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## Past Times

# Mysteries in the air

FLYING saucers and monsters from outer space began to excite the West during the 1940s—and, by the end of the decade, eager Americans were reporting more than 600 U.F.O. sightings a year.

The official sighting that started it all was made by American pilot Kenneth Arnold on June 24, 1947. Flying near Mount Rainier, Washington State, he was astonished to see

"nine peculiar-looking craft", moving at an estimated speed of 1200 mph.

"They looked," he said, "like a saucer would if you skipped it

across water." In 1977, 15 pupils at Broadhaven Junior School in Wales reported seeing a silvery-yellow, cigar-shaped form in the sky. When the headmas-

ter asked them to draw, independently, what they had seen, he had to admit that the pictures bore "a remarkable similarity to one another".

Three years later, a West Yorkshire policeman claimed to have been beamed aboard a flying saucer by a "tall humanoid", who was assisted by eight robots.



**SARA DRIVER**