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Highlights Guide

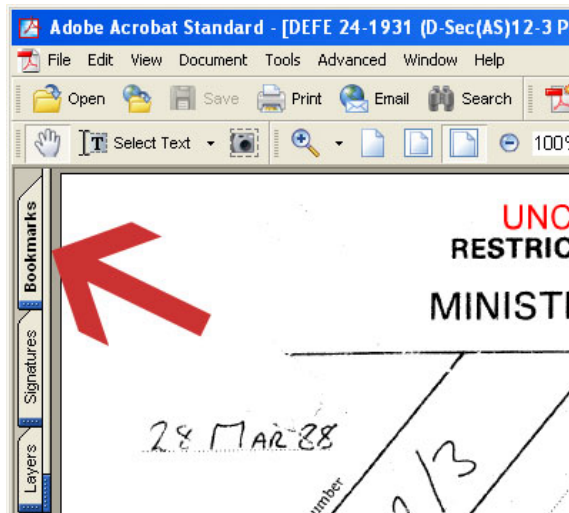
This document contains details of how to navigate through the newly released files. We have included bookmarks in each of the PDF files of key stories and reports highlighted by Dr David Clarke. This will make it easier to navigate through the files.

For information on the history of government UFO investigations and where these files fit in please read [Dr David Clarke's background guide to the files](#).

Navigating the files using the bookmarks

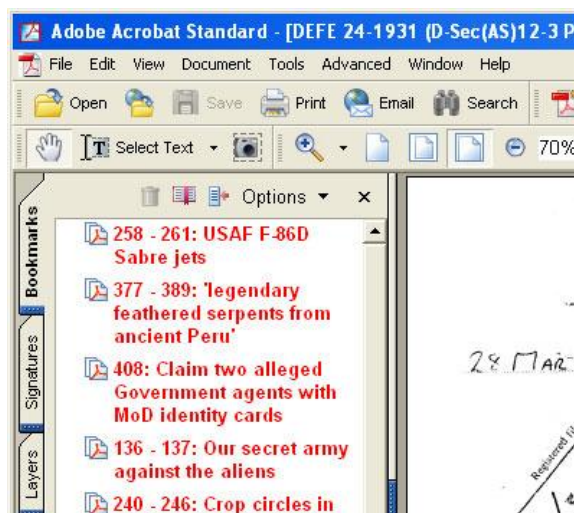
To view the bookmarks, click on the 'Bookmarks' tab on the upper left hand side of the PDF window, the bookmarks tab will expand – as shown below.

1. Click on 'Bookmarks' tab



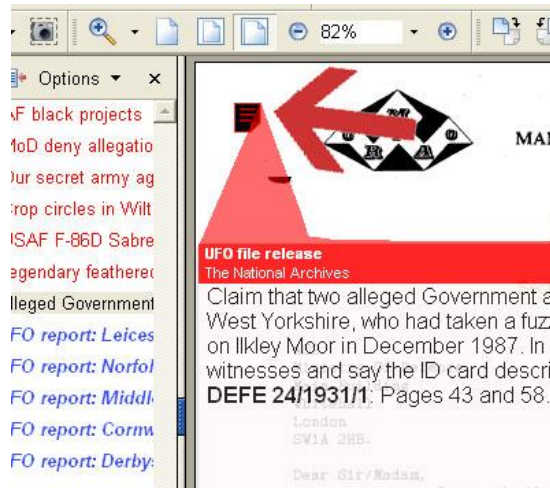
The 'Bookmarks' tab will then expand and a list of relevant bookmarks will be displayed – as shown below.

2. Bookmark tab will expand.



Clicking on a bookmark will take you to the pages of the file related to that particular story. To see the details of each bookmark – hover over the icon that appears on the top left hand corner of the relevant page of the PDF document – as shown below.

3. Hover or click on bookmark icons to see detail



Below is information on the key stories and reports of UFO activity contained in these files. It includes a list of the bookmarks contained in each file, with a short summary of each bookmark. Please note that not all files contain bookmarks.

Highlights & Key stories

This is the tenth and final tranche of UFO files. There are 25 files containing 4,400 pages. The files cover the work carried out during final two years of the MoD's UFO desk, from late 2007 until November 2009. The files cover policy, correspondence with Ministers and members of the public, responses to FOI requests and sighting reports.

Ten files originate with DAS (Directorate Air Staff, MoD Main Building). In December 2008 the UFO desk moved to RAF High Wycombe and the remaining 15 files originate from the RAF Air Command.

Due to the volume of files released, highlighted files have been divided into the following categories for ease of reference.

- **Closure of the UFO Desk**
- **Disclosure Campaign**
- **UFO Sightings and Reports**
- **Sighting reports by geographical location**

Closure of the UFO Desk

The UFO policy file DEFE 24/2458/1 (p 19-25) contains a briefing dated 11 November 2009 for Defence Minister Bob Ainsworth prepared by Carl Mantell of the

RAF's Air Command. This recommends that MoD 'should seek to reduce very significantly the UFO task which is consuming increasing resource, but produces no valuable defence output.' Ainsworth was told that in more than 50 years 'no UFO sighting reported to [MoD] has ever revealed anything to suggest an extra-terrestrial presence or military threat to the UK' and 'there is no defence benefit in [MoD] recording, collating, analysing or investigating UFO sightings.' MoD had decided that 'investigations into UFO sightings, even from more reliable sources, serve no useful purpose and merely divert air defence specialists from their primary tasks. Accordingly, no further investigations should be carried out into UFO reports received from any source.'

