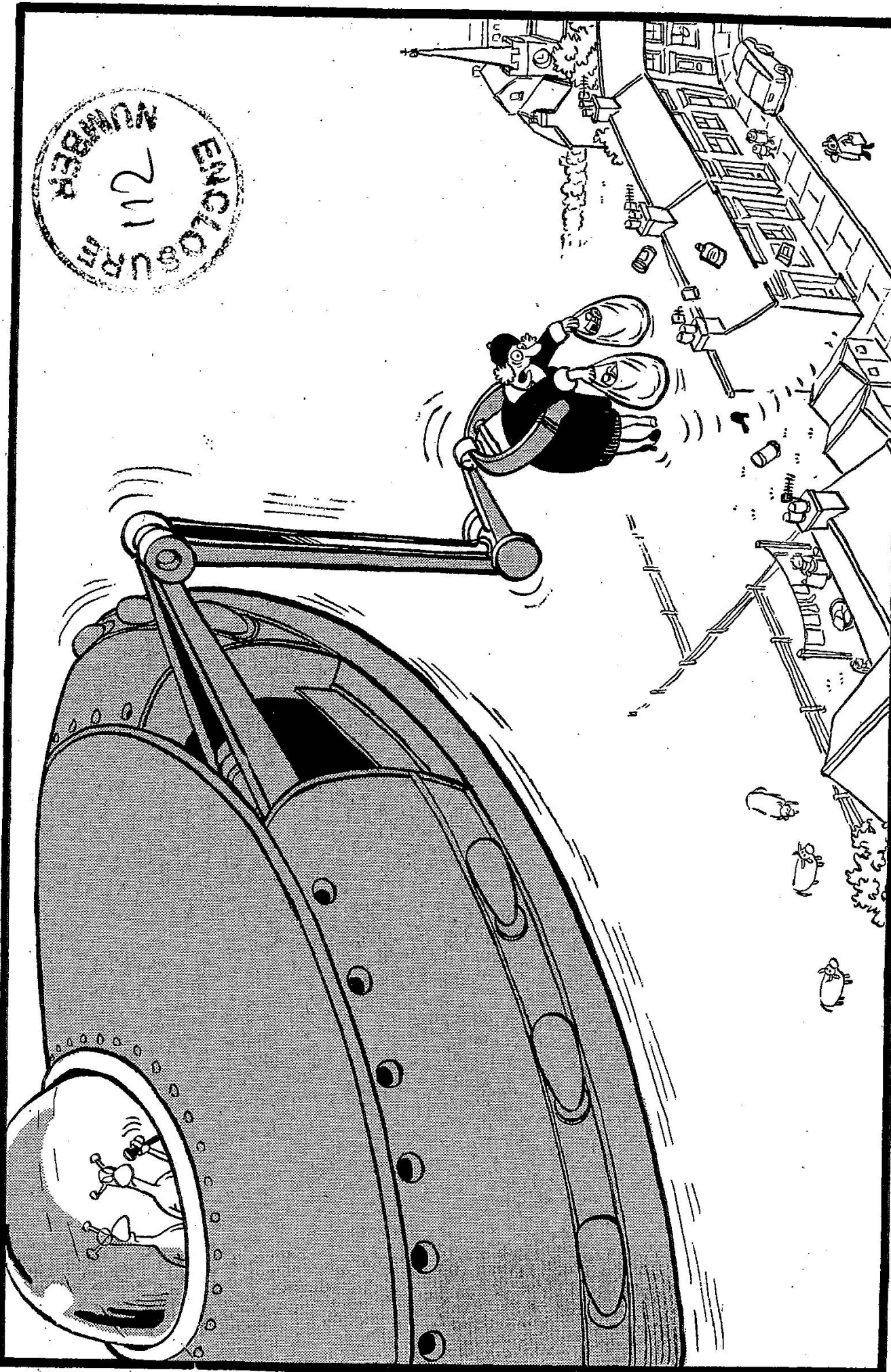
The British designer ended up in Auckland, where he spent the rest of his days dreaming up gadgets for Air New Zealand, such as a hydraulic tail door to allow engineers easy access to



Flights of fantasy... the publicity department at Avro designed brochures, anticipating the day when their flying craft would become public, spawning a string of military and civilian spin-offs

Daily Mail, Thursday, September 16, 1999

mac



'Don't panic, Doris. UFO scientists say it's just something called a lenticular cloud.'
Cartoonist of the year

04/08/99

£5m pledge boosts British Mars bid

BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A £5 MILLION pledge from the Government has increased the chances of a British spacecraft landing on Mars early in the next century.

Lord Sainsbury, the Science Minister, yesterday committed the money to the Beagle Two spacecraft, leaving its backers — led by Colin Pillinger of the Open University — another £5 million to find.

Professor Pillinger has been promised £3 million from the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council, and £13 million from industrial companies. The mission is expected to cost between £25 million and £28 million.

Beagle Two, named after the ship on which Charles Darwin sailed to South America,

is intended to form part of the European Space Agency's Mars Express mission, due to be launched in 2003. About the size of a microwave oven, the lander will drop on to the surface of Mars while the ESA vehicle orbits the planet taking pictures.

The all-British craft, designed by scientists from the Open and Leicester Universities, will deploy a robot "mole" to burrow into the Martian soil and look for chemical signs of life.

Professor Pillinger said yesterday: "The really important signal that Lord Sainsbury has sent with his contribution today is that the Government are behind us. That enables me to go to many people I had

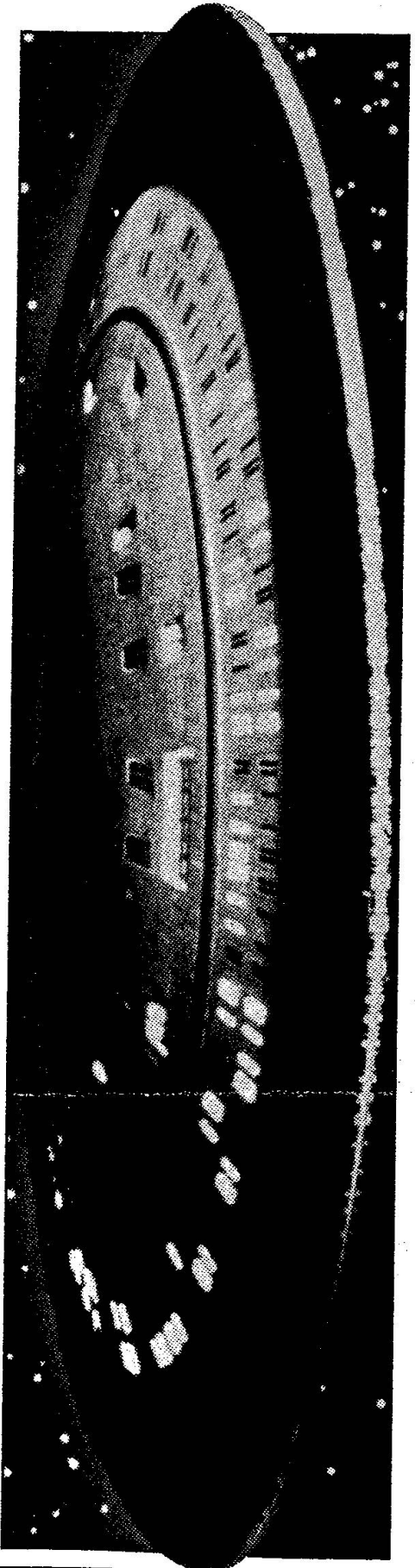
sounded out about the project, and say this is a serious and mature project that stands every chance of coming to fruition."

It forms part of a £19.5 million spending package for space science, engineering and technology which also includes a £10.5 million contribution towards Artes 4, an ESA programme developing new telecommunications technologies, and £4 million for research into advanced spacecraft design.

Britain's total commitment to space spending, including money from the research councils, Ministry of Defence, Met Office and other bodies, remains unchanged at around £180 million a year.

Goodbye, cruel world

Doomsday cult heads for hills and rendezvous with spaceship



From IAN COBAIN
in New York

HUNDREDS of members of a doomsday cult vanished yesterday into remote Colombian mountains saying they were off to board an alien spaceship to escape the end of the world. Police fear the two megalomaniac leaders of the Gnostic Church Stella Marts cult may persuade their followers to commit mass suicide when the spacecraft falls to turn up on time.

'These people are no joke - they are deluded and dangerous,' said a

'She believes a tidal wave is coming'

spokesman for the Colombian state police.

Former teacher Rogelio Perea and his deputy Rudiof Perez have told disciples that the world will end in a series of massive earthquakes at midnight on December 31.

Cult members are convinced the coastal city where they live, Cartagena, will be engulfed by a tidal wave, and have sold all their belongings and taken out bank loans.

Much of the money is thought to have been handed to Perea and Perez before the duo led their followers up the ice-capped 18,000ft Sierra Nevada mountains 300 miles away. Devotees believe they must wait

there for the arrival of a second Noah's Ark, a spacecraft which will whisk them away to another world. Citing passages of the Bible as evidence, cult members say a chosen group of 140,000 humans will be saved to start another life on the new planet.

The Stella Marts cult, a breakaway group from another organisation called the Gnostic Church, has gripped people from all walks of life in Cartagena.

Adherents had half built their own temple in the city when the call apparently came for them to rendezvous with their alien saviours.

Doctors, accountants, motor mechanics and housewives are among those who have disappeared. The youngest is a boy of 16, while the oldest is in her 80s.

Police were last night searching for the missing cultists, but fear they may be unable to bring them to their senses and talk them into climbing down even if they find them alive.

'We think around 200 people have joined Perea and Perez, but we can't be sure how many people are involved because some are still leaving the city,' said the spokesman.

'There is not much we can do about it, because our constitution is very clear about the right to religious freedom, and about freedom of movement.' Among those missing is San-

dra Herrera, a 19-year-old music student who fell under Perea's spell when she went to babysit his children.

'She came back saying we had to sell all our belongings and leave,' said her mother Aida.

'She really believes that a tidal wave is going to come and sweep us all away, and that only the aliens can save us.'

'I tried to tell her that these ideas were just crazy, but she wouldn't listen. When I woke up

and saw she had not slept in her bed I went to the Perea place to look for her, but it was completely empty. There was not a stick of furniture in there.'

Mariela Tovar, whose 23-year-old daughter Patricia went with the cult, said: 'I am going out of my mind with worry.'

Enrique Impidid, whose wife also fell under the influence of Perea and Perez, said: 'I had to restrain her to stop her from selling all our belongings to go on

the trip.' Former cult member Gabriel Nicholls told local journalists that talk of UFOs was 'nonsense' and the devotees were simply attending a regular retreat at a cabin 16,000ft up the mountain.

'They have been there before and they always come back,' he said.

But Mrs Herrera said: 'My daughter says this trip is final - she was very definite about that.'

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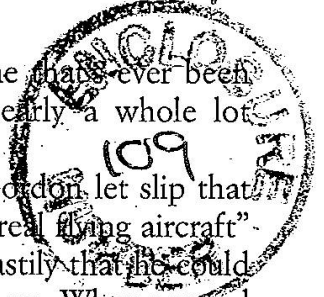
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FOR UP AND ON - U

The Times
Saturday 3/7/99



If you're a defence journalist working in Britain, you know when you're getting dangerously close to something the Ministry of Defence would really rather remained under wraps, because you'll almost certainly get a call from the Ministry's D-Notice Committee telling you so before you rush to print. The D-Notice system is a fairly gentlemanly affair and relies on a certain amount of goodwill on both sides. Chances are, a retired rear admiral or air vice marshal will gently pull you aside and explain patiently how your story will endanger national security, or the lives of serving British military personnel, or both. The system is voluntary, but it lets you know where you stand before things get heavy and unpleasant under the Official Secrets Act. The essential point is, you're in no doubt where the line is – and you step beyond it at your peril.

Cross the Atlantic and it's a very different story. In America, deeply secret defence programmes are protected under a regime known as the "special access" system. Special access programmes – SAPs, to use the jargon – are graded white, grey and black, according to their

degree of sensitivity. White programmes are relatively straightforward, usually involving hardware and technology which might be ultra-sophisticated, but which in essence has nothing secret about it. Grey programmes usually relate to a non-sensitive platform, such as an aircraft or a ship, whose innards the Pentagon wants to protect from scrutiny. But the third category, the black programme, is in a league all of its own, because it is an "unacknowledged" project. This means that someone, somewhere has deemed that its very existence must not be revealed or admitted to. The lore of the "black world" has it that there are certain military projects from which even the President is excluded – because he does not have the "need to know".

When you enter the black world, it can be a pretty mind-bending experience. Three years ago, I was granted a rare interview with Jack Gordon, the head of the Lockheed Martin "Skunk Works", at the company's top-secret facility on the edge of the high desert in Palmdale California. The Skunk Works, named after the foul-smelling chemicals used in the construction of its first secret aircraft back in the Forties, has built just

about every black plane that's ever been acknowledged, and clearly a whole lot that haven't.

While we chatted, Gordon let slip that he had worked on 15 "real flying aircraft" in his career, adding hastily that he could only talk about 12 of them. When pressed on the missing three, he skilfully moved the subject along. When the interview concluded, I was escorted back through the tight security of the windowless building and out into the bright California sunshine. On the way, however, I'd spotted a diagram on a wall that proudly charted the lineage of every Skunk Works plane since the first one, America's first operational jet fighter, built in 1944. Past the U-2 that secretly overflew Russia between 1956 and 1960, past the SR-71 Blackbird, the fastest plane ever built, and today's F-117A Stealth Fighter, there was something called "Astra". Astra was depicted as a sleek-looking beast, but more importantly, it was right at the top of the family tree.

The thing is, officially, the Skunk Works has built nothing since an unmanned, somewhat sedate-looking spy-plane called DarkStar that had rolled out of the factory the previous year. When I registered my interest in Astra, I was

In America, money's no object when it comes to defence – but when \$35 billion goes appear in the sky, questions must be answered. Aviation expert and supernatural sceptic that led from Washington to Nevada, and ended up asking: Is it a bird? Is it a spyplane?

the outer limits



feature ●

given the black world equivalent of the bum's rush: a shrug of the shoulders and a polite reminder that the interview was over. Three weeks later, and only after persistent questioning, I was told that the depiction on the chart was a mistake and that Astra was really a high-speed airliner project that had been studied in the Seventies and very quickly cancelled. My first reaction in the face of such obfuscation was to laugh. But the lingering effects of the black world are subtle and insidious. Occasionally, in the small hours of a sleepless night, I wonder whether I didn't just imagine the whole thing.

