

Lights in the sky, aliens on the files reveal 'close encounters'

DETAILS of close encounters with UFOs contained in previously top secret files are released by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) today.

More than 6,000 pages of material spanning from 1994 to 2000 catalogue hundreds of other-worldly experiences with unidentified flying objects and apparent aliens across Britain.

Aircraft of all shapes and sizes have been witnessed flying over a wide range of locations – including former Home Secretary Michael Howard's home in Kent and Chelsea Football Club.

One man told police he was physically sick and developed a "skin condition" after an eerie "tube of light" enveloped his car in Ebbw Vale at 10.40pm on January 27, 1997.

The man, who worked for a funeral director, was sent to the doctor after his alleged brush with the unknown.

It is just one of hundreds of bizarre reports received by the police, military and Government, suggesting that the truth might be out there after all.

This fifth instalment released under a three-year project between the MoD and The National Archives consists of 24 files of sightings, letters and Parliamentary Questions.

Experts believe the records highlight how shapes of reported UFOs have changed over the last half-century.

This could be explained by representations of UFOs in popular culture – such as TV shows like The X-Files.

Many reports in this latest file describe aircraft as big, black and triangular in shape with lights along the edges, whereas the predominant form in the 1940s to 1950s was saucer or disc-shaped.

Dr David Clarke, author of The UFO Files and senior lecturer in journalism at Sheffield Hallam University, said: "In the 1950s the

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MoD releases accounts claiming the truth really is out there after all

next big leap in technology was thought to be a round craft that took off vertically and it's intriguing to note that this is the same period when people began to report seeing 'flying saucers' in the sky.

"In the period the latest file release covers, triangular-shaped US stealth bombers and Aurora spy planes featured heavily on TV, such as The X-Files between 1993-2002, and films such as Independence Day, released in 1996, and the shape of reported UFOs corresponds.

"It's impossible to prove a direct link between what people are reading and watching and what they report as UFOs but one interpretation could be that the latest advances in technology may be influencing what people see in the sky."

The reported incident in Ebbw Vale took place on a clear and dry night, at 10.40pm on January 27, 1997.

A motorist told Gwent Police that his car was surrounded for five minutes by a "tube of light" which swept towards him from the north east as he headed away from Newport.

He said that during this time both his radio and mobile phone stopped working.

Following his encounter the man began feeling ill.

The police report said: "He felt and was indeed sick later on. He is still feeling ill today (28/1/97) and has developed a skin condition. Advised to see doctor."

The report goes on to describe the encounter: "First sighting seemed like a 'massive star' moving towards the car. Having

stopped the car and switched the lights off, the light encircled the car, remaining for perhaps five minutes.

"(The man) was able to walk through the light which was very bright.

"There was no sound, no aircraft or helicopter noise, and besides feeling ill was very frightened."

The report said the man's car was left covered in "dust and dirt".

This sort of episode would be classed by ufologists as a "close encounter of the second kind" – UFO sightings followed by associated physical effects.

Another such case in the MoD records happened in Kingstanding, Birmingham, at 4am on March 18, 1997, when a man reported seeing a 200ft blue triangle over his back garden.

