

# Close encounters of Kentish kind

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NEWLY-released government documents reveal details of sightings of UFOs over Kent, most of which were reported to the former RAF base at Manston.

The Government has released the files in an effort to persuade conspiracy theorists that there is no X Files-style cover-up about alien contact.

One report says that in November 1981, a "bright, small flashing light" was seen at Warden Point on the Isle of Sheppey.

It adds: "UFO stationary, then disappeared suddenly" over the sea.

In February 1982, an "aerial phenomena" was seen in the skies over Brencley, near Tunbridge Wells.

It was "two flashing red and green lights" and lasted for 45 minutes. The report says the lights were "stationary and then disappeared".

On November 25, 1981, a man in Gravesend saw a "bright light bursting into smaller stars on striking ground" while driving on the A2 towards Chatham.

Then on November 27, someone in Istead Rise, near Gravesend, saw a "single, steady, very bright, round white light" in the sky.

On January 12, 1982, RAF Manston in Thanet received a report of a "very bright light ... with red orange and blue lights moving around" south of Ramsgate.

In February that year, a motorist in



**ALIEN NATION: 'Can you tell us how to get to RAF Manston, please?'**

Bishops Way, Maidstone, reported "at least 12 lights pink/white, size of four to five helicopters, disc-shaped, two white lights at front". The UFO "hovered" above the bridge before "moving away down river".

UFO author Timothy Good lives in Beckenham. He said: "I do believe in UFOs and do believe the MoD when they say 95 per cent of sightings can be explained - I am more concerned about the other five per cent. These released documents are interesting, but there is nothing from MI6, GCHQ, Naval Intelligence, RAF or Army Intelligence. There is plenty more being hidden from us."

The author of 'Top Secret and Need

to Know, added: "There is a lot of rubbish in these files. I was told in 1978 that the government had a secret £11 million budget just for that year to investigate UFOs."

He said: "Unexplained reports amount to tens of thousands by highly intelligent personnel."

"There have been more than 5,000 reports that we know about from pilots, both military and civilian. The ones we don't know about are still withheld, even going back to the 1950s."

The MoD X Files are available to the public from the National Archives website and cover 1978 to 1987. The eight released files are part of almost 200 to be made available over the next four years.

Dr David Clarke, an expert in UFO history and a lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University, admits conspiracy theories about aliens are "very difficult to disprove".

He said: "I doubt the disclosure of these files will convince those who believe there is an official cover-up."

"Inevitably, some have already dismissed this release as a whitewash. For them the 'truth' still remains out there, hidden no doubt in more top secret files."

An MoD spokesman said: "We only look at these reports to see if UK airspace has been compromised."

"We don't have any information or opinion either way on whether they are UFOs or not."

To look at the reports, visit <http://ufos.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

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