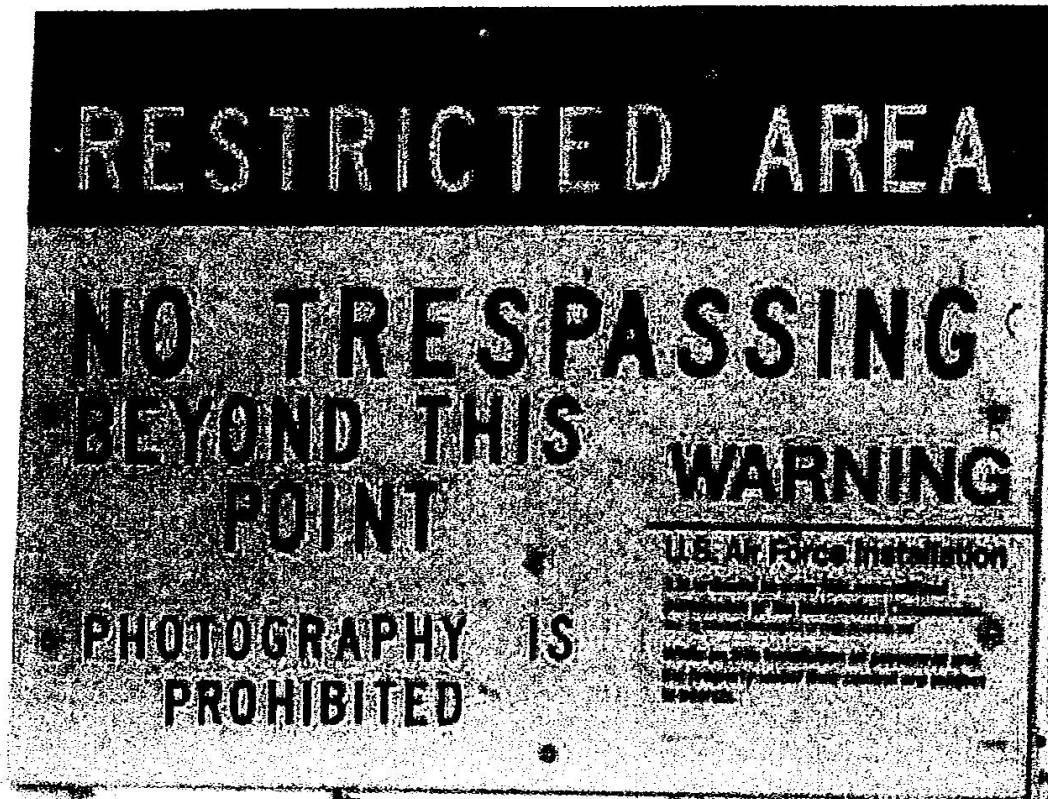
It is this fine line between fact and fiction, as well as dream and reality, that defines the character of the black world and gives it its ethereal shape. Unsurprisingly, it has given rise to a whole host of conspiracy theories over the years, ranging from Pentagon mind-control experiments to alien cadavers stored in freezers at secret locations across the country. While there seems to be no end of people, many of them weaned on Nineties *X-Files* culture, who accept these yarns at face value, the US defence and intelligence community is not beyond putting its own spin on them

from time to time. Two years ago, the CIA admitted that it had encouraged reports of flying saucers in the Fifties and Sixties to obscure flight trials of its then top-secret U-2 and Blackbird spyplanes.

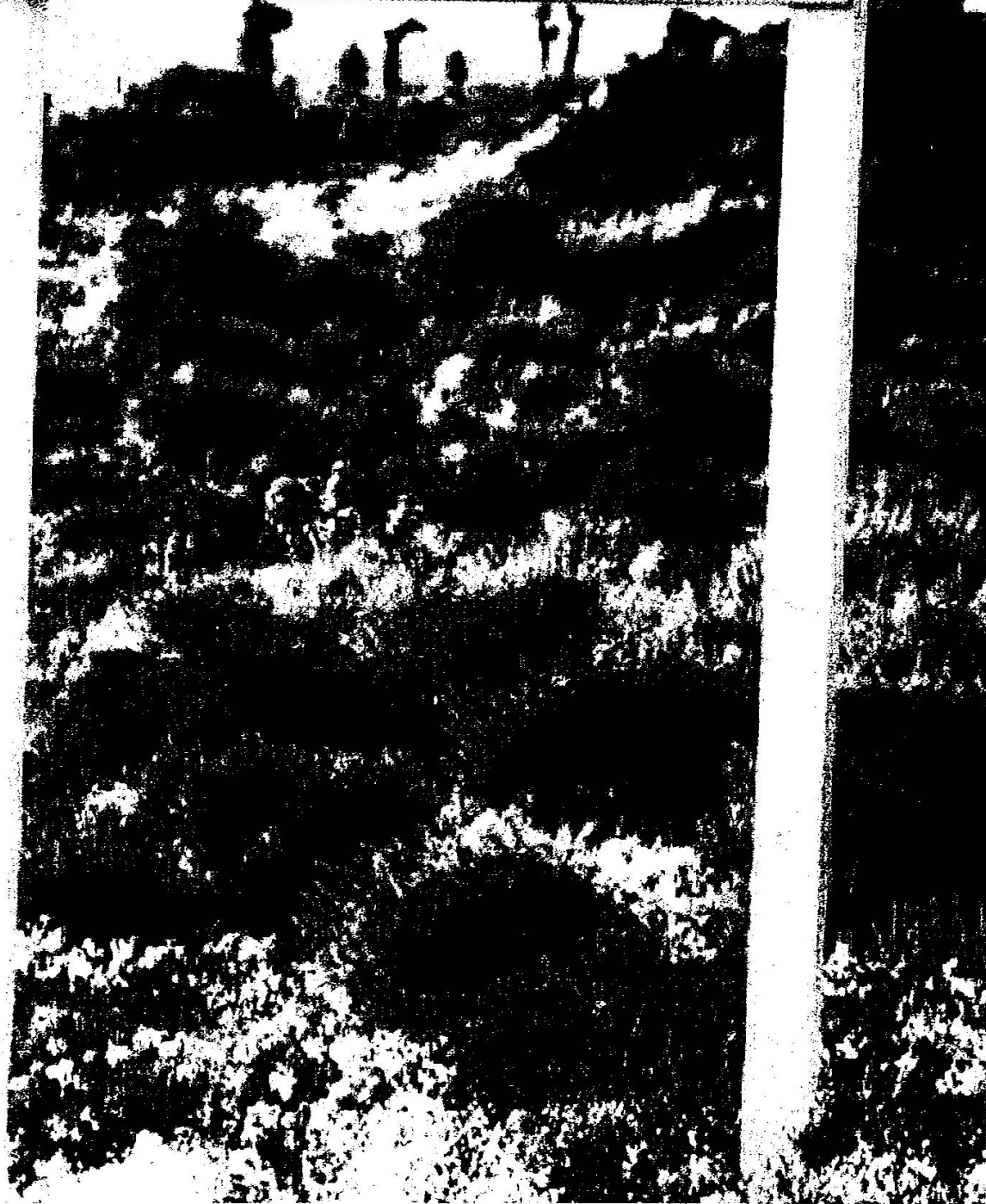
The overall effect is undoubtedly the desired one: when you enter this environment, you step into a looking-glass world where down is up. As Aviation

Editor of *Jane's Defence Weekly*, a large part of my brief has been to report on the cutting edge of Pentagon defence technology. In *Billion Dollar Secret*, a documentary shot last year for Channel 5, I wanted to take this one step further — to see to what degree the UFO myth was rooted in very real black world technology. The result was an east-west ►

missing and strange things
Nick Cook followed a trail
Or is it a UFO?



ANDERS LOFSTEDT



◀ journey from Washington DC to a top-secret US Air Force base in Nevada that probably owes as much to Hunter S. Thompson as it does to Mulder and Scully.

My journey began in Washington because although entry points into the black world labyrinth are few and far between, here — as is the case almost everywhere in the world — money can open doors. In a bizarre contradiction that is so often a characteristic of the deeply classified environment, the most secret thing about it — the cash that is its lifeblood — is calculable thanks to good ol' American government accounting procedures.

Every year, the Pentagon submits its fiscal request to Congress in the form of a number of budget books that itemise just about every nut and bolt of defence equipment the armed forces are likely to need over the coming 12 months. When you add up all the line items, however, the total does not match the grand total of the overall budget request, which today hovers around the \$270 billion mark. Subtract the total for the line items from the grand total and you find a discrepancy of around \$35 billion. It is this sum that makes up the black budget and, to put the figures into perspective, it almost exactly equates to the total UK defence budget.

'They do business differently at Area 51. We have constitutional rights, but if you pass that border all that ends'

During the Cold War, there were few dissenting voices on Capitol Hill over the rationale for the black budget, but lately more have been making themselves heard. This is in part because the size of the black budget, as a proportion of an overall defence budget that has been shrinking in real terms for over the past ten years, has been increasing under the Clinton administration. One of the more vociferous campaigners against black-budget secrecy has been Congressman Dana Rohrabacher, Republican chair of the influential space and aeronautics subcommittee of the House science committee. Rohrabacher's beef is that a vast quantity of American taxpayers' money is being spent on commercial aerospace projects — especially in the space field — that already have a direct, but hidden, equivalent in the black world.

"If we have a functioning technology in a black programme, we should not be

spending billions of dollars on a similar programme that's visible to the public," says Rohrabacher. A likely example of this duplication, he maintains, is the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's X-33 programme.

The X-33 is a demonstrator vehicle being built by Lockheed Martin for a satellite launcher that will take off like a rocket and land like a plane. If it works as advertised, its operating costs will be a fraction of the Space Shuttle's, which it is due to replace. Last year, Rohrabacher wrote to Clinton requesting that the administration declassify secret projects that perpetuate this overlap in spending. The project which overlaps with the X-33, he believes, is "Aurora", a black programme of mythical proportions to a hard-core of "watchers" who scour budget books, as well as

history is anything to go by, he may have a long wait.

The trail now led west, to the vast expanses of Nevada and the mythical nexus of black world aerospace development — the US Air Force's Groom Lake testing facility, otherwise known as Area 51. For the past 45 years, Area 51 has been a test centre for top-secret aircraft such as the U-2, the Blackbird and the Stealth Fighter. In more recent times, it has also become a mecca for UFO watchers who are convinced that the US Government is testing captured alien spacecraft there.

One of the first individuals I met on the road to Area 51 was Bob Widmer, a former head of design at General Dynamics Convair, now in his eighties. In the late Fifties, Widmer worked on an extraordinary spy-plane design for the CIA



The SR-71 Blackbird supersonic reconnaissance aircraft (top), the U-2 spyplane (centre) and the F117A "stealth" fighter (above) were all tested at Area 51.

the skies, for evidence of top-secret defence projects.

Aurora is perceived to be a "family" of very fast high-flying aircraft, the most sophisticated of which can effectively fly through space in the same way that the X-33 is designed to. It was first spotted in 1987 as a mysterious line-item, consuming several billion dollars' worth of funds in that year alone, in the reconnaissance section of the air force's budget request. Several people claim to have seen it since the late Eighties, the best apparent sighting coming from a trained Royal Observer Corps "spotter" who saw a huge wedge-shaped aircraft overflying the North Sea oil-rig on which he was working in 1989. If Aurora exists — and Congressman Rohrabacher is fairly sure that it does — it can most likely cross the Atlantic in something under 45 minutes. As yet, Rohrabacher has had no response to his letter to Clinton and, if

that was codenamed "Fish". In the end, Fish lost out to its rival, Lockheed's Blackbird, but for a reason that has never been altogether explained, the details of Widmer's design remain top-secret, long after the Blackbird fleet was consigned to air museums across America. Could it be that Fish, whose general characteristics sound resoundingly familiar today, was actually a secret prototype for the Aurora? We may never know. Widmer was forced to burn almost all the plans for Fish and was instructed by the CIA ▶

Evening Standard West End Final

18 June 1999

Page 4

Cadogan Estates buys Duke of York barracks

CHELSEA'S biggest landlord is to buy the Duke of York barracks on the King's Road and turn it into a complex of shops, flats and offices, writes Ben Leapman.

The Ministry of Defence said today it had agreed to sell the military building to Cadogan Estates. The Territorial Army will continue to use part of the 10-acre

site until 2003. No price is being announced but the value is estimated at £40 million. An MoD spokesman said officials were confident they had secured better value for the taxpayer than they would have in an open auction. The first phase of development will see the creation of 26 flats for low-earners and around 30 shops.

Daily Telegraph

19 June 1999

Page 2

WEEKEND

UFOs in Wiltshire

Bless the aliens. Of all the fascinating places in Britain they could hover over — London, Manchester, Spaghetti Junction — they always seemed most attached to Wiltshire. (In the late Seventies, the most favoured UFO location was mid-Wales, of which the ETs subsequently seemed to tire.)

For some time, a particularly popular destination for inter-planetary visitors seemed to be Salisbury Plain — on summer evenings in the Sixties, one could scarcely move for enthusiasts sitting on hills and looking up at the stars, hopefully twiddling with pointlessly elaborate radio equipment.

Any suggestion that lights in the sky might actually be connected in some way with the MoD, which does, of course, have a pronounced presence in the area, were routinely dismissed by the silly season set as mere eccentricity.

In the Seventies, the notion of ley lines was woven into UFO myths. The idea was that flying saucers would use these mystical energy channels running

through the landscape as navigating signals. And the Crewe Junction of these ley lines happened to be in Wiltshire.

But one hears less of UFOs these days. The reason, most probably, is that American enthusiasts have introduced the unwelcome idea of abduction. Few would care to tramp up a Wiltshire hill on a balmy night if the end result was a zapping from a bright white light, followed by a rather personal examination on board a spaceship.

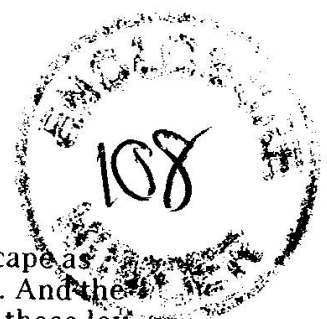
As time wears on, and clunky old retro-style UFOs find themselves having to compete with upstart corn circles, the Warminster area is none the less still the place to go if one fancies a summer's evening of lying back and dreaming of life elsewhere.

What to wear: a big anorak, nerdy as you like.

What to bring: binoculars and a not especially good camera.

What to say: "When one looks up at the vastness of the sky, one finds it impossible to imagine that we are really all alone, drifting through this cold infinity..."

What not to say: "It's clearly a weather balloon, but the real mystery is why we still use them."



3

Daily Mail, Monday, May 24, 1999

LETTERS

Page 51

A lesson not learned

WHO told David Blunkett that Literacy Hour is a return to traditional, tried-and-tested teaching methods (Mail)?

Ten minutes chatting about words, 20 minutes reading a shared text (not a real book but a photocopied sheet because we can't afford books for every child), 20 minutes when children 'work' in groups, or a task which might have only tenuous links to the text, unaided by the teacher, who is busy hearing another group read, and then ten minutes given to what we've learnt — or not.

This happens five days a week, often on the same text, which might (as in the case of our seven and eight-year-olds) include a study of the wording in a legal document. This isn't traditional class teaching of English. It has been made to look like it by transferring some of the secondary school curriculum downward, but it is, in fact, 'progressive' methods by the back door.

David, you've been had.
Mrs R. WILSON, Durham.

Round in circles

AS A struggling fruit grower, I'd be very pleased to have Lawrence Rockefeller along for half a day, at a fee to be negotiated, to study the mystery of crop circles (Mail).

These circles have appeared only since tramlines were used by farmers for accurate working measurements of their fields. Thus explains why most of them are found in the large fields of Hampshire and Wiltshire, among growing cereal crops and not in fields of potatoes, cabbage, strawberries, swede, etc.

Or is it perhaps that Martians haven't developed a taste for these more complex crops?

*VICTOR BREACH,
Tonbridge, Kent*

Save money and set your kids up for life

PARENTS who feel it necessary to spend £200-plus a week on their children (Mail) would be better off saving their money and giving their kids a ticket into the real world.

At 17, I consider myself lucky with the £5 a week pocket money I'm given. My Saturday job helps me save for university, and I find I can just about cope without £90 trainers and brand new clothes every week.

These children are growing up having everything handed to them. I may be considered 'poor' because I don't ship my friends off to London for my birthday but I'd rather learn to appreciate the value of money.

SUZANNE LOGAN, Canterbury, Kent.