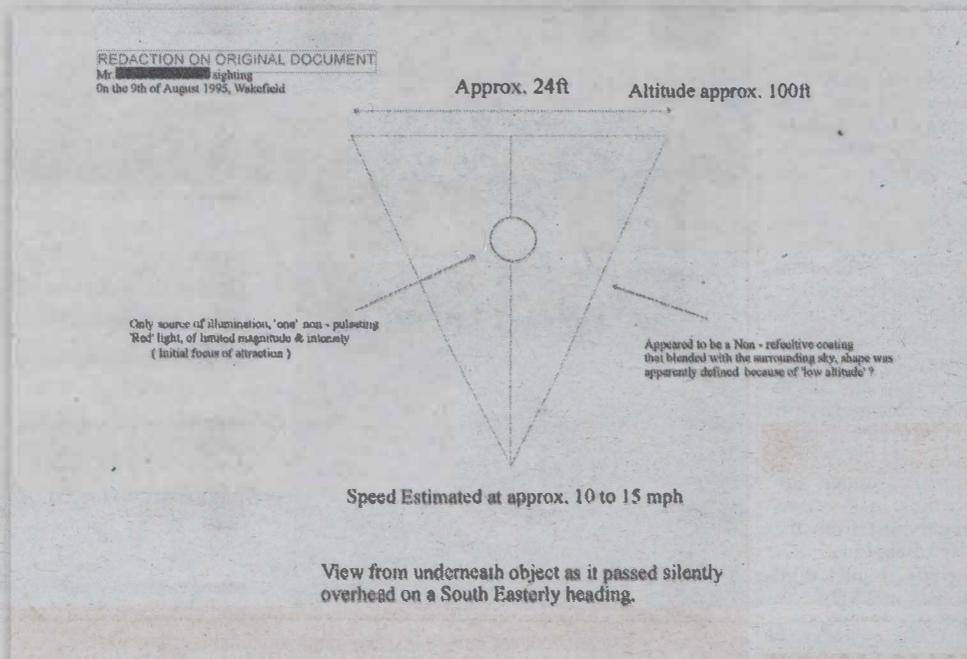
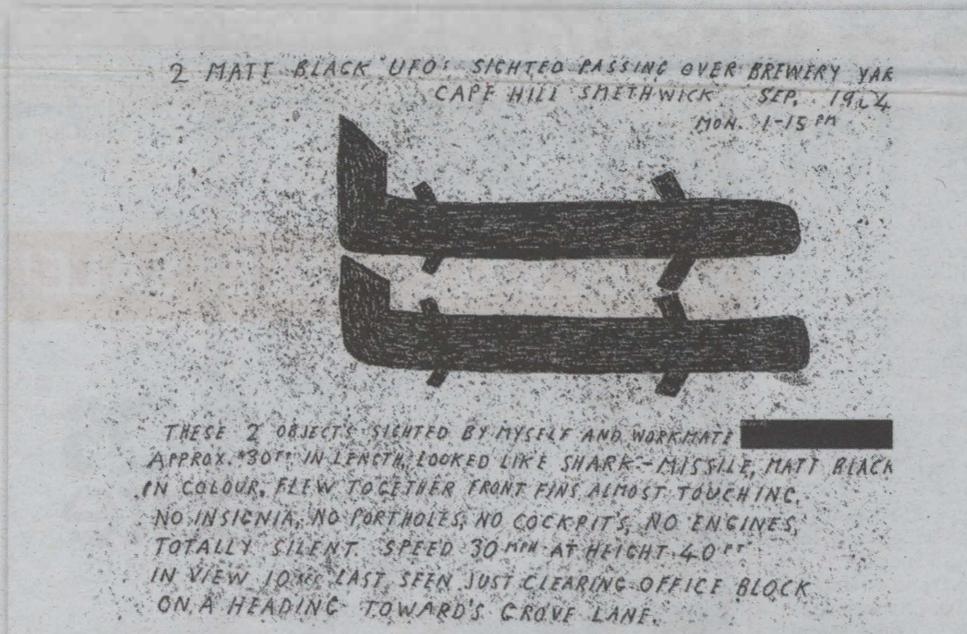
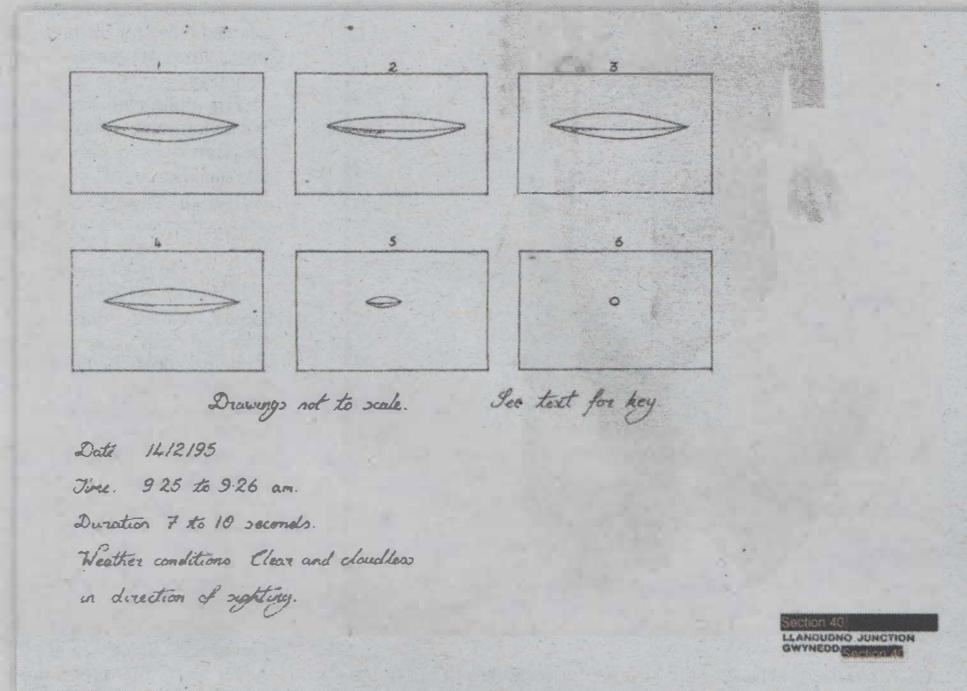
The man claimed the object hovered – causing dogs to bark – and shot off, leaving a "silky white substance" on the garden trees, which he collected in a jam jar.

