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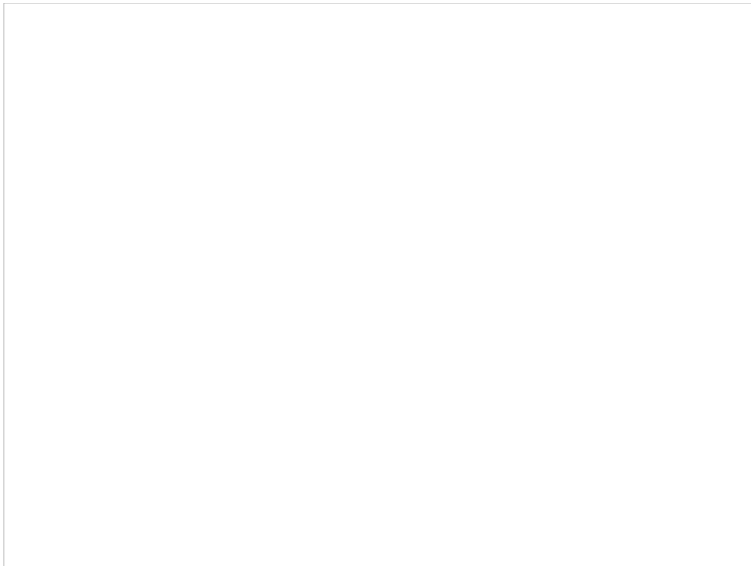
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Local History

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Dick and Mary Jennings examine the saucer.

What would we do if aliens landed? On Monday 4th September, 1967, the world found out.

When Chippenham farmer Dick Jennings anxiously phoned the Police to report a Flying Saucer had landed in his field, he was greeted with the pithy comment; "Yes Sir. And are there any little green men walking around it?"

"No," countered Jennings. "But it is bleeping. You'd better come quick!"

The laugh was on the Police, because when they arrived at Elm Tree Farm in the Patterdown area, there it was - a silver, bleeping Flying Saucer!

There was no other way to describe the five-feet long, seamless domed object chattering away to itself. Earlier in the morning it had given a farmhand a serious fright and a stunned Jennings family had arrived en masse to photograph the unearthly visitor.

The bewildered Police took no chances - refusing to enter the field and stopping anyone else from doing so.

For good measure they also cordoned off nearby Saltersford Lane to prevent traffic stopping to welcome the aliens. Chief Inspector Frank Dummett arrived with reinforcements to take charge, quickly followed by Special Branch and CID.

As the Jennings family seriously considered the possibility of aliens, the Police were hoping for a more realistic explanation. Could it be something that had fallen off of a plane, or even a secret military device? They called the RAF for help.

It looked like the story of the century and media arrived quickly; Newspaper journalists, HTV and BBC radio news.

The police had no answers to their barrage of excited questions. But when Dick Jennings barged back into the field, the media bundled after him. The front page of the next day's Daily Mirror would show a photo of Dick examining the saucer, with a disgruntled police officer still on the other side of the hedge!

When someone went to touch the object, Chief Inspector Dummett yelled; "Not with your bare hands!"

The danger of radiation was now a real fear.

Unfortunately, when the RAF arrived, they didn't have a clue what it was either.

"I'm foxed," said a non-plussed Flying Officer. "It certainly hasn't fallen off an aircraft."

By now the Jennings family, Dick, daughter Mary and youngest son Martin, had become anxious about having touched the intruder.

Then around mid-day the police decided to move the saucer to Chippenham police station and called in the Army.

As they did, stunning news came to the field via the reporters; Chippenham wasn't alone. At least five further 'landings' had been reported along a line from the Kent coast to the Bristol Channel, mobilising an array of alarmed civil and military defence experts, including the Ministry of Defence.

But at Chippenham's 'Little England' dump, the army decided there was only way into the saucer - plastic explosives. This would certainly have signalled an interplanetary act of war were the object to have been found to have contained visitors from another planet!

As it transpired, the saucer invasion was a stunningly elaborate Rag stunt. Apprentices from Farnborough's prestigious Royal Aircraft Establishment owned up, telling reporters "Flying Saucers might land one day, so we thought we'd make our own to give the experts a bit of practice!"

Indeed, for 12 hours the country had held its breath!

Click below to listen to a vintage BBC radio report about the Chippenham flying saucer, broadcast on the day it was discovered.

- [BBC Radio 04/09/67: Chippenham flying saucer](#) >

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Historian John Keeling is currently writing a book about this extraordinary story and would like to hear from anyone around at the time who can contribute their recollections.

No account will be too trivial; so if you can recall your reaction on hearing that a flying saucer had indeed 'landed' in Chippenham, saw any of the drama unfold, or know someone who did, you can contact John via email on info@monkeyspawtv.com or by telephone on 01376 570652.

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Have you had a close encounter in Wiltshire? Let us know.

Your name:	<input type="text"/>	Your comment:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Send"/>
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The BBC reserves the right to edit comments submitted.

Daniel-David Mateus

Quite stunning to hear that everybody was fooled! Ha. Shows aliens are part of the imagination and will never surface to real life. It's part of a story book so you might as well stop looking for such abstract nonsense. :D

Mary Puntis (nee Jennings)

I am the Mary Jennings in the picture above and I remember it as though it was yesterday. Local people still talk about it and still recognise me from the picture! I am so pleased to hear that John is writing his book and cant wait to read it when published.

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