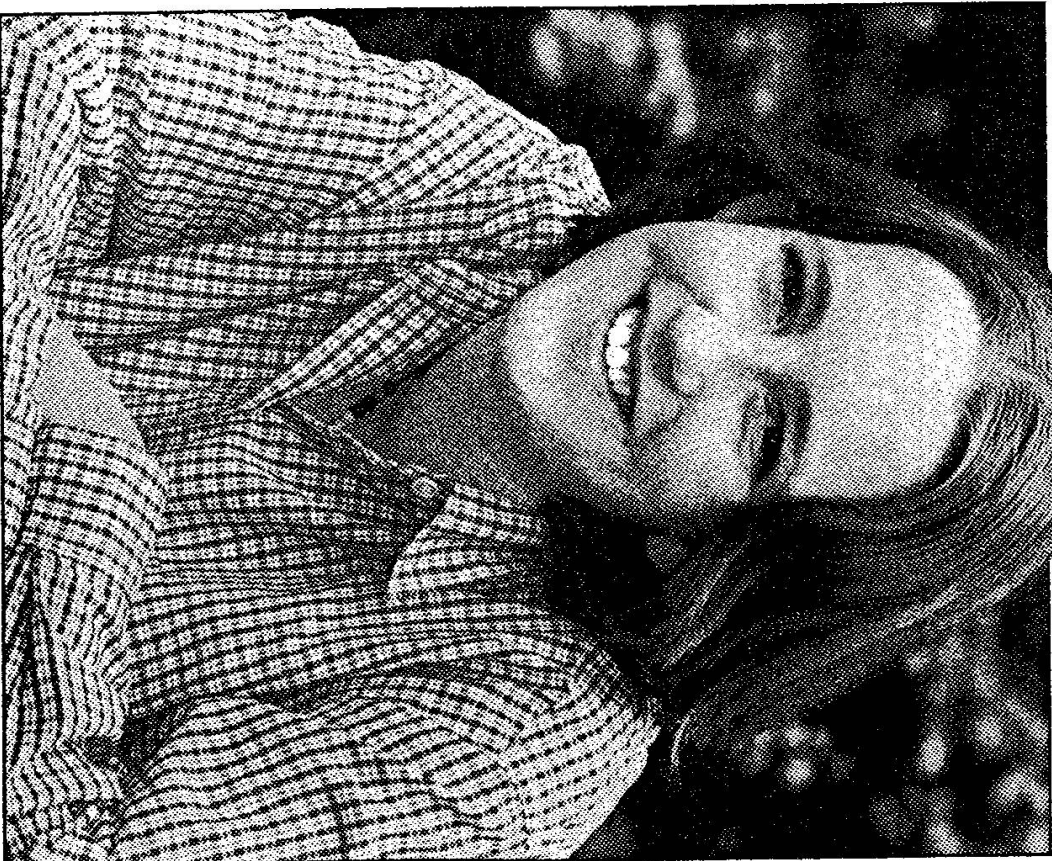
I'M A working mother, helping my husband, a self-employed solicitor, in his office. Our two children, of nearly 12 and 16, both go to private day schools but I spend very little on my daughter.

Lizzy's worn the same school shoes for three years and has to be pushed into having money spent on her. If she wants extras she babysits for money.

I spend £80 a year on her tennis club membership and another £60 on lessons. The rest of the time she simply practises with friends. Many of her schoolfriends have extra private lessons for their GCSEs, but she's bright and motivated enough not to need them — and if she were not, I wouldn't throw good money after bad. In all, I spend £500-£600 a year on Lizzy.

My son's clothes come to only between £200 and £330 a year. He's having private Bar Mitzvah lessons at £20 per week, and his cricket club fees cost £30 a year. His biggest expense is use of a football season ticket at £400 a year (much to his sister's annoyance) but her indulgence this year will be to be sent on a trip to Israel with a large group of 16-year-olds, after GCSEs, at a cost of £1,500.

My children don't feel underprivileged — in fact, they often tell me not to waste my money. Materially, I had much less as a child and want them to appreciate the cost of living.



STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

■ LET'S all support Tony Blair's crusade in Kosovo. All he is saying is give war a chance.

Mr J. MASON, Barnet, Herts.

■ PATSY Kensit tried to scotch reports that she's expecting a baby. Does she fear public censure because she's married?

*Mrs JEAN WARREN,
Sale, Cheshire.*

■ BRITAIN comes complete with the perfect buffer zone against GM crops — the sea. Other countries aren't so fortunate. We shouldn't sacrifice this advantage by inviting the stuff here.

*STEVEN PENNY,
London N16.*

■ ANYONE who argues against capital punishment because innocent people might be killed, but agrees with bombing Belgrade, is invited to reconcile these contradictory principles. Any thoughts, Tony?

*NICHOLAS ASTLEY-
COOPER, Address supplied.*

■ WHEN the credits roll at the end of a film involving Judi Dench, Maggie Smith, Diana Rigg or Alec Guinness, that's how their names appear. So why is it always Sir David Frost and Dame Thora Hird, even in adverts?

*IAN WILLIAMS,
Llandudno, Gwynedd.*

■ LET'S not be kidded by 'protesting truckers'. They are mostly farmers who have diversified into road haulage — Tory subversives out to embarrass the Government.

AS A MILLIONAIRE PHILANTHROPIST FUNDS SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INTO

Mystery, miracle or

LAURENCE Rockefeller, the American millionaire and philanthropist, is funding scientific research into crop circles, it emerged yesterday. Why? After all, this is a problem that everyone thought had been solved.

The Crop Circle Mystery caused headlines and arguments nearly every summer for 20 years. Strange shapes were appearing in cornfields in Wiltshire and other counties. From the ground, the corn was seen to be beaten down, amazingly regular. From the air, the patterns appeared.

They came first as simple circles. Later, there were circles within circles, then more intricate patterns still — circles radiating spiral arms, circles joined by straight lines, circles arranged in squares, even snowflake patterns of amazing intricacy and beauty.

For 20 years arguments raged. Were they caused by circular winds? Or were mysterious forces at work? The obvious solution was human hoax. But if so, how?

In 1992, two Southampton men, Doug Bower and Dave Chorley, confessed to making corn circles: every summer night for 20 years. Their method was simple: rakes and planks of wood to bash down the crop, ropes to guide them to a perfect circle, loops of wire on hats to guide straight lines.

It began as fun but, as UFO theories snowballed, they wanted to see how credulous people could be.

Dave Chorley died in 1996. The pair had retired from circle-making some time before. That should have been the end of the mystery. Yet corn circles continued to appear.

'They are worldwide,' says Michael Green, President of the Centre for Crop Circle Studies. And this week, the first of this season's British crop, 12 of them, have been seen in fields of oil-seed rape in Hampshire and at Milk Hill, Wiltshire.

Andrew Thomas, author of the crop-circle book, *Vital Signs*, claims that the Bower-Chorley 'confession' was itself a hoax: 'They could not explain how they laid the stalks so perfectly; nor why the circles have continued to appear.'

And now Laurence Rockefeller, brother of the late Nelson Rockefeller, is funding a researcher to re-investigate the phenomenon.

HE IS paying Connecticut-based Colin Andrews to engage staff and they have flown reconnaissance flights over Wiltshire and Hampshire. Andrews has a database of 10,000 crop circles. With computers and satellites, the research and debate has re-opened. So what could cause them?

'First theories were circular winds, mini-cyclones or "dust-devils" [tiny tornadoes], says Montague Keen, scientific adviser to the Centre for Crop-Circle Studies for three years. 'A meteorologist devised a theory of "plasma vortices", spiralling winds of electrically-charged air.'

Ball lightning was another possibility — again circular, again involving powerful and little-understood forces of electricity.

'But straight lines do not come from natural phenomena,' says Keen. 'The patterns became increasingly complex and no natural phenomenon can change and evolve like that. There were too many for them all to be hoaxes.'

A U.S. physicist found evidence that corn inside the circles undergoes chemical and biological changes. It takes up more nitrates than corn outside, and microscopic holes form in the stem tissue. These

changes seem to argue for a sudden, sharp infusion of energy into the circle — far more than could come from men with planks or rollers.

'I was never quite convinced that his research was sufficiently rigorous' says Mr Keen, 'but there were certainly electromagnetic changes within circles. Compasses behaved strangely; people felt either distress or euphoria inside the circles; and batteries went flat unaccountably often.'

'All this seems to point away from hoax towards something very strange, indeed. There is clearly some kind of intelligence behind them.'

And if it is not natural intelligence? 'Well, then you are thrown back to imagining some wholly *unnatural* intelligence.' As, for example, some form of psychic projection from human beings — dead or alive.

'Some shapes of the early Eighties seemed similar to shapes carved into rocks by Palaeolithic man,' said Michael Green, President of the Centre for Crop Circle Studies.

Were mental energies of past minds being channelled into cornfields?

The first corn-circle for which evidence is claimed appeared in Hertfordshire in 1678. A pamphlet shows a woodcut of a circle mown in a field of oats, and the devil mowing.

The pamphlet describes the sky over the field that night as being 'all of a flame'; so here, too, for those who are willing to believe, is a link with flying saucers and UFOs.

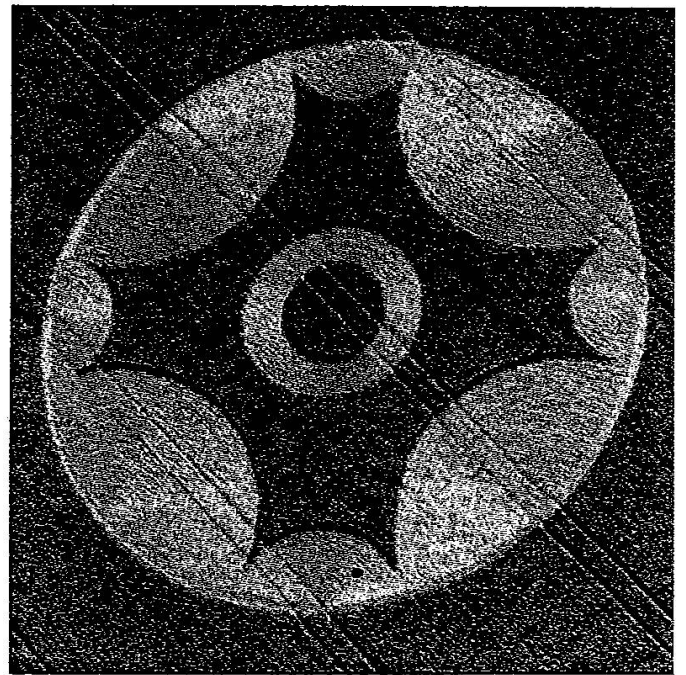
For, of course, there are the aliens as the final theory of crop circles. Michael Green does not believe that little green men are responsible — but he believes some kind of non-human intelligence is behind them.

He points to a succession of shapes, from simple to complex to very complex indeed. Can these be messages to be read by all of mankind?

'These are written large on the landscape. They are there to be seen. There is a non-human intelligence behind them,' says Mr Green. 'That's what points one towards thinking the unthinkable.'

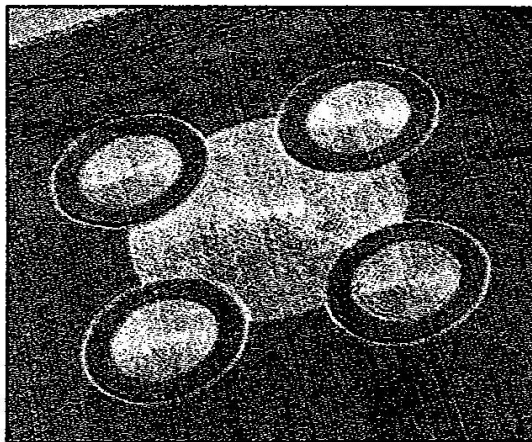


Marlborough, Wiltshire, July 11, 1997: Twelve circles, 100 yards across. Locals charged tourists £1.50 a visit

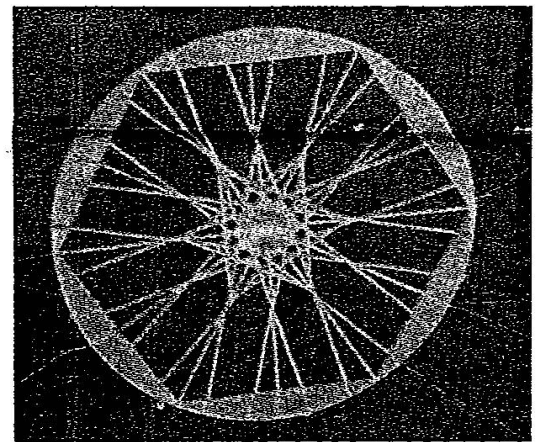


Morestead, Hampshire, 1997: A Maltese cross — an ancient symbol once worn by the Knights of Malta — 100ft across. Hundreds flocked to see it when it first appeared

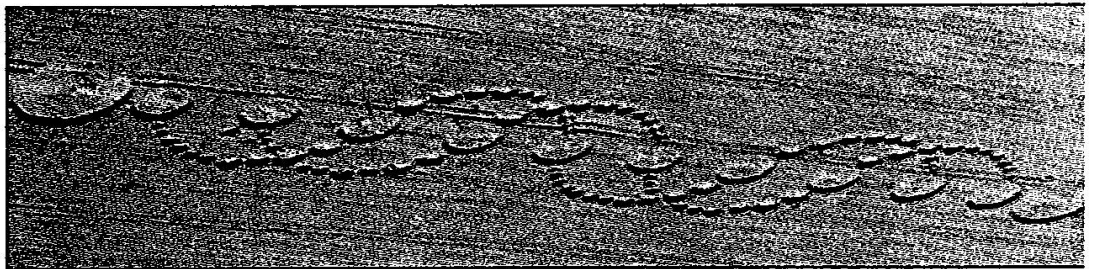
by JULIAN CHAMPKIN



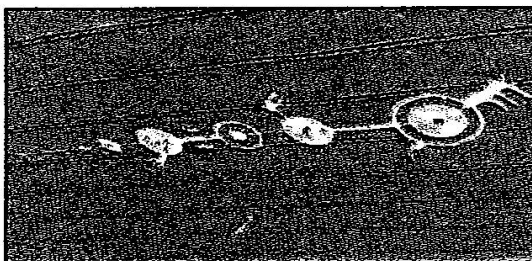
Headbourne Worthy, Hampshire, July 7, 1997: A similar but cruder crop circle design had appeared in the same field 19 years before



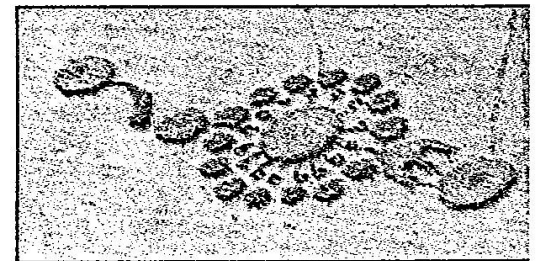
Cley Hill, Wiltshire, July 1997: Straight lines make up a hexagon — this is only the second time this shape has ever been seen in corn



Alton Barnes, Wiltshire, 1996: The 648ft chain of circles, linked in intricate mathematical beauty, are said to resemble the structure of DNA, the building block of life. If this is a fake it could only have been carried out by someone with scientific knowledge — or a very good textbook



