

# Mysteries have been around for centuries

**W**HILE unidentified flying objects have really only materialised in the past 20 years they have been around for centuries. The earliest recording of an unidentified flying object was in 1254 when a "mysterious coloured ship" appeared over a monastery in St Albans in Hertfordshire, England.

Alexander the Great's army was apparently dispersed by large "flying shields" and even Shakespeare was affected by the filtered reports of flying objects when he wrote *Henry VI (Part III)*.

Edward: *Dazzle mine eyes, or do I see three suns?*

Richard: *Three perfect suns, each a perfect sun. Not separated with the racking clouds, But sever'd in a pale clear shining sky. See see! They join embrace and seem to kiss, As if they vowed some league inviolable: Now they are one lamp, one light, one sun. In*

*one lamp, one light, one sun, In this, the heaven figures some event.*

The modern history of the UFO or unusual aerial sighting began on June 24, 1947, when Kenneth Arnold ("the man who started it all"), flying alone in his small plane, reported seeing flying gleaming disks over the Rocky Mountains in north-west America.

He described the nine objects as "skipping like saucers across water" and estimated their speed at 1900km/h. The report captured the imagination of the world and the modern UFO was born. UFOs have since been seen all over the world and notably at all theatres of war, including the recent Gulf conflict.

The Americans seem to have the monopoly on bizarre reports, with several stories of people being abducted or having talked, travelled or had sex with aliens.

In 1975 an Oregon father won custody of his two children on the grounds that their mother departed on a UFO voyage into outer space and never returned, while in 1980 another man failed to convince the court that "alien critters" had asked and helped him to rob a liquor store.

And then there were the serious in-court claims, in 1983, that the US Air Force was actually holding alien creatures prisoner.

Of course such subject matter has provided Hollywood with enough storylines for hundreds of movies from *The Invasion of the*

movies from *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) to Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) and *ET* (1982).

There are several definitions of what constitutes a UFO encounter although among the ufologist

community the most commonly used is that of Professor Allen Hynek. His idea can be broken down as such:

Close encounters of the first kind  
— UFO seen at close range.

Close encounters of the second kind — close-range UFOs with physical effects noted.

Close encounters of the third kind  
— occupants are seen in conjunction with close-range UFOs.

But if you think UFO reports are exclusively a US-inspired and believed phenomena, there were deadpan-style reports in the Soviet Union's *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in October, 1989, of a landing in the city of Voronezh (where strange things have been reported to happen since 1983 from floating orange globes to warm spots on the ground).

## Something strange

On the night of September 27, it was claimed by the locals that a UFO landing took place in a local

**UFO landing took place in a local park and trigger-happy, silver-suited aliens strolled through the park, accompanied by a robot, and fired shots at a local teenager. Soviet scientists weren't sure what took place but are convinced that something strange did happen at the park.**

**England has its circles in the crops mysteries and Australia has reports coming in from the Null-arbor of cars being attacked by dancing objects and freight trains being drained of power by "strange lights".**

**In New Zealand there was a spate of UFO reports in 1979 and a Christchurch man unsuccessfully claimed court compensation for "terrestrial" injuries caused by a flying saucer.**

**All reports and UFO spotters will have their time in the lime-light next month (August 16-18) when Britain will hold the world congress of UFOs.**

**Speakers and delegates from Britain, the United States, Australia, Africa, Spain and other places will have the opportunity to exchange reports and theories at the conference.**

**The conference will hear first-hand reports of abductions and landings and of strange objects that go bump in the night.**

**— CHARLES MIRANDA**

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