In another report, recorded on June 11, 1997, without a location, a man claimed he was visited by a flying man – what ufologists would refer to as a "close encounter of the third kind".

The man was sitting in his living room, where he slept, when a man walked in and lay on his quilt.

The report said: "The window then went all white and the man whooshed through the window."

"(The man) then called the police who wouldn't come to his house because they thought he was 'a nutter', so he phoned Scotland



Something of the night about UFO

THE Ministry of Defence received reports of a large triangular UFO hovering in the skies above former Home Secretary Michael Howard's home.

Government correspondence, local newspaper reports and details of an RAF investigation into the sighting near the Llanelli-born MP's home near Folkestone, Kent, all feature in UFO files released by the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

Eyewitnesses in Burmarsh and New Romney saw the "humming" object, the size of two passenger planes, near Mr Howard's home on March 8, 1997, when he was serving as Home Secretary for the Conservative government.

Sophie Wadleigh, 25, from Hythe, reported the sighting to the Folkestone Herald.

She told the newspaper: "It was so peculiar, it all felt really odd and I heard this humming noise.

"As I looked across the field I



STALKED? Were they after former Home Secretary Michael Howard?

saw a large triangular shaped flying craft hovering about 300 metres off the ground."

Ji Lane, 23, and Christopher Lee, 27, also witnessed the in-

cident. Mr Lane said: "It was crazy – I was getting a drink in the kitchen when I saw these strange lights in the sky just over the field across the road from our house. It

NEWS

bed ... top secret with UFO visitors



'Flying saucers' memo was sent by Churchill

FORMER Prime Minister Winston Churchill, left, expressed curiosity in "flying saucers" and requested a briefing from his ministers, a memo released today revealed. The "Churchill Memorandum" sent on July 28, 1952, to Lord Cherwell, Secretary of State For Air, is one of hundreds of UFO files released by the Ministry of Defence and National Archives.

Chelsea UFO report

A police officer described a UFO he saw hovering over Chelsea football ground as "not like anything" he had seen before. In the brief report released by the Ministry of Defence today, the policeman described seeing four lights, square to diamond in shape, over Stamford Bridge in London. The mysterious bright yellow lights, also witnessed by the officer's colleague, hovered over the Premier League club's home turf at 8.05pm on March 10, 1999.

'Top place' for sightings

Some enthusiasts believe the small town of Bonnybridge in Scotland is the world's number-one place to spot UFOs.

It has been claimed more than 600 UFO sightings were recorded in just two years in the town, four miles west of Falkirk.

Records released by the Ministry of Defence and National Archives today reveal local councillors wrote to both John Major and Tony Blair when they served as prime minister to request an inquiry into the unexplained observations.

In October 1997, Councillor William Buchanan, of Falkirk District Council, who supported the claim of 600 sightings in two years, wrote to Mr Blair demanding the phenomena were investigated after five years of pursuing the matter.

He wrote: "For five years the people both you and I represent have witnessed a phenomenon in the area that has been left unexplained. UFO over 3,000 people have witnessed, some have photographed, some have videoed, then lights and objects.

"I wrote to your predecessor John Major, I have also contacted our local MP Dennis Canavan who put me in contact with the MoD who told me quite strongly that nothing was happening in Bonnybridge that was a threat to national security."