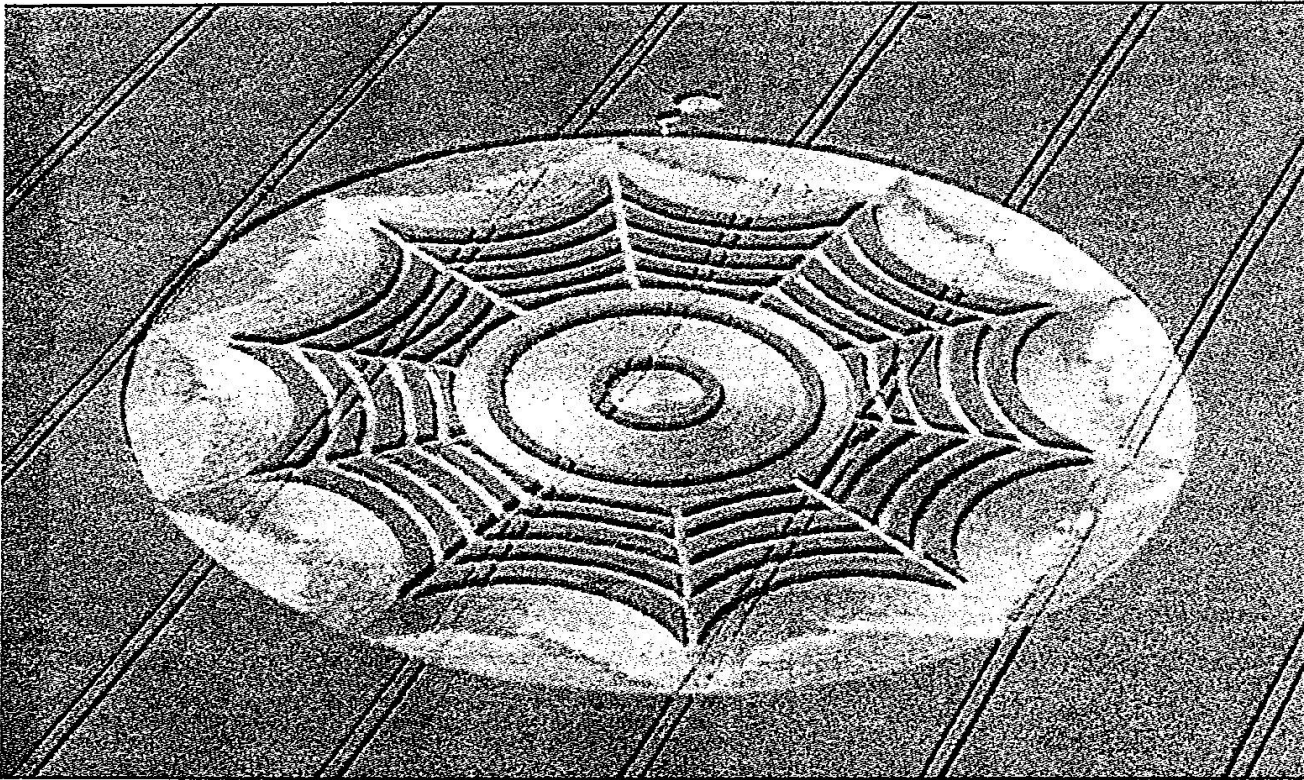
Alton Barnes, Wiltshire, July 11, 1990: The night this 555ft long design was created, there were 'strange accounts of humming sounds'



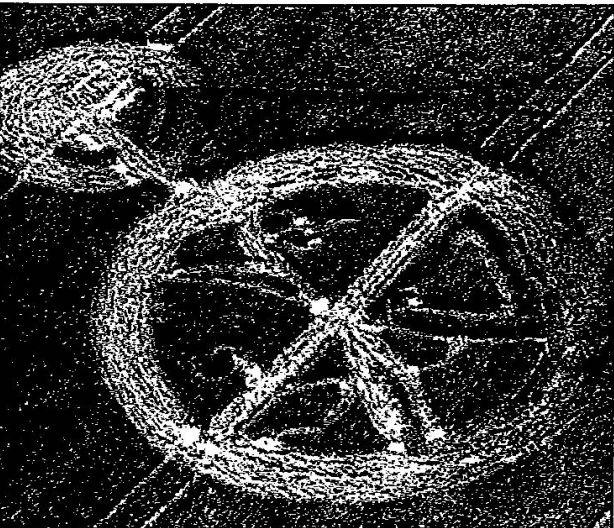
Milk Hill, Wiltshire, May 1999: Formed only days ago. 'We have evidence of a genuine phenomenon' says Lucy Pringle, a leading corn circle researcher

TOP CIRCLES AND A NEW BATCH APPEAR, WE ASK:

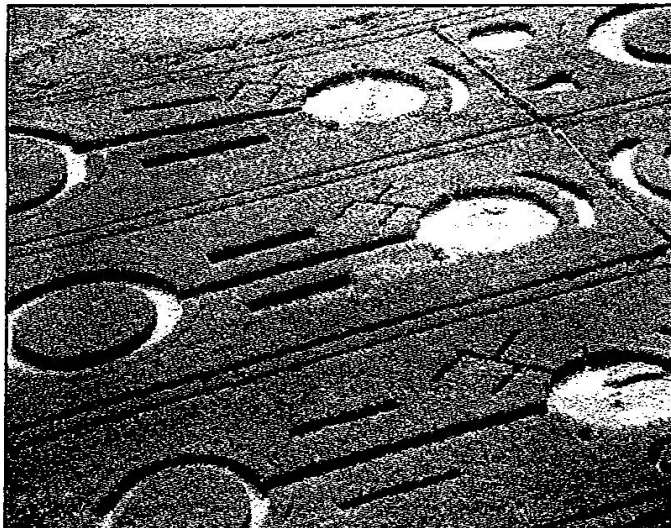
giant hoax?



Wiltshire, August 11, 1994: What spider wove this web next to the ancient stone circle? This beautiful design has been nicknamed the Dreamcatcher. A hoaxer would have to be Houdini to leave no disturbance in the rest of the field



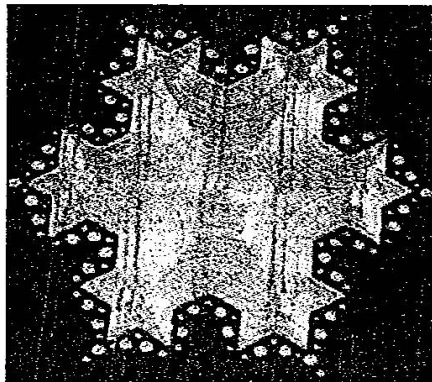
Wiltshire, June 1998: Hamster wheel or sacred symbol? It was 300ft across but though the wheat had been flattened, not a single blade of it was broken



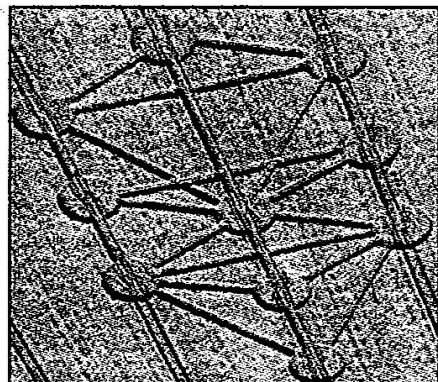
West Wycombe, Bucks, 1992: Definitely man-made. At a corn circle competition, entrants had to work overnight, without lights or noise. Tools included baseball bats and ladders



Examining the circle: Close examination shows corn laid in perfect circles, with stems broken. From ground level, the overall effect can be difficult to see, making it even harder for hoaxers to create a design without mistakes



Silbury Hill, Wiltshire, July 1997: Summer snow appeared in a flake 200ft across. Local farmers charged sightseers to visit — some crop circles have made more than £5,000 for their lucky owners. A motive for hoaxers?



Barbary Castle, Wiltshire, May 4, 1997: The Kabbala tree of life, an occult symbol from Hebrew mythology — laid along the field's existing tractor lines. Fascinatingly, circle watchers had prayed for just such a symbol to appear



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Daily Mail

27 April 1999

Page 27

Riddle of UFO 'the size of a battleship'

CONSPIRACY theorists had a field day yesterday over reports that a UFO 'the size of a battleship' had been spotted 28,000ft above the North Sea. Both the Civil Aviation Authority and the Ministry of Defence confirmed they were

aware of the alleged sighting but denied they were investigating it.

'This may sound silly,' said the CAA, 'but it is a matter for the MoD.' The MoD commented: 'Our people have been looking at it but we

are not investigating.' One UFO spotter declared: 'Well they would say that, wouldn't they?' The mysterious craft - said to be silver-coloured and pencil thin with square windows along the fuselage - was reported by a pilot on a

private charter flight between Linköping, in Sweden, and Humberside on February 3. The pilot, from the Luton-based airline Debonair, was flying a BAe 146 jet when the cockpit was immersed in 'incandescent light'.

The Times

27 April 1999

Page 28

Defence projects to protect jobs

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of jobs in the defence industry were protected yesterday by the Government's decision to go it alone on a frigate building programme and also to proceed with a three-country air defence project.

The Ministry of Defence said yesterday that it was withdrawing from the troubled Horizon frigate programme, which it had been working on with France and Italy, in favour of its own initiative.

Defence analysts said that the decision would bring more work to the UK on the multibillion-pound programme to replace Type 42 destroyers and that the work could start sooner.

The MoD is aiming to build 12 new vessels by 2007. Initially it had wanted a launch date of 2004 but talks between the three countries have been long and problematic, eventually

foundering on the allocation of work. The building of the frigates is unlikely to generate work for the Govan shipyard on the Clyde, which has been put up for sale by its Norwegian owner, Kvaerner, as the shipyards of VSEL are more suited to warship work.

The UK Government has, however, reached agreement with France and Italy to build together the Principle Anti-Air Missile System (PAAMS) defence system for the new generation of frigates.

Matra British Aerospace Dynamics, the Anglo/French joint venture, will be the main contractor on the UK variant of PAAMS, bringing work worth about £700 million to the UK. A spokesman for BAe said: "We look forward to working closely with the Ministry of Defence to produce the world's most advanced missile defence system."

The Times

27 April 1999

Page 4

New effort to cut red tape

The Prime Minister has ordered a war on red tape after complaints that industry is struggling to cope with new regulations and laws. Government departments are to face checks to ensure that new laws do not suffocate or overburden business or the professions with bureaucratic demands.

Dr Jack Cunningham, Minister for the Cabinet Office, has been given the new enforcement role inside Whitehall to tackle ministries which clutter legislation with unnecessary regulations and paperwork. He is to outline his approach tonight in a speech to the Social Market Foundation.

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The Mirror

27 April 1999

Page 16

Pilot tells of his close encounter with a UFO

BY SIMON BIRD

A BRITISH charter jet has had a close encounter with a UFO said to be "the size of a battleship".

The shocked pilot and crew of a Debonair BAe146 plane reported being buzzed by "a long cylindrical object" as they flew over the North Sea.

Three other pilots have also independently logged seeing the bright object 58 miles off the coast of Denmark.

Last night the Civil Aviation Authority confirmed a comprehensive report of the pilot's sighting had been received.

The report says the captain and crew first became aware of the object after the underside of the plane was immersed in "an incandescent light".

A CAA spokeswoman said: "The captain reported seeing an unnatural bright light below his aircraft while flying at 28,000ft. The area below him was illuminated for about 10 seconds by incandescent light and it was certainly not a light from another plane.

"Three other aircraft saw it moving at a high speed or static. However, air traffic control were informed and they confirmed that there were no other planes in the vicinity.

"Then, five minutes later, there was a brief radar return from a spot

75 miles away. We believe there was no danger involved."

The Luton-based 96-seater plane was flying company executives from Linköping, Sweden, to Humberside airport. A spokesman for Debonair, which runs cut-price flights throughout Europe, said chief executive Franco Mancassola had been informed that a "great red light in the sky" had been spotted near one of the company's planes.

At one stage, the report says, the object came to an abrupt halt before accelerating past the airliner at thousands of miles an hour.

A CAA source says the object was tracked by a military radar station in Yorkshire after it entered UK air space.

A spokesman for the 6,000 member British Pilots Association said: "We get reports of this nature from our members but they are few and far between.

"In the past 10 years or so I would say there have been around six cases of UFO's being sighted.

"Many pilots are reluctant to make such claims because it tends to lay them open to ridicule. So when they do go as far as making a report we do expect it to be given credence."

A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence insisted there were no military aircraft in the area adding: "We saw nothing."

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Telegraph
 April 1999
 Page 6

Vergers guilty of harassing Army captain

By Michael Fleet

A LOVESTRUCK vergers who fell for a woman captain at the Army base where he worked was found guilty yesterday of harassing her with letters signed to "Dear Boo".

Peter Parkinson, 52, from St Leonards, East Sussex, became besotted with Capt Angharad Crew after meeting her for the first time at All Saints Church on the Pirbright Army Camp in Surrey.

He wrote telling her of his love for her and calling her by her nickname of Boo but was sacked after she became distressed by the letters and military police were called in.

Parkinson, who was a civilian employed to assist the padre at the base, told magistrates at Guildford: "I was in love with her and that's a fact of life. I wanted to show my feelings towards her."

Sentence was adjourned for reports.

The Mirror
 28 April 1999
 Page 19

Shame of Army cleric

A CHURCH vergers who bombarded a young woman Army officer with bizarre love letters was found guilty of harassment yesterday.

Peter Parkinson, 52, sent 27-year-old Captain Angharad Crew a series of passionate notes, addressed to her barrack-room nickname of "Boo."

She called in military police and Parkinson was dismissed from his post at the Training Regiment in Pirbright, Surrey.

He then sent hate mail to the regiment's commanding officer, saying he would be going to hell.

Parkinson was convicted of harassing both at Guildford, Surrey. He will be sentenced in June.

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The Mirror
 28 April 1999
 Page 18

Jet crew tell of close encounter with UFO

A PASSENGER jet's crew have reported a close encounter with an unidentified flying object.

They said that they noticed an "incandescent" light below their Debonair BAe 146 as it headed over the North Sea from Sweden to Humberside.

Then, they added, a long cylindrical silver-coloured object the size of a battleship flew alongside. The British plane's shocked captain saw what seemed to be rows of square portholes on the UFO before it vanished at "enormous speed".

The crew told the Defence Ministry about their sighting. An RAF radar station tracked the object, which was seen from three other planes.

9

Daily Mail, Thursday, April 29, 1999

Raising the alarm in 1555

QUATRAIN X, 72, of Nostradamus's 1555 book of prophecies translates from the French as:

*The year one thousand and nine hundreds
ninety-nine seven months,
From the sky will come a Great King of alarm,
To bring back to life the Great King of
Angoumois,*

Before after, Mars to reign by good fortune.
This hardly squares with political science professor Willie Breytenbach's suggestion (Mail). Is the U.S.-led Nato the 'Great King of alarm'? Who is the 'Great King of Angoumois'?

A 'Great King of alarm' suggests an evil being. Some interpret this as an alien invasion, occurring in July or August. Others consider 'angoumois' an anagram of 'mongolois', suggesting the people of Mongolia.

Author Nigel Kerner points out that graves containing Cro-Magnon skeletal remains were unearthed earlier this century in Angoumois, western France.

Cro-Magnon arrived on the scene around 60,000 years ago. From where did Cro-Magnon appear? And why did the well-built Neanderthals become extinct after his arrival?

Kerner claims Cro-Magnon man is a hybrid of Earth people, engineered by alien 'greys', and that the hybrid's superior intelligence and aggression enabled them to displace Neanderthal.

The MoD has declined to investigate the battleship-sized UFO seen over the North Sea on February 3. It has little choice, since similar objects in the past have easily out-paced our fastest aircraft.

I sometimes wonder if these craft are inflicting invisible damage on our Earth. A craft this size could certainly transport a large community — but from what and to where?

MICHAEL JOYCE,
St. Osyth, Essex.

NATO keeps on apologising and trying to find excuses when it makes a mistake: Milosevic must think its nerve will crack. Had it started by carpet-bombing Serbia, the conflict would have been over in seven days.

