

Nine-foot ETs take a walk in the park with their robot Space invaders land in Russia, and you had better believe it

By GRAHAM DUDMAN

ALIENS from another planet have visited earth—if you want to believe everything the Russians say.

Tass, the Kremlin's trusted mouthpiece, revealed yesterday how a spaceship manned by giants with tiny heads landed in a park in Voronezh, a city 300 miles south-east of Moscow.

According to the voice of Russia, three nine-foot extra-terrestrials and a robot enjoyed a short walk before returning to their shining saucer.

The "intergalactic scoop" was underplayed in the official news agency's usual matter-of-fact style.

It said: "Scientists have confirmed that an unidentified flying object recently landed in Voronezh.

"They have identified the site and found traces of aliens who made a short promenade about the park. They were tall, with small heads."

Serious

The report did not give a date, but said onlookers were "overwhelmed with a fear that lasted several days".

Last night, Tass's London correspondent Yuri Sidorov said: "We are a serious agency and do not report things that are not true.

"Personally, I do not believe in flying objects but if Tass says something, it must be so."

A Ministry of Defence spokesman said: "We do not entertain opinions about men from Mars."

And a Met Office official asked: "It's not April Fools' Day is it?"

A spokesman at the Russian embassy in London added: "Tass is very reliable and you can believe what they say. I don't think there is any official position on this."

Tass claimed scientists investigating the UFO report found a 20-yard depression with four deep dents as well as two unidentified rocks.

Genrikh Silanov, head of the Voronezh Geophysical Laboratory, said: "They looked like deep red sandstone. However, analysis has shown the substance cannot be found on Earth. Additional tests are needed to reach a more definite conclusion."

Tass also reported sightings of a "banana-shaped" UFO like one described in an American magazine, but added it was unlikely anyone in Voronezh could have read about it.

RIDDLE OF THE ALIENS

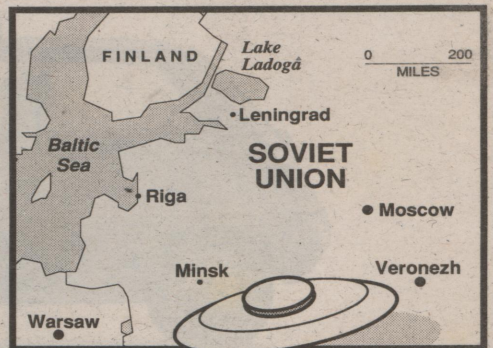
BRITISH UFO expert Steve Balon, who has studied the subject for 28 years, said last night: "I have every reason to believe this is genuine, but it is strange the Russians should treat it as a matter of fact."

UFOs have a special fascination for Russians and the state press regularly carries reports of

unusual sightings. A "commission into abnormal phenomena" was set up in 1984 after a "flying cigar" was seen near Gor'kiy, east of Moscow.

Asked whether the latest report could possibly be a hoax, a Tass spokesman replied: "Tass never jokes.

"If we start joking, we'll stop existing".



Click! The sightings captured on film



Sighting: A scare over suburban Ohio



Sighting: Night fright over Birmingham

Visitors from the beginning of time . . .

SIGHTINGS of UFOs have been recorded in pictures and words from the days of cave dwellers, but public controversy has really raged over their existence since the late Forties.

That was when the U.S. Airforce started to compile Project Blue Book. By the time the project ended in 1969, 12,618 had been listed.

It wasn't until 1953 that the

term UFO was coined, by American pilots, after a rash of sightings.

The fear, in the days of the Cold War, affected even Winston Churchill, who ordered a secret inquiry into reports that UFOs were flying over Britain.

In a 1952 memo to to his air minister, he asked: "What does all this stuff about flying sau-

cers amount to? What can it mean? What is the truth?"

The Air Ministry reported back comfortingly that UFO sightings could be explained as astronomical or meteorological happenings, aircraft, balloons, optical illusions . . . or hoaxes.

But flying cigars, triangles and spheres are common . . . with one in six claiming a strange sighting.