

The flying saucer is 40 years old, but no-one is throwing a party

I see no spaceships!

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There's a UFO cover-up say skywatchers

THE flying saucer is 40 years old this week, but the UFO department of the Ministry of Defence won't be holding a party.

The department consists of one civil servant, a notepad and a filing cabinet.

The solitary official logs UFO reports in the notepad and then uses the filing cabinet in which to dispose of them.

"They're all filed" explains the MoD, which means they are never heard of again.

"If we had a report of a UFO hovering over a Cruise missile base, for instance, we would investigate. We're only interested in a military connection.

"We have heard nothing to suggest that UFOs are in any way hostile and we still have no proof they are from outer space."

This is how far we've come since pilot Kenneth Arnold spotted nine bizarre objects zig-zagging over the mountains on America's west coast in June 24 1947.

By **ANDREW MCKENNA**

He described them as "a chain of saucer-like things" and Pressmen dubbed them 'flying saucers.'

Arnold wrote a book called 'The Coming of The Saucers' and they've been coming ever since.

The trouble is that no-one knows what they are, who's in them and where they're coming from.

Not only saucers can fly. Thousands of reports from across the planet list flying cigars, triangles, rectangles, spheres, blimps, tops, and lights.

UFOs, which have been recorded since ancient times, have been spotted by airmen, pilots,



There's one! A UFO photographed by a bank employee in Warrington, Cheshire, in 1978

doctors, business executives, farmers, police, servicemen and former US president Jimmy Carter - not just by people walking dog at closing time.

A new survey says that one in six of us has had a Close Encounter of the First Kind (which means we've seen something odd in the sky).

But officialdom's reaction has been to shrug its

shoulders, smile gently and proffer a list of 'explanations'.

In 40 years these have included: clouds, meteors, aircraft, ball lightning, lighthouses, tricks of the light, reflections, the planet Venus, alcohol, hallucination and, amazingly, badgers.

Tell that to the fighter pilot who chased a UFO 'the size of a Boeing 707' across the skies above

Tehran in September 1976.

He described it as an intensely brilliant object with flashing lights. Suddenly a smaller bright object descended from it and rushed towards him at unbelievable speed.

He attempted to fire a missile, but all his weapons and communication systems suddenly failed.

The smaller object re-

joined the 'mother ship' which landed on the ground casting a glow up to two miles around it.

The report comes not from Steven Spielberg, but from the CIA.

It was kept secret until the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act.

UFO buff Richard Lawrence of the London-based Aetherius Society says: "Over the

past 40 years we've seen a great UFO cover-up by world authorities."

The society, which believes many UFOs are literally out of this world, recently obtained a wad of reports from the US which reveal an official cover-up of an airline pilot's UFO sighting over Alaska.

Such unearthly behaviour is common, Lawrence reckons.