BILL GROVER,
Plymouth, Devon.

AS NAVIGATOR of a bomber, I 'bought it' fairly early in World War II and spent four-and-a-half years as a POW.

Some years ago, a gathering of ex-prisoners from all over the world was held in Warwick and the organisers sought the permission of Coventry Cathedral to hold a service of thanksgiving for our safe return. The reply was that the cathedral wouldn't care to be associated with a body

GRAVE INSULT

IT'S the custom for members of our Armed Forces who are killed in battle to be laid to rest in the country in which they fought and died. The exception to this rule seems to be Moslem countries because no infidel can be buried on Islamic soil. Perhaps those clamouring for 'our' lads to get themselves killed for Islamic Albanians will remember this when the bodies start arriving home for burial.

Mrs P. O'NEILL,
London NW6.

consisting mainly of bomber crews. Not long after the end of the war, public opinion consolidated its attitude towards ex-airmen: Fighter crews = Battle of Britain = Heroes. Bomber crews = Dresden = Scum (despite the death toll among bomber crews being the heaviest of any of the fighting services).

So I say to those flying sorties over Serbia, soak up all the adoration you can get. It won't last long. When people such as Tony Blair and Bill Clinton look back on the war and its civilian death toll, they will have forgotten who first ordered the bombing: it will be the fault of those belligerent bomber boys.

WALTER BRADLEY,
Gawthorpe, W. Yorks.

IN MY family, there is a soldier who has been a full-time professional since he was 18. The Ministry of Defence has fed him, clothed him, provided him with a house when he married and flown his children, during their holidays, from their English boarding school to wherever their father was stationed.

All this to leave the soldier free to practise killing our enemies, with the consequent risk of being killed himself.

Why is there such a fuss whenever this risk arises? What does the taxpayer pay the soldier for?

J. EDMONDS,
Chepstow, S. Wales.

supermarket. She realised how important time is to everybody.

The break-up had nothing to do with anybody else. Miss

He has been amazing'

Hunter also dismissed speculation, ~~life after the split~~, that she was angry about the amount of time the 54-year-old rock star was devoting to football and his other hobby, model trains.

'He is not a fuddy-duddy and I've never had anything to say about his trains and his football,' she told the Australian magazine New Idea.

'There was no fighting with Rod and I couldn't say there was any particular reason. I think it's just immaturity on my part.' She said she had no intention of going off partying. She just had 'a lot of

things to figure out'. Her estranged husband was being extremely understanding and had been amazing throughout the past three months, she said.

Miss Hunter remains in touch with Stewart, speaking to him every other day and sharing their children, Renee, six, and four-year-old Liam, who she said have accepted the change.

She told the magazine the children have lived in an 'unconventional world anyway' surrounded by all of Stewart's other children. Divorce was a reality of the day and age, she added.

On the couple's age gap, she said there might have been moments when it mattered, but wouldn't elaborate because it was a private matter.

She added: 'He is a wonderful man. He has an incredible love for life and is very strong, very funny and a very sensitive person. He's going

to be in my life for ever and I adore and admire him.'

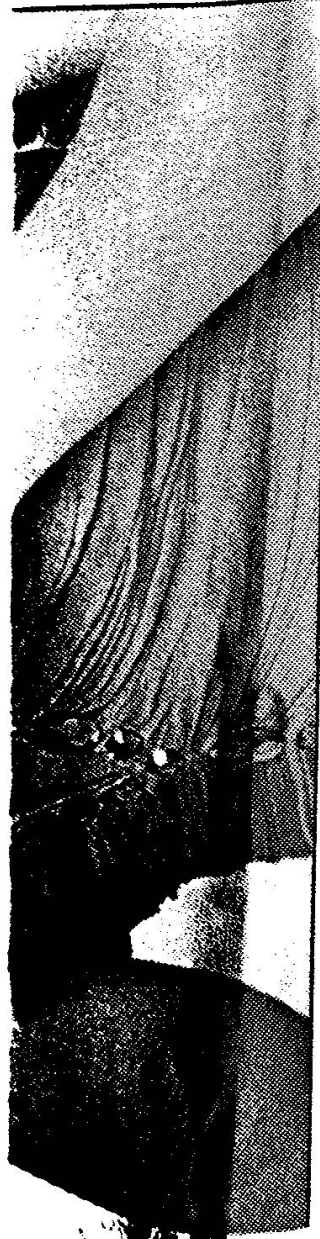
She told the magazine they remained close friends and added: 'I may be doing the most stupid thing in my life right now, but it feels right and means to go through with it. There's an urge to run "home".'

She said she was too young when she married but was swept along by the fairytale.

Turning to her reported relationship with her son's soccer coach, Mark Clay, she said she had never laughed so much as when she saw stories linking them. Miss Hunter has also been linked with American actor Michael Weatherly, 30. She said the media automatically made a romantic connection with anyone she was seen with in public.

She wants to have at least one more child, but not for about another five years, she said.

Miss Hunter also wants to pursue her acting career after appearing in seven films in the last 16 months. One of her projects, Winding Road, in which



Rachel Hunter: The 30-year-old model denies she found Stewart a 'fuddy-duddy'

she plays an alcoholic, is earmarked for screening at the Cannes Film Festival.

Her profile was raised earlier this month when it emerged that she had reportedly been paid £300,000 to pose nude for Playboy. The pictures will be published late this summer.

She also appears in a 24-page photo spread in this week's edition of Hello! She maintained, however, that her life now is not very different from the time she was with Stewart.

She had never seen her life as that of a rock star's wife, she added.

Riddle of UFO 'the size of a battleship'

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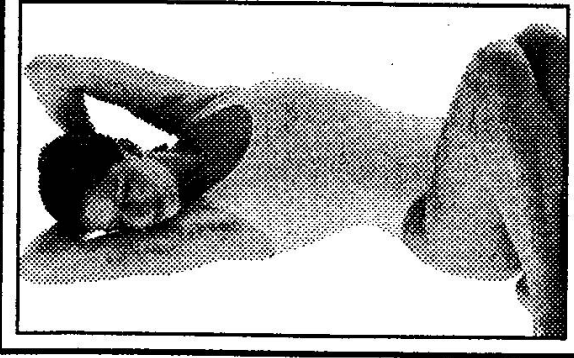
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Marathon man runs out of luck

A MARATHON runner was arrested as he crossed the finishing line when a fellow athlete identified him as a bicycle thief.

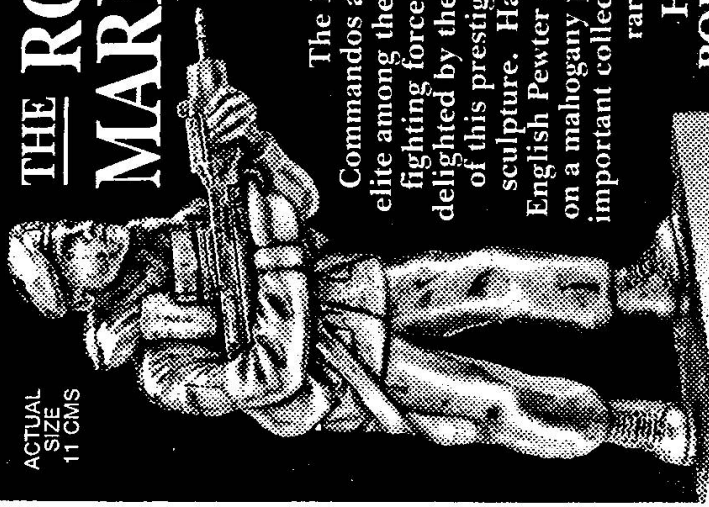
After being taken to the police station in Gosport, Hampshire, for questioning in his vest and shorts, he astonished officers by asking to use the exercise yard.

Police said the man admitted taking the bike at nearby Hayling Island. But the owner offered to drop charges if he agreed to pay her £75 compensation.

Subsequent investigations revealed, however, that two warrants were outstanding for failing to appear in court at Folkestone, Kent, on charges of criminal damage, and he was kept in custody.

THE ROYAL MARINES

by RICHARD HANLEY



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DAILY MAIL 27 APRIL '99



MIRACLE: Sharon with Sarah Alice, the baby she never expected

pushed into hospital with crippling back pain, she thought her problems had returned.

But hours later, instead of receiving the organ transplant she was expecting, Sharon was holding the baby she longed for after giving birth to 6lb 3oz Sarah Alice.

"She's my little miracle," said Sharon, of Elswick, Newcastle

back pains at home mum took me to hospital gave me a scan that was pregnant - and I was in labour - I thought been my kidneys again "I couldn't believe it had been no indication side effects at all. I finally managed to get I burst into tears of

Pilot's close encounter with UFO

BY SIMON BIRD

A BRITISH charter jet has had a close encounter with a UFO said to be "the size of a battleship".

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Battleship-sized craft 'buzzed jet'

spotted near a company plane. At one stage, the report says, the UFO came to an abrupt halt before accelerating past the jet at thousands of miles an hour. A CAA source says the object was tracked by a military radar station in Yorkshire after it entered UK air space.

A spokesman for the 6,000 member British Pilots Association said: "We get reports of this nature from our members but they are few and far between. In the past 10 years or so I would say there have been around six cases of UFO's being sighted.

"Many pilots are reluctant to make such claims because it tends to lay them open to ridicule. So when they do go as far as making a report we do expect it to be given credence."

A Ministry of Defence spokesman insisted there were no military aircraft in the area adding: "We saw nothing."

●A councillor in the Stirlingshire village of Bonnybridge has recorded a CD about the thousands of UFO sightings witnessed there in the past decade.

Billy Buchanan plans to send his songs to Roswell in America, scene of the world's most famous UFO incident in 1947.

His accompanying message says: "I believe our two areas have an affinity and I give you greetings from my area to your area. My quest for the truth goes on."

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The EXPRESS
27 April
98.

The table above shows the APR charged on a loan of £5,000 to new customers may qualify for a lower rate. Source: Moneyfacts 16/3/99. *9.9% APR refers to the by direct debit with full personal loan protection. Typical loan example: £5,000 discounted rate of 11.9% APR. Monthly payments would be £109.63 and to reserved. Loans are not available to applicants under 18 years of age, and are subject to record or monitor calls to or from Alliance & Leicester Personal Finance. Alliance No. 2486611. Registered Office: Heritage House, 61 Southgates, Leicester LE1 5 Leicester plc. DATA PROTECTION ACT: In order to process your telephone application at a credit reference agency which will keep a record of that search.

1 lines
Friday 23 Apr 99

18 OVERSEAS NI

Radical college sets up chair of aliens

FROM GILES WHITTELL
IN LOS ANGELES

IF ANYBODY'S out there, Berkeley would like to know: the university that invented gender studies in the 1960s has appointed the first Professor of Extraterrestrial Intelligence.

Dr William Welch will supervise the building of a three-acre field of telescopes in Northern California in a renewed attempt to answer what most scientists consider the Big One: are we alone in the universe? He does not expect a quick answer.

Using giant dishes pointed at deep space from New Mexico and Puerto Rico, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (Seti) has been seeking signals from alien life for decades, without success.

"Will we find intelligent life in space in my lifetime?" Dr Welch mused in an interview with *The New York Times* at Berkeley's Hat Creek Observatory. "It's a very remote possibility."

Seti researchers concentrate on a band of microwave radiation considered the best hunting ground. Such signals could take aeons to get here, though. In 1974 a message about our solar system was beamed from Puerto Rico to a star cluster 25,000 light years away. A prompt reply would not be back for 50,000 years.

Dr Welch's job is at least a sign that Seti is about science, not little green men. Endowed to the tune of \$500,000 (£311,000) by two Seti volunteers, the professorship is a much-needed injection of money for a search stripped of most of its Nasa funding in 1993, as depicted in *Contact*, the film starring Jodi Foster.

Jill Tarter, on whom Foster's character was based, then sought private backing. She happens to be Dr



Sophia Lore
The 64-yr

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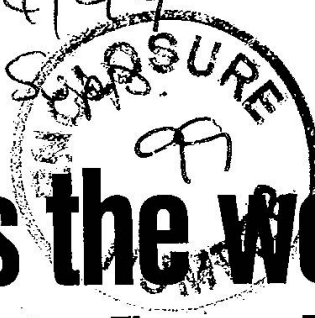
THE extent to which South Africa has talised by its enc wave became cl after the screening evision of a showing police nesburg assaulting suspects.

Although seni pressed shock, r radio phone-ins for them."

Reports about tary, shown on Monday and re night on South- sion, were the newspapers at tins. The South- casting Corpor that the police the Brixton Hig Johannesburg, banded.

Typical of the white woman, Sue, who lives r

Sat 24/4/99
Times Colour Supp.



this is the wee



● The Fortean Times

holds its sixth annual convention of the bizarre and paranormal this weekend.

Called the *Fortean Times* "Unconvention", it consists of speeches, demonstrations and public participation experiments

on such preposterous topics as The Poltergeist of Humpty Doo and Flying Saucers of the Apocalypse. However, the biggest mystery — and probably one that won't be solved — is how people can be gullible enough to pay £25 to listen to this old rubbish.

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Matthew Perry and Courtney Cox in TV's Friends

their emotional stamina. It has become known as the 'Friends' syndrome - named after the hit show in which a small group of professionals stick together and regard their parents as unhelpful intruders - and appears in research released this week from Britain and the US.

Even Posh Spice and David Beckham suffer from the 'Friends' syndrome. Posh, Spice Girl Victoria Adams, said last week the celebrity couple moved in such small circles 'we could have our wedding in a postbox'.

A British researcher into social circles, Dr Geoff Collee, has conducted studies in the US and in England to find most people only 'bonded' with three people even though they

money? Would a conversation without hesitation after a year? Do they remember all the small details about you, and vice versa? Are you with them in all moods and places - work or in a sport? Janet Asgham, sociologist at City College London, said people had deeper roots and circles of friends than middle-class professionals.

She added: 'Now, as middle-class becomes the norm, we move away from jobs and the family fragmentation, marrying later and more divorce. Friendship has never been

Career threat to sex

INCREASING numbers of successful professionals are finding the pursuit of promotion and riches is seriously damaging their sex lives - just like the TV lawyer, played by Calista Flockhart.

An investigation into private health clinic attendance found high earners regularly suffer more sex-related problems than their less-ambitious colleagues.

One specialist said: 'The high-

flying businessman might be big in the boardroom but lots were bored in the bedroom.

'More than 90 per cent of the high earners - those with incomes of between £80,000-£100,000 - have the words 'sexual difficulties' on their forms.'

Warwick University's Andrew Oswald said his research showed those with a relaxed attitude to their careers usually enjoyed life more.



Ally...

Break for UFO fans

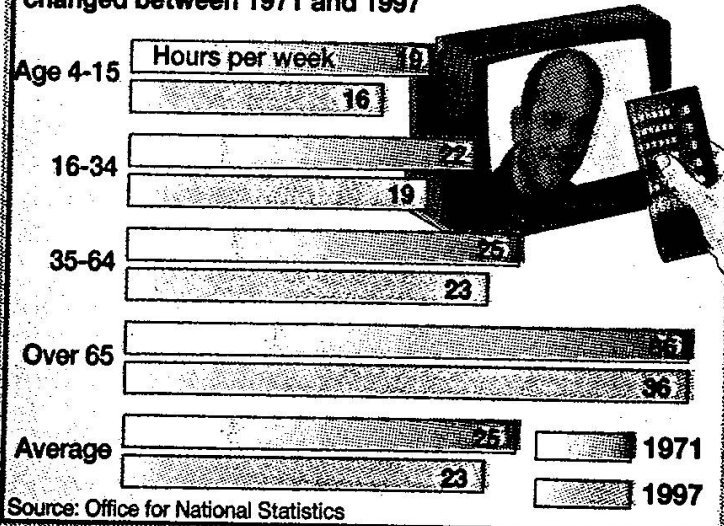
TOURISTS are being offered weekend breaks to indulge in a little UFO-spotting.

