

THE WEEKENDER

Andy Rutherford's glance back at the week that was

Maybe aliens do like to be beside seaside

UFOs eh? You can't move for them.

Disc-shaped, cigar-shaped, spherical, shiny, pulsing, glittering, humming, red, green, blue, white...

A mere glimpse at some of the 6,700 pages of files of UFO 'sightings' released this week through the National Archives, is ample enough to set one wondering - if they are so common, why haven't we got one shred of palpable evidence of their existence?

They seem to be everywhere. St David's, Rhossili Bay, Ebbw Vale and Pontypridd are just four out of scores of places in Wales where UFOs have allegedly been spotted, and there are thousands more across the UK.

It's the usual sort of thing.

"I was driving alone along a road late at night, when I saw a huge silver, cigar-shaped craft streak across the sky at a speed way beyond anything in my experience before. I felt a bit sick afterwards."

That's not an exact quote - it just sums up the fundamental scenario detailed in these reports of sightings.

The most entertaining parts of these files are not the accounts of sightings, but the musings of those at the Ministry of Defence about their contents.

One UFO intelligence officer states that there has been no apparently hostile intent and other possible reasons for UFO visits to Earth are "a) military reconnaissance, b) scientific, c) tourism."

Military reconnaissance? Well, if there is another race out there that can use its own technology to zip through the universe to see what we have to offer, when we can barely send fragile bits of metal to Saturn and beyond, my bet is that they are going to be sorely disappointed.



THEY ARE EVERYWHERE: They've even had UFOs in Ebbw Vale

Scientific? Possible, in a human-in-a-laboratory-specimen-jar sort of way. This may account for some of those seemingly bonkers "I was kidnapped by aliens who stuck probes up my nose for six weeks then dumped me in my neighbour's dustbin" type stories.

You know, people who can barely remember their own names claiming that after being visited by little green men they can recite the complete works of Chaucer, backwards, in Catalan.

And that leaves... tourism? It is entirely possible of course, that the said Ministry of Defence official was displaying an extraterrestrial sense of irony in penning these words.

But what if he/she was serious? Has it been contemplated by the upper echelons of our military that aliens might come quadrillions of miles across the universe, dodging the heavy traffic caused by the developing Black Hole at Sector Sigma PS375-X, enduring delays due to galactic roadworks near Uranus, and having to nurse space-ship-sick kids, all for a fortnight in Porthcawl?

Apologies to Porthcawl, but I suspect that even the most intrepid alien travellers might have other Earthly delights on their must-see lists.

All of these claims, all of these musings, and still, we do not have anything that truly proves the



ALIEN DESTINATION: Porthcawl, perhaps

existence of UFOs.

And given the depressing frequency with which sightings of Chinese lanterns continue to be mistaken for UFOs by otherwise sensible folk, I suspect that even if they do exist, we are sadly lacking in the intelligence to prove it definitively.