

'Flying Saucer' has the boffins baffled

A TEAM of French government scientists who have been investigating the report of a Flying Saucer landing admitted this weekend that, for the first time in more than 1,000 cases, they have been unable to find a logical or earthbound explanation.

At first glance the report was like any of a hundred other sightings. While working in his garden in the Gard region of southern France, a farmworker heard

from
DAVID PASKOV
Paris

a slight whistling sound, looked up and saw "a strange machine coming down very fast. It was not spinning and there were no flames or smoke."

After hitting the ground, it took off almost immediately at a tremendous speed.

It was about 13ft in diameter, about 8ft high, and shaped like two inverted soup

plates of unequal size joined together by a projecting rim.

At the scene scientists from GEPAN, the group for the study of non-identifiable aerospace phenomena set up by the government in 1979, found some strange evidence.

Plant life had mysteriously changed in character. Although it was summer it was as if autumn had arrived overnight.

Analyses carried out at four separate laboratories produced startling results. Chlorophyll and other sub-

stances in the plants had been reduced by between 30 and 50 per cent.

But that was not all. The scientists' report added that an analysis of soil samples indicated that an object of extremely heavy weight had scraped along the ground leaving evidence of both thermic and mechanical effect and a residue of what was possibly combustion.

Could this really have been caused by a Flying Saucer?

The scientists' report does not indicate a belief in UFOs, but it ends with: "We are in the presence of traces for which there is no satisfactory explanation and we can find no reason to suspect that the eyewitness is deliberately lying."

Top scientist Alain Esterle said: "For the first time we found a combination of factors which leads us to accept that something similar to what the eyewitness described actually did happen."