The sci-fi holidays are planned for the autumn in Bonnybridge, near Falkirk, Scotland, where more than 350 UFO sightings have been reported since 1992.

Organisers say they will charge UFO-spotters from as far away as Japan and Australia £180 each for a place on the trips - which include sky-watching nights complete with midnight picnics.

METRO graphic

How Londoners' TV viewing habits have changed between 1971 and 1997



Rowing for record

A TEAM of 16 adventurers are hoping to set a new speed record for rowing non-stop from London to Paris.

They will start on the Thames, cross the Channel and finish on the Seine, close to the Eiffel Tower.

The record attempt - due to take place in May - will be made in a replica of a 180-year-old Thames workboat and the team will be led by yachtsman Jock Wishart.

The current record for the 430-mile route is five-and-a-half days, set in 1990 by a Metropolitan Police crew.



Saturday 24th April is London's Territorial Army Day. Meet the soldiers and see the kit and equipment at the Territorial Army Centre, London's HQ in the Kings Road, Chelsea (5 mins from the Tube). Meet the soldiers and see the kit and equipment that they use.

TA service means one evening a week, at least once a year, and two weeks of annual exercise. It's paid, and it's a chance to get fit and make new friends.

Gates open at 11.00am and close at 3.30pm.

For more information call 0171-414 5555

Metro (free newspaper)
19 April 1999

Sunday Times

7 February 1999

Page 3

UFO hunter at MoD 'kidnapped by aliens'

by Mark Macaskill

THE Ministry of Defence official who once headed investigations into unidentified flying objects believes he was abducted by aliens. Nick Pope, who ran the ministry's top secret Airstaff Secretariat office during the early 1990s, believes that he, his girlfriend and their car were abducted from a deserted toll road in Florida.

He has described how he was lifted aboard an alien spacecraft and then wandered around its corridors — without, however, meeting any aliens.

It was following this incident that he applied for the job heading the defence ministry department which collects all reported sightings of UFOs and related phenomena. He did not, however, enter details of his experience on the files since he was uncertain exactly what had happened to him and because he was worried he would be labelled a crank.

Pope is still employed by the ministry, but a routine transfer in 1994 means he now works for the finance policy department as a higher executive officer.

He has alluded to the incident in his bestselling book *The Uninvited*, which claimed to expose the phenomenon of alien abductions. But only now has it emerged that one of the detailed descriptions of the several abductions was based on his own experience rather than on that of someone called Peter.

This weekend, Pope refused to confirm or deny the claim that he was the "Peter" in the book. He said he was unable to speak because he had since broken up with his girlfriend

and did not want to involve her.

According to the book, the incident happened while "Peter and Jenny" were travelling along a Florida turnpike. Suddenly, they realised they were no longer on the same road and had jumped several miles closer to their destination, even though no time seemed to have elapsed.

He described the experience as the "strangest" event in his life. In the book he went on to explain that he only recovered his memory of what happened when, some time later, he underwent hypnosis. He then "recalled" how he and his girlfriend had been lifted from the ground in their car and how he had then walked on air into a metallic corridor in what seemed to be some sort of spacecraft. Shortly after, the experience ended with him returning to his car with "no immediate recollection" of what had happened.

The book makes it clear that he accepts that such recollections are not 100% reliable and he cannot say for certain that he was actually abducted. He says, however, that he believes it is highly likely. The book adds: "If the event occurred as Peter remembers then he was taken without consent and subjected to some truly bizarre experience."

His latest revelation will come as a further surprise for the ministry, where officials

were amazed when he announced that his time collating their "X files" had convinced him that Earth was being visited by aliens.

They were sufficiently relaxed about his claims, however, to allow him to publish his first book, *Open Skies. Closed Minds* in 1995. Its success illustrates the huge interest generated by the subject of aliens visiting Earth, with hundreds of people claiming to have been abducted by travellers from space.

Jenny Randles, the former

head of investigations at the British UFO Research Association, who remains one of Britain's leading "ufologists", said: "When I discovered that Nick had had an experience I was mildly surprised given his position as the government expert on UFOs.

"What surprised me more, though, is why he has never admitted to it before and why he chose to describe the incident as happening to somebody else.

"Clearly, the truth really is out there."

96
NUMBER

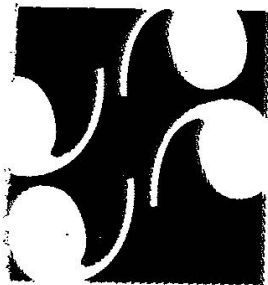
13

Some places on the trip may still be available. If you are interested in taking part contact Sarah Clarke at CARE International on: 0171 379 5247 or e-mail: sarah@uk.care.org



Wally Hunter

I don't think people have a raw deal here. The building does, however, need modernising, especially the heating system. "I don't think open-plan offices are a very good idea because of the noise factor. It's



May you be... is sure to co... eminate a... appealing b... sights in an... of a two ce... The price... return purp... including br... accommodat... Xian optio... Museum (R...

Travel as off... USA and Ca... computer... single per son... 7/7 Jan... years) (6... Prices are... A with mo... war after a...

For full deta... IPII mem... title/dept or... A/C Club etc... V. Old DF... All pay... a course and... pro. job b... companies... conditions... notice For I...

1. What's the best advice you have ever received?
Stand up for your beliefs.

2. Name the historical character you most admire.
Winston Churchill.

3. What are you reading at the moment?
Dr Strangelove, I Presume by Michael Foot.

4. Is there one piece of criticism that sticks in your mind?
People tell me I speak too loudly.

5. Describe yourself in six words.
The real life Agent Fox Mulder.

6. What's your favourite piece of music?
Any relaxing, New Age Music.

7. Which career would you have followed if you hadn't pursued your current profession?
Journalism... or maybe the police.

8. Which part of your job gives you the most pleasure?
Making judgement calls.

9. And the least?
Simply having to refer people to a set of regulations.

10. What can you see from your window?
Part of the boiler system. Yuck!

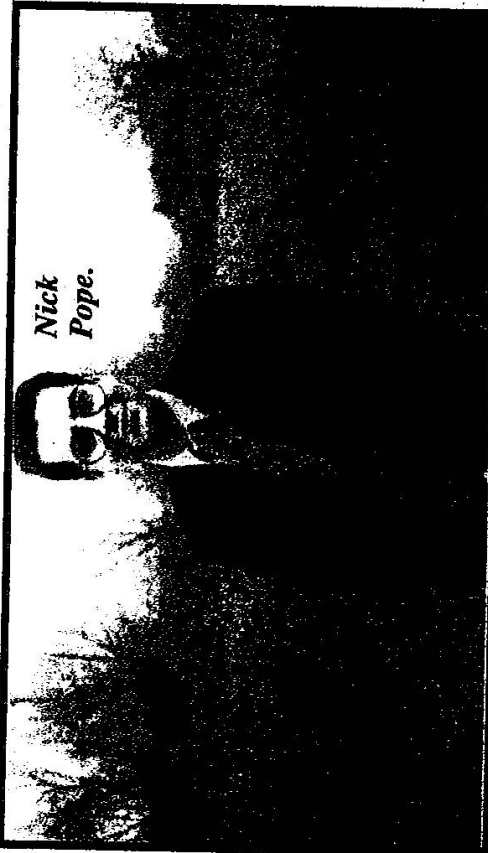
11. What do you always carry with you to work?
My mobile phone (switched off in the building, of course!)

12. What's your pet hate?
People with closed minds.

13. How do you want to spend New Year's Eve 1999?
At the mother of all parties.

14. Who would you nominate as Man or Woman of the Millennium?
Stephen Hawking.

Is there anyone you would like to see featured in Brief Encounter — or do you want to nominate yourself?
Write to Brief Encounter, Focus, Room 0316, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB, or telephone us on 82341MB; CHOTS: DICMT(FOCUS)2.



Nick Pope

NAME:

Nick Pope

POSITION:

HEO in Fin Pol (Repayment) 2, Main Building

He's been described as MOD's answer to Fox Mulder. Here, Nick Pope, author of two best-selling books on alien encounters, turns his attention to the mysteries of the Focus questionnaire

62/50

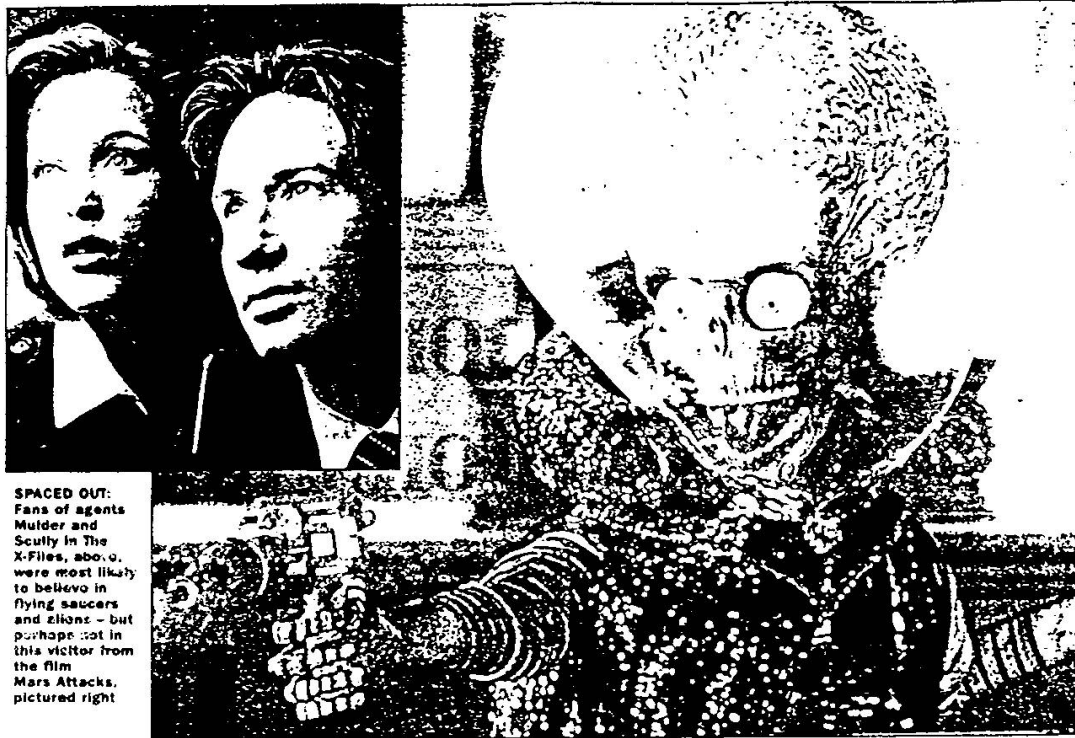
The Express

12 January 1999

Page 17

You're a little green, men

58 per cent
of males
believe
in aliens



SPACED OUT:
Fans of agents
Mulder and
Scully in *The
X-Files*, above,
were most likely
to believe in
flying saucers
and zions - but
perhaps not in
this visitor from
the film
Mars Attacks,
pictured right

BY MICHAEL HANLON
SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

FOX MULDER'S suspicion that the truth is out there is shared by the public, it seems.

More than half of us believe that alien intelligence exists - with more men than women showing their gullibility over little green visitors from far-off galaxies.

And nearly everyone thinks that if extra-terrestrials were visiting us our Government would do everything in its power to cover it up, according to a new survey.

Unsurprisingly, sci-fi fans, particularly enthusiasts of the TV series *The X-Files*, are most likely to assume a conspiracy, with 86 per cent expecting the Government to lie.

"Even people who do not believe in UFOs believe the Government wouldn't tell the truth if they knew there was alien life," said Paul Simpson, editor of *Focus* magazine, which polled more than 1,000 people.

Overall, more than 50 per cent of the UK population believes there is intelligent life on other worlds, while 14 per cent don't know. And while 58 per cent of men believe there is alien intelligence, the figure for women is just 43 per cent. "This was a finding we could not explain. Men tend to be slightly more cynical, so this is a bit contradictory," said Mr Simpson.

There were also marked differences in belief in aliens,

by age, and geographically. The biggest believers in alien intelligence live in the South West, where more than two-thirds think that we are not alone, while Londoners are the most sceptical. Pensioners were the least likely to accept the idea of extra-terrestrials. "A lot of scientists are coming to the view that alien life is out there," said Mr Simpson. "Our poll shows that

belief in alien life is no longer only the preserve of the lunatic fringe."

Britain's own Fox Mulder is Nick Pope, a Ministry of Defence civil servant who investigated UFO sightings from 1991 to 1994. He says that in about "90 to 95 per cent of cases" he could explain away the alleged UFO sighting. But a small number of

sightings "were really interesting, as far as I was concerned there was definitely an intelligence at work".

However, unlike agent Mulder, Mr Pope never had anyone trying to suppress his findings. "I never got anyone trying to shut me up. Never once did anyone have a quiet word with me to cover up a mysterious sighting.

Never once did a witness say that mysterious men in black had turned up at their house after a sighting. There's a lot of paranoia out there.

"Of course, I have been accused of being part of the conspiracy myself, but you just can't win with these people."

Most scientists accept that alien life is almost a certainty, but point out that sending crewed spacecraft across interstellar space is so difficult, time-consuming and expensive that it is much more likely that aliens will choose to communicate with us using radio signals.

Meanwhile, American computer tycoon Joe Firmage has abandoned his £1.2 billion business to search for UFOs.

He believes that recent advances in technology, from silicon chips, fibre optics and lasers can be traced back to alien hardware recovered from a spacecraft which allegedly crashed near Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947.



1

EXPOSURE
23
JAN 21 1985

GRBs

After dinner, say cheese to keep a bright smile

ROUNDING off dinner with the cheeseboard not only prolongs the meal — it could do the same for your smile.

A spot of stilton or cheddar, or whatever cheese you prefer, is just the thing to fight off tooth decay especially after a sugary dessert, according to the latest dental research.

The 'Wensleydale effect' stops those filling mouthfuls causing a mouth full of fillings by preventing bacteria around the gums turning sugar into acids that attack the teeth's

By JENNY HOPE
Medical Correspondent

enamel, a conference was told yesterday. Cheese is close to perfect because it contains fat and salt to stimulate acid-neutralising saliva and a combination of calcium and a milk protein which speed up natural repairs to the surface of the teeth.

It is equally effective against acid from fruit, juices and soft drinks. Scientific support for the cheeseboard was part of the British Nutrition Foundation's

latest report, Oral Health: Diet and Other Factors, produced by a team of dental and nutrition experts and launched yesterday.

They also found that how frequently sugary foods were eaten was the most important factor in decay.

'What this means is that it is less what you eat, and more when you eat that affects the risk of tooth decay,' said Sarah Schenker, nutrition scientist at the foundation.

So the advice included a warning to keep away from the snack bar and concentrate eating at meal times. 'If you

are eating sugar continually throughout the day there is little chance of your mouth returning to a neutral balance.'

Tucking into a stick of celery or a few grapes with the cheese will also help produce saliva and prevent decay, she said.

For those eating on the run a simple stick of chewing gum will bring down the dangerous acid levels.

Surprisingly, she suggests another perfect end to a good meal are chocolates, which have the same saliva-producing effect as cheese.



Better bite: Cheese course of treatment

Zap go the space invaders

MYSTERIOUS explosions in space may be wiping out alien life-forms before they have a chance to explore worlds such as Earth, a scientist claimed yesterday.