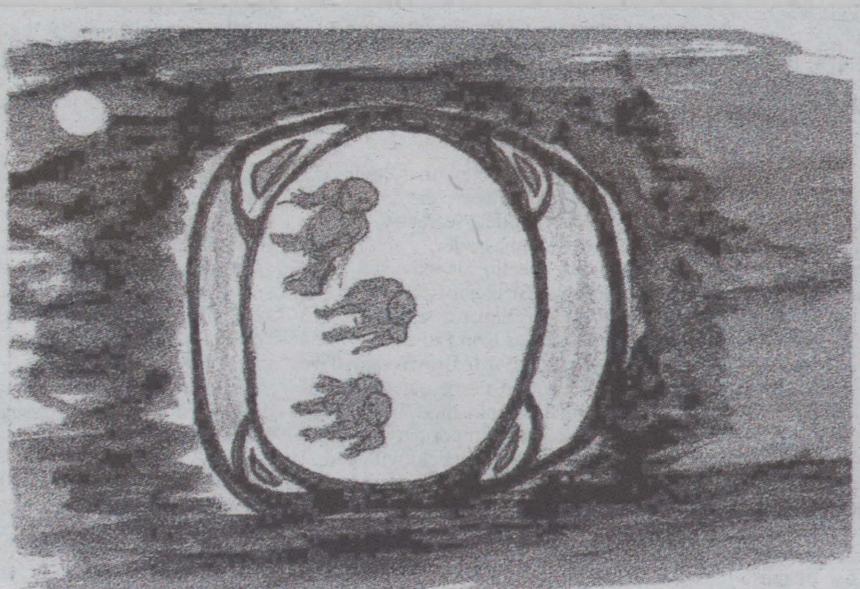
He went on: "I have tried to get an answer for the people and have been ridiculed for it. I appeal to you Mr Blair to get the phenomenon investigated."

But a MoD response to the letter said there were no grounds to investigate the matter.

But Mr Buchanan did not give up and wrote to Mr Blair once again in 1998 demanding "the truth".

YOUR VIEWS

Send your comments on this story by writing to Letters to the Editor, Western Mail, Media Wales Ltd, 5th Park Street, Park Street, Cardiff CF10 1XR or by e-mailing readers@walesonline.co.uk



LONDON HEATHROW TERMINAL 3
TO HONG KONG VIA BANGKOK
19TH JULY 1993.
THAI INTERNATIONAL
FLIGHT N^o TG 919

EVIDENCE?: Pictured above and left are National Archives images of drawings and descriptions of UFO sightings contained in previously top secret files released by the Ministry of Defence

Yard and the Fire Brigade. He wanted the police to see the quilt where the man had been because the indentation showed that the person just lifted off the

quilt without getting up from it in a normal way.

"The man stressed that he was not a crank and was not on drugs."

■ The files are available to download for free for a month from the website www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ufos

over Michael Howard's home

was a lot longer than a plane and moved incredibly quickly - I have no idea what it was and we were both left speechless."

Further newspaper cuttings reveal Chris Rolfe, co-ordinator of group UFO Monitoring East Kent (Ufomek), warned at the time the UFO could have been looking for Mr Howard.

Mr Rolfe said: "It would seem the UFO was disinterested in Sophie, the girl who reported it and watched it for quite a long time. This certainly makes it seem like it had a purpose and has left me wondering if its purpose had something to do with Mr Howard."

Ufomek compiled its own report on the sighting and sent it to the Prime Minister, Home Office and Ministry of Defence.

An eyewitness account in the Ufomek report said: "It was just

a huge triangle thing, which was a lot bigger than an aeroplane or anything like that.

"It had lights all around the outside, and this disc attached to the back, and a big light on the front. I pulled up to a stop and as I did it shot off."

It went on: "I was really frightened by it and I'm not stupid. I don't believe in anything like that (UFOs). This is not something I've ever seen before or like something we would have built."

An RAF investigation into the sighting was undertaken, but the findings found nothing unusual. The Air Defence inquiry said there was "no such security incident" involving Mr Howard and "no such military activity reported anywhere, and, specifically, in the Kent/Folkestone area".

The report added: "Addition-

al inquiries have confirmed that no unusual or unauthorised air activity, civil or military, was reported or observed in that area on that date."

MoD responses to queries related to the alleged sighting said there was "no evidence" to suggest a security breach.

One letter addressed to an un-named individual said: "Your letters mention a UFO sighting over the home of the former Home Secretary Michael Howard, near Folkestone."

"Although the MoD has received reports of an alleged 'UFO' sighting near Michael Howard's home on March 8, 1997, MoD Air Defence staff have confirmed that there is no evidence to suggest any unauthorised incursion of the UK Air Defence Region on that date."