Gamma ray bursts, or GRBs, unleash devastating amounts of radiation in seconds. Many experts think they may occur when the remnants of dead stars, or black holes, collide. James Annis, from the Fermilab U.S.

Government laboratory in Chicago, told New Scientist magazine that these cataclysmic explosions may sterilise whole star systems, wiping out alien species before they have a chance to leave their home planets.

The rate of GRBs, about one per galaxy every few hundred million years, is believed to be slower than in the past, raising the intriguing possibility that aliens may at last have time to develop space travel.

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ALIENS



exists!

Official

When Nick Pope was put in charge of investigating UFO sightings and alien abductions for the Ministry of Defence, he thought flying saucer buffs were mad. That is, until he turned into one. Emma Bayley meets Britain's real Fox Mulder



**The man from the
ministry, he say:**
"Typical! You wait for
years for a UFO and
then three come
along at once!"

Aliens Exist!

"Oh, I see. You've got me under the light so it looks like I have a UFO over my head," says Nick Pope as we take his picture on London's Embankment under a twilight sky. "Fine."

Kate Moss may have said she'd like to have a "one2one" with Elvis. But this guy decided that, despite being sorely tempted by Gillian Anderson, it would have to be with an alien. When the mobile phone radio ad aired, listeners heard Pope declare that he would ask the extraterrestrial creature where it was from, how long it had been here and what it wanted.

The UFO lobby were furious with him. How dare he trivialise and make a mockery of their subject? What was he thinking of, selling out like that? "They were just jealous because they didn't get the commission themselves," Pope jokes. But he simply saw it as a great opportunity for him to spread his message wide: Aliens Exist. Official.

This is a man who on the morning of 29 July 1991 walked along the pavements of Whitehall to a new job. As he puts it, he was a typically conservative, sober-suited civil servant. He passed the policemen at the entrance to Downing Street and entered the austere, grey Ministry of Defence HQ building across the road.

Who is he?

Name Nick Pope

Age 33

Nationality British

He was born on 19 September 1965 in London, grew up in the Surrey village of Rowledge, went to Lord Wandsworth College in Long Sutton, near Basingstoke and then started but didn't finish a law degree. He drifted into the Civil Service, thinking that it would be a good stop-gap measure while he decided what to do with his life – almost 14 years later, he's still there. Since he took the MOD's UFO job, his girlfriends have objected to playing second fiddle to aliens so he's still single (although utterly in love with Gillian Anderson).

He had been working at the MOD for six years. But on this particular day he was moving within the department known as Secretariat (Air Staff) to the UFO desk (the only official post worldwide looking into sightings, a job he ended up doing for three years). He was pleased to have landed the position, even though he had no particular interest in UFOs.

"I thought it would involve dealing with a lot of strange people," he says. "I thought I would spend my days writing letters like: 'Dear Mr Smith, thank you for your letter concerning the strange lights you saw in the sky recently. I'm sure it's nothing to worry about. Now run along...' I could not have been more wrong."

We duck out of the rain and enter a bar called Walkers on a dimly lit backstreet off Whitehall. Pope tells me that this is where many MOD employees come drinking. We pass candlelit booths and huddles of suited folk engaged in earnest conversation (highly classified defence secrets perhaps?) and settle ourselves at a table.

Nick Pope is 33 years old, 5ft 8in tall, dark-haired and seems like an easy-going, down-to-earth guy. Dressed in a blue and white striped shirt and dark suit, he loosens the tie around his neck, takes a slug of his white wine, nudges a pair of dark-rimmed glasses up the bridge of his nose and begins the account of his conversion.

"My predecessors at the UFO Desk mainly replied to people who reported sightings by suggesting a conventional explanation like aircraft lights," he says. "But I decided to be more proactive than them.

"Initially, this involved gathering information on, say, when and where Richard Branson flew his Virgin airships, or when and where military exercises, weather balloon launches, laser light displays or meteor events were due to take place." Amazingly, nobody in the job had done this before. This meant he could do more than suggest conventional explanations to UFO sightings, he could confirm 95 per cent of them.

But that still left five per cent unexplained. Considering 13 million people worldwide were reported to have seen 'something', 650,000 sightings were unaccounted for. Pope, being a methodical chap, felt he wouldn't be doing his job of protecting the defence of the realm properly unless he checked out at least the British incidents.

Earning a few raised eyebrows from fellow officials, he immersed himself in the literature on the subject – every book, report, paper and wacky UFO magazine he could lay his hands on. He made contact with every researcher and investigator who had ever touched on the phenomenon. "I wasn't swayed from my scepticism by others," he says. "What changed my mind were the cases I personally investigated."

The clichéd view of UFO spotting. Fedora-hatted Americans staring into the night sky and saying, "Damn me, what's that?"



There were two famous historic sightings which paved the way for his change of heart. The first one, known as Britain's Roswell, was the Rendelsham Forest incident.

At 3am on 27 December 1980, two security patrolmen, from the joint RAF/USAF airbase at Woodbridge in Suffolk, witnessed a 3x2m triangular metallic-looking object illuminating the coniferous woods with red and blue lights. When a team led by the deputy base commander, Lieut-Colonel Charles Halt, went to investigate the next day, they found dents in the ground and scorch marks up trees. But, most importantly, they saw the strange object for themselves. It conveniently returned for several hours before disappearing in a flurry of multicoloured pulsating lights into the blackness of space.

The team submitted a report to the MOD but it was never investigated in detail. Despite the object being seen by a number of trained military observers, it was judged to be of no defence significance. Case closed.

"It was a tragic missed opportunity," claims Pope. "Here was one of the most important sightings anywhere in the world and nobody interviewed witnesses or checked radar and radiation data. So I decided to reopen the investigation." When he checked the radiation taken by Halt and his team with the Defence Radiological Protection Service, he found that where the object had pressed into the ground, readings were ten times higher than normal.

Pope was a only few months into his job and already he was scratching his head. Could there be more to the UFO mystery than he thought? "I had not expected to find reports of military personnel seeing these things," he says. "It sounds patronising but I thought it was only people who'd had one too many down the pub."

The other well-known case that intrigued him was the wave of sightings over Belgium on the night of 30-31 March 1990. Both the Belgian gendarmerie and Nato picked up the object on their radar screens. Nato authorised the scrambling of two F-16 fighters. These jets, capable of 1,100mph, were airborne in minutes. But as fast as they locked the object onto their radar, it broke away at unbelievable speed. After a 75-minute aerial chase, it vanished completely.

A combination of public, police and pilot eyewitness accounts described a triangular formation of coloured lights on the underside of a huge craft. The Belgian government admitted it had no idea what it was.

"How can the same establishment that prints 'In God We Trust' on its banknotes close down a UFO research project for want of evidence?"

Exactly three years later, a similar wave of sightings occurred over Britain. When Pope came into work at 9am on 31 March 1993 he was inundated with witness reports. The most extraordinary account came from a meteorological officer at RAF Shawbury in Shropshire.

This man, who clearly knew his airships from his meteors, saw a triangular object the size of a Jumbo jet flying erratically towards him at several hundred miles an hour. It swept a beam of light over the ground as if looking for something and then shot off at high speed, moving from about 30mph to a speed several times that of an RAF jet in an instant.

"What was I meant to say to the man?" asks Pope, waving his wine glass. "I could hardly suggest he might have seen Branson's airship."

Perhaps it was a secret American aircraft, I venture. "Nonsense," he snaps. "You do not fly into another nation's airspace, undermining diplomatic relations and the whole fabric of Nato, and risking engagement by that country's air defence network just to try out a shiny new toy. As an insider, I can tell you, it simply does not happen like that."

So what did he think it was then? "A real UFO. It was a bit of kit a quantum leap ahead of anything even on our drawing boards. Cases like this convinced me that an extraterrestrial explanation best fits the facts. There was simply nothing else it could be."

Pope conducted a two-week investigation and sent a report to the assistant chief of air staff. MOD officials agreed with him – the case could not be explained. But they did not agree that it constituted a defence threat.

"To me, that was so wrong-headed, it was laughable," he says. "These people had their heads in the sand. They just repeated parrot-fashion: 'UFOs – no defence significance,' giving no thought to how ridiculous that made them sound. It's a nonsense to write this off as being of no defence significance."

Conspiracy theorists may suggest shady dealings but Pope has no time for suggestions of cover-ups. "Several officials thought I was digging in areas best left untouched," he says. "But this was not because they were hiding a secret. It comes down to ignorance, prejudice and belief systems. People find it frightening to have research which suggests we are not alone, shattering their cosy view of the world."

Although Pope is adamant that there has not been any cover-up activity in Britain, he cannot be so sure about the States: "I'm more inclined to believe there are things which haven't emerged there. But I don't want to level any direct accusations of a cover-up because I have not been involved on an official level."

Does Roswell not make him suspicious? "Roswell has turned into something of an industry. But there's no getting away from the fact an awful lot of eyewitnesses saw something very strange there. The trouble is, now the case is 50 years old, the number of witnesses who are still alive is small and declining. So it's incredibly difficult to be certain about it."

There used to be an official line of inquiry in the States similar to that managed by Pope in Britain. From 1948, Dr J Allen Hynek, Professor of Astronomy at Northwestern ▶

Liens Kist!

Pope claims masses of RAF personnel have secretly told him they have seen UFOs, but fear they'd be ridiculed



Portraits by Steve Orino

► University, Illinois, was employed by the US Air Force over a 20-year period to head up two research projects into UFOs – 'Sign' and 'Blue Book'. Hynek too became convinced that the phenomenon was genuine.

But in 1969, Blue Book was closed down due to lack of proof of UFOs. Pope is withering about this: "I don't mean to be blasphemous, but how can the same establishment that prints 'In God We Trust' on its banknotes close down Project Blue Book for the want of evidence? Excuse me! Am I the only person who thinks that's a little bit hypocritical?"

It becomes clear how Nick Pope earned his nickname of the real Fox Mulder (which, he says, half-flatters, half-irritates him because it trivialises the serious side of his work). Not only did this sceptic, employed by the government to investigate UFOs, start believing in the phenomenon, but he became widely regarded as an outspoken maverick on the subject.

But if he was sceptical about UFO sightings at first, he was plain annoyed with people who suggested they had been inside them. How was he meant to do serious, respectable research into unexplained craft when there were nutters bringing the subject into disrepute with their half-baked notions of alien abductions and intergalactic breeding programmes?

Realising that there could be something in UFOs changed all that. Suddenly Pope realised that 'transport' was a secondary concern. As he puts it, if the Queen's motor drives up outside your house, you don't faff around examining her wheels, you find out what the hell's she's doing there. Horrified at how dismissive he had been of reports of alien abductions before his UFO revelation in 1993, he set about trying to make amends with these victims. Slowly, word got out that the man from the ministry was now prepared to hear your tale, however bizarre.

He spent hours with hundreds of individuals, listening carefully while they unravelled their

UFOs? Three unexplained British sightings

Reports of strange craft with weird lights are not so easily dismissed when observers include crowds at traffic jams, civilian aircraft pilots and the military. As the RAF station commander said, "Most unusual..."

December 1993

A large triangular craft with weird lights was spotted by a number of people in Lincolnshire over an area near the sea which afterwards became known as the Louth Triangle. A huge traffic jam formed along the coast road caused by people getting out of their cars to

stare at the strange object. The station commander of the local RAF base was one of them. He later reported: "I tried to be rational with the situation but certainly could not say what it was. Most unusual. Most unusual."

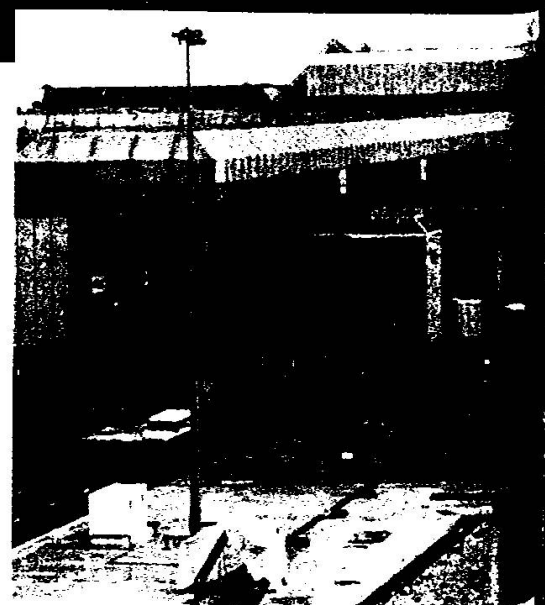
21 April, 15 July 1991

On both these dates pilots flying civilian aircraft over

Kent experienced near misses with unidentified objects. The first pilot, flying an Italian MD80 out of Lydd airport near Romney, reported that a grey, missile-like object flashed past his plane at 22,000ft. A radar blip confirmed they had come within a few feet of being blasted out of the sky. The second pilot, flying a Boeing 737, saw a black 'lozenge-shape' object virtually scrape his wing tip.

6 January 1995

A British Airways passenger jet on its way from Milan to Manchester, was overtaken by a wedge-shaped craft just above the clouds when visibility was ten miles. The object, which was covered with small white lights and possibly a black stripe down its side, flashed silently past at such a speed that the co-pilot ducked as it went by. A year-long investigation could not explain the incident.



strange stories. They were often so traumatised by the memories that they broke down, sobbing hysterically on his shoulder. As he emphasises, each case is unique (don't think all aliens are grey, one was reported as being pink) but there are marked similarities between them.

Many experiences take place on a lonely road at night where an instant of disorientation and sleepiness is followed by the realisation that the journey has taken a good few hours longer than it should have done. Sleep is haunted by nightmares of insects with huge black eyes. Reports later emerge, sometimes through hypnosis, of being taken onto a spacecraft and subjected to medical procedures often sexual in nature, with physical scars to show for it.

Particularly interesting to Pope are city reports. He tells the story of Patsy (a pseudonym) who was sunbathing in a London park one afternoon when suddenly she found herself floating above her body. "Sure, it could have been a dream or a hallucination," Pope admits. "But she came away from the event with a huge scar on her inner thigh which left her unable to walk without sticks and left doctors baffled."

The scars do indicate that something has happened in the physical rather than the purely psychological realm. But it seems incredibly far-fetched to suggest that this is due to alien intervention. Perhaps, hysteria – where hidden psychological traumas manifest themselves physically – could be the key. Or some sort of instability in the brain. Canadian psychologist, Michael Persinger, has shown that stimulation of the temporal lobes can create a fearful impression of a strange presence along with sensations of ascending into the air.

Pope admits that, unlike the UFO phenomenon, there are no videos, photos, radar or radiation reports to back up the accounts. But he is quick to emphasise the straightforward

nature of these people, who rarely have any history of mental disorders. He quotes an experiment conducted by Dr Elizabeth Slater in 1983 who after testing a group of abductees against a control group, concluded they showed no signs of psychopathology.

The general consensus today (including the views of astronomers and astrophysicists) is that with potentially millions of habitable planets out there, life must exist elsewhere in the universe. But few of us honestly believe it has paid Earth a visit, let alone carried out abductions. Perhaps, as Pope suggests with the titles of his two books on the subject, *Open Skies, Closed Minds* and *The Uninvited*, we are in collective denial because we simply cannot get our heads around the reality of extraterrestrial visitors.

Pope claims that huge numbers of RAF personnel have secretly told him they have seen UFOs – he's very envious of them, as he's never seen one ("yet," he adds optimistically). But they fear the ridicule of going public. As one said to him: "I don't fancy being known as Flying Saucer Fred for the rest of my career." But apparently awareness in the higher echelons of power is on the increase. "In the last two years, there have been 30-40 questions tabled in parliament about UFOs. Look in *Hansard*," he says.

In a face-to-face situation Pope presents some convincing arguments. But one concern is that he has become so involved in the subject, it is hard for him to remain objective. "I suppose that's a fair point," he replies. "But you might as well say Stephen Hawking is so involved in black holes that he can't write any further papers on them." Fair point.

May we see your licence?

Mankind's first line of defence against aliens isn't a missile system, it's the sphere of electromagnetic radiation from TV and radio signals surrounding the Earth. Already 50 light-years in radius, it's expanding at the speed of light. Any aliens heading for Earth will, if they reach Alpha Centauri now, be bombarded with digital images of a pink-and-yellow monster saying "Bobby, bobby, bobby". If that doesn't convince them to turn back, nothing will.

Steve Cross for Focus

Manchester Airport: curiously a UFO was reported as heading at high speed in the opposite direction

PA News

4715

EA

Truckers target Cabinet in 'gridlock' fuel protest

By Vincent Moss
Political Reporter

PROTESTING lorry drivers will bring chaos to Britain's roads by parking their trucks outside the offices of more than 50 MPs.

Prime Minister Tony Blair, Chancellor Gordon Brown and Transport and Environment Secretary John Prescott will be among those targeted in the demonstration against rises in fuel tax.

Hauliers plan to leave their vehicles outside the constituency headquarters of senior Ministers and MPs in marginal seats to highlight their case.

The protest will leave dozens of town centres gridlocked as drivers refuse to move their lorries until they have made their point.

The move comes amid angry complaints from hauliers that the 'excessive' level of fuel duty is

driving many of their businesses to the wall.

A full tank of diesel costs a British driver an average of £255 — but just £156 in France and £150 in Germany.

Not only can Continental drivers fill up before handling deliveries in southern Britain, but their lower operating costs at home make for a healthy industry while British rivals struggle.

No date has been fixed yet for the nationwide protests, but they are scheduled to take place before the Chancellor's Spring Budget.

The Road Haulage Association, which represents 100,000 drivers, has predicted that Mr Brown's intention to raise fuel by three

times the rate of inflation will cost thousands of British jobs.

Apart from hitting a handful of Cabinet Ministers, the protests will focus on MPs with a majority of fewer than 1,500 — the number of lorry drivers estimated to live in every constituency.

RHA spokesman Dan Hodges said: 'Our protest will remind MPs that hauliers don't just provide a vital service, they keep many politicians in their jobs.'

'We want to know what MPs are prepared to do to help the haulage industry.'

'We are not frightened of fair competition.'

But the Government's policy of hiking up fuel duty means our members are being forced to compete against foreign drivers with one hand tied behind their backs.'

HOW WE

By Nick Fielding
Chief Investigative Reporter

THE figures are hazy, the light poor, but there appears to be no doubt. Lying on a table, covered in a white fabric, is an alien, its skin grey and staring black eyes expressionless.

Two people hover around the extra-terrestrial and one of them begins to cut the fabric and remove handfuls of innards. Another, dressed in a long coat, appears fleetingly. This, according to those in the know, was US President Harry Truman.

And then, after little more than a minute and a half, the grainy black and white film ends. Some versions contain a security coding in a corner: Restricted Access, A01 Classification Subject 1 of 2, July 30th 1947.

The so-called 'tent footage' purports to be an examination of an alien recovered from a spacecraft which crashed near the isolated New Mexico town of Roswell in 1947.

These few seconds of video, which first appeared in 1994, and another better-known segment of film — the 'alien autopsy' footage which appeared a year later — have intrigued UFO enthusiasts and generated lengthy debate on the Internet.

'They have been shown on countless TV stations and subjected to every conceivable test to discredit them. Yet despite detailed analysis — down to the types of table lamps and clocks on the walls — no one has been able to crack the mystery of where they came from. Until now.'

For we can reveal that the Roswell tent footage was shot in a barn in Bedfordshire by two men whose previous claims to fame included karaoke videos and another which featured animals singing nursery rhymes.

The official story, promoted by London-based video producer Ray Santilli, is that both films were shot by an anonymous former US army cameraman. Santilli claimed he had been offered the footage by the camera-

'We could hardly stop laughing'

man when he had been searching in the US for early film of Elvis Presley.

The truth, according to video producers Keith Bateman and Andy Price-Watts, is somewhat different. Bateman and Price-Watts, whose company, AK Music, is based in Milton Keynes, say that in the summer of 1994 they were approached by Santilli, who they had known for many years and who occasionally bought some of their bizarre videos.

Santilli told them he had a video of aliens, but it was of poor quality. Could they enhance it?

They tried, but could get nothing from the film. Santilli was disappointed and the matter was dropped. But knowing Santilli was in the market for this kind of material, Bateman and Price-Watts decided to try to make their own version.

Their research led them to a story already well established in UFO mythology — of how, after a spacecraft had supposedly crashed at Roswell, an alien had been taken to a barn nearby where a medical examination had taken place. President Truman was rumoured to have visited during the operation.

'We found a barn in the quiet village

It was the world's most convincing evidence of UFOs. Now The Mail on Sunday can reveal this film was made in a Bedfordshire barn by two Milton Keynes karaoke video producers

of Ridgmont, Bedfordshire, through a farmer I knew', says Andy Price-Watts. 'I had an old paraffin lamp and we brought along a table, some sheets, overalls and rubber gloves.'

'We filmed it in the evening to make it look as if it had been shot in the dark. The gloves — Marigolds — looked too modern so we had to discard them. We tried to get a mannequin from a local store, but it was impossible. Elstree Studios offered to make us one for £25,000, which was ludicrous.'

'In the end we used a wig holder we bought for a few quid, which Elliot Willis, our tape operator transformed using painted orange peel for the eyes. Elliot and the local butcher, Roger Baker played the two medical staff. Roger got the part because he could supply the chicken guts we used as the alien's innards.'

'We were thinking of using pig guts, but they looked too human.'

As they were filming, the farmer walked in to see what they were doing. 'I suddenly thought we could use him', says Bateman. 'There was an old scarecrow in the corner of the barn and we got the coat from it, put it on him and he had a little cameo role as President Truman. We could hardly stop ourselves laughing as we shot the video, which took about an hour and a half to complete.'

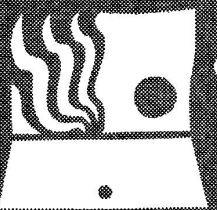
Andy Price-Watts's 12-year-old son played the alien, with his head covered by the sheet and the dummy head placed on top.

'We used a Sony video camera on a tripod and kept joggling it to give the impression it was being held', says Andy. 'The strange camera angles added to the veracity of the film.'

The resulting film was edited down to six minutes. Shot in colour, it was processed to black and white and animators in the studio drew scratch lines on computer and overlaid this on to the film. It was then transferred between different video formats to make it as grainy as possible.

'We then went to see Santilli and told him we had some alien footage which we had bought in the States', says Bateman. 'He told us we had been

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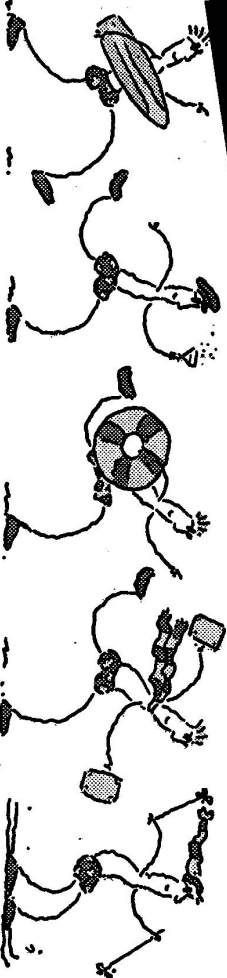
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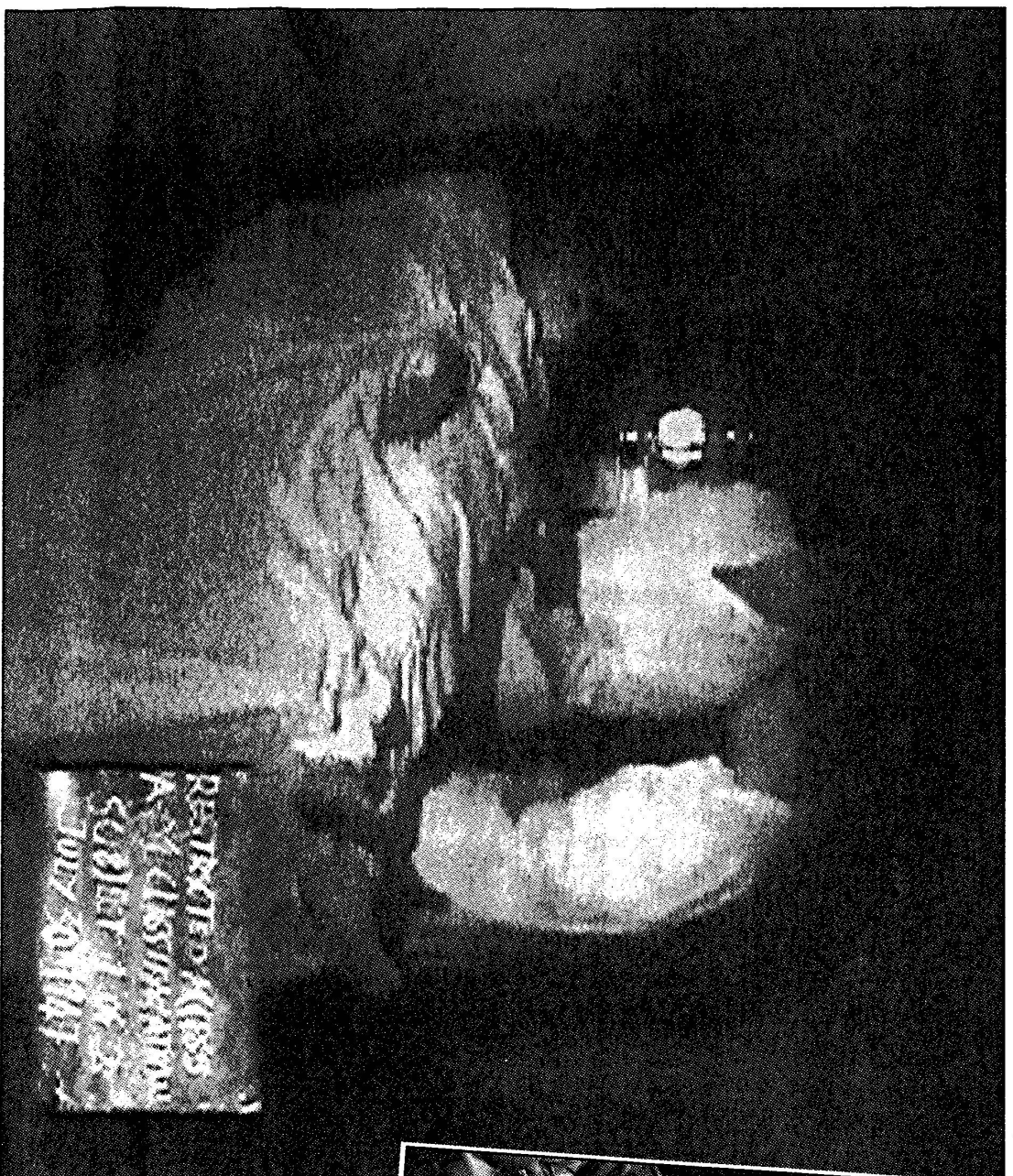
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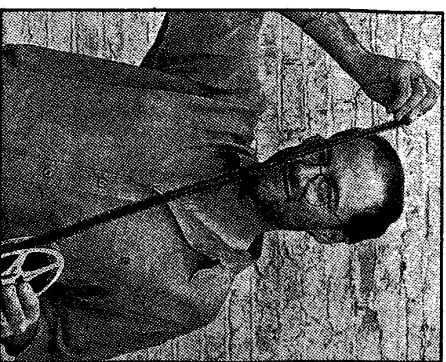
faked alien autopsy



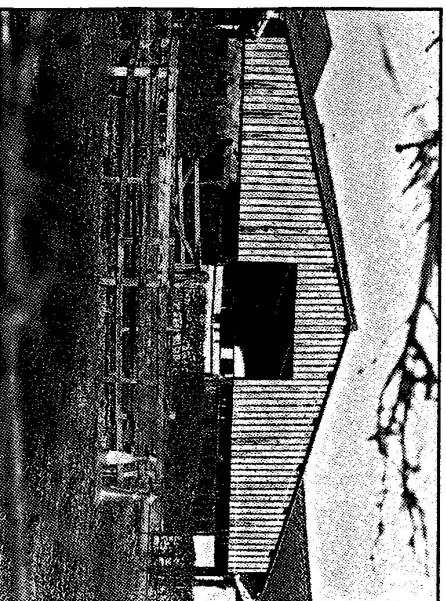
UNMASKED: Bateman with the 'alien' head made from a wig holder

BARRY BEATTIE

SHADY MOVES: The faked alien examination, filmed at night using paraffin lamps and a scarecrow's coat as props



FILM LAUNCH: Roy Santilli



UNDERCOVER OPERATION: Scene of the 'alien' encounter

conned and didn't think it was very good. He said it should have been clearer and should also have had a restricted notice on it.

Bateman got the film back, superimposed the bogus classification message and sent it back to Santilli, who told the two men he could not use it.

Early in 1995, Bateman says, he was surprised to hear Santilli's friend and UFO enthusiast Reg Presley of Sixties pop group The Trogs mention the tent footage in an interview.

Despite having rejected their film, Santilli refused at this time to criticise it in public.

That summer, Bateman and Price-Watts decided to put their film out on a video being made

by producer Bruce Barlow called Penetrating The Web 2.0. In the meantime Santilli had apparently acquired his alien autopsy film and, unknown to us, was planning a huge media launch in about a dozen different countries,' says Price-Watts. 'I had already got a slot on GMTV to talk about our film and when Ray heard about this he was not pleased. He flew back from a holiday in America and came straight to our offices, telling us our film would mess up his launch.

'He offered to pay us if we agreed not to promote the film for 10 weeks, which we agreed to.'

With his potential competitors out of the way, Santilli launched

the main autopsy film around the world. Of much better quality than the tent footage, it purports to show an autopsy taking place in an operating theatre. Despite knowing the background to the tent footage, Santilli adopted an ambiguous attitude to it.

'The first piece of film I saw at Santilli's office was the tent footage,' says independent UFO researcher Philip Mantle. 'He said it came from a "scrap reel" from the army cameraman. It had been processed by some friends of his, but when he had taken it to America and shown it to the cameraman after processing, the man said he did not recognise segments of it.

'Only later did he admit it had

been tampered with, although it now appears it was shot entirely in the UK.'

On numerous other occasions Santilli failed to state the truth about the tent footage, namely that it had been faked by people he knew.

In June 1995, for example, when asked during an Internet UFO conference if the people in the tent footage had been identified as actors or military personnel, he replied: 'Those seen in the tent footage have not yet been identified, but in time I am sure they will.'

The story resurfaced last year when a former colleague of Bateman and Price-Watts published some details on the Internet.

Bateman says the pair were pestered with calls, letters and e-mails after their names and addresses were published on the Internet and he even moved home after becoming worried about the safety of his family.

'That is why we have decided to talk now. We are fed up with the crazy UFO nuts for whom this story is the centre of their lives.'

Graham Birdsall, editor of UFO magazine, said most UFO researchers would be unsurprised to learn the tent footage had been faked.

He added: 'It clearly casts even more doubt on the so-called alien autopsy footage. It may only be a matter of time before the whole story comes out.'

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