The document reveals MoD refrained from making any 'formal approaches to other Governments' in reaching its decision to close the UFO desk because these 'would become public when the relevant UFO files are released and could be viewed by "ufologists" as evidence of international collaboration and conspiracy.'

Handling of the proposed closure of the UFO Desk:

In December 2009, after Ainsworth approved the policy recommendation, MoD closed the UFO hotline answer phone service and the dedicated email address for sighting reports. These had initially been created to improve communication with the public following an earlier surge of public interest in the subject at the time of the 50th anniversary of the Roswell incident in 1997 (DEFE 24/2458/1, p8). MoD predicted the closure 'will attract negative comment from "ufologists" [who] may, individually or as a group, mount a vociferous, but short-lived campaign to reinstate the UFO Hotline suggesting that, by not investigating UFOs, MoD is failing its Defence commitment.' But the briefing predicted the media coverage of their decision would probably treat the closure in a 'frivolous' rather than critical fashion.

Last UFO desk officer

The last UFO desk officer was re-deployed to another post in MoD in 2010 and the remaining UFO files were marked for transfer to The National Archives. One of the final tasks was to issue letters to other government departments notifying them of the MoD's decision. In January 2010 he wrote to the Home Office to cancel standing instructions to police forces who had, in the past, routinely forwarded UFO sightings made by officers and the general public to the MoD. Another was sent to the Head of Aviation Directorate, requesting that 'any reports received by the Department of Transport or air control centres are not forwarded to MoD and that members of the public who make such reports are not encouraged to believe an investigation will take place.' Copies of these letters form the final enclosures of the file at DEFE 24/2458, pages 5-8.

The files contain a number of letters from members of the public inquiring about the duties of the UFO desk officer, some of whom wished to apply for the post 'running Britain's X-files'.

Disclosure Campaign

Letters and emails from members of a campaign calling on the UK government to disclose 'the truth' about UFOs can be found at DEFE 24/2629/1 p29-31, 13-14 and DEFE 24/2457/1 p34-36. The campaign highlighted a radio interview with an American astronaut who said he believed '*the Roswell crash was real and a number of contacts have been real and on-going [but] it's all been covered up by all of our governments for the last 60 years*'. A letter dated 11 August 2008 addressed to the then Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, asked if the UK government was aware of the astronaut's revelations and asked '*do you believe that the British people have the right to know if our world has been contact[ed] by alien civilisations?*'. The letter was answered by the MoD which stated that it is '*quite open about its involvement with the UFO phenomena*' and that it had agreed to transfer its entire archive of UFO files to The National Archives (DEFE 24/2629/1, p.14-15). There are further letters and emails addressed to Defence Ministers Des Browne, Bob Ainsworth and John Hutton (DEFE 24/2629/1 p29-31) as well as a letter that was forwarded to MoD from Buckingham Palace (DEFE 24/2457/1 p35-37).

Suggestions that release of UFO files is a 'cover-story'

Several correspondents ask why the MoD had not released any close encounter stories that would prove the existence of extra terrestrials. One adds that '*the papers recently released...are a cover-story, covering up the UK government's true intentions with UFOs; they have learnt more than they are telling*' (DEFE 24/2452/1, p52).

Reaction to media coverage

In an email dated 2 June 2009 to RAF Business Secretariat, the MoD UFO desk officer wrote: '*I believe it is fair to say that the release programme itself...has been a success for the MoD. It has accrued a great deal of national and international press publicity, the majority of which can be considered to be positive or at worst neutral. Naturally a section of ufologists will never be convinced of that, but frankly, whatever we say, they will choose to believe whatever they believe and we will never convince them otherwise*' (DEFE 24/2458/1, p41).

UFO Sightings and Reports

The surge in UFO sighting reports

A briefing, which can be found in DEFE 24/2458/1 (p 19-25), reveals that during the years 2000-2007 MoD received an average of 150 reports per annum. This figure doubled in 2008 (208 reports) and trebled in 2009 (643 reports were logged by 30 November). This was the second highest recorded by the MoD since 1978 when officials logged 750 sightings. In addition the UFO desk officer received 97 FOI requests on UFOs during 2009. The briefing notes that the '*upsurge in sighting*

reports' during 2008-9 had begun to make the workload of the one official responsible unmanageable and had begun impacting on other defence tasks.

UFO sightings and Chinese lantern craze

Details of the sighting reports logged by MoD in 2008-9 can be followed in the UFO sighting files, DEFE 24/2623-2627 (2008) and DEFE 24/2459-65 (2009). A large number of these reports were generated by sightings of 'Chinese lanterns' and the files suggest that many people who saw these floating lights in the sky for the first time believed they were UFOs. Formations of orange lights were filmed on mobile phones and video cameras by members of the public some of whom said they were '*amazed*', '*stunned*' and even '*frightened*'. Sightings tended to cluster during the summer months with reports of UFOs seen while outdoors walking dogs, smoking cigarettes, enjoying family barbeques – or even relaxing in hot-tubs (DEFE 24/2623/1, p 146). A stream of stories and stills from phone footage were published in local and national newspapers.

A typical sighting, dated 8 December 2007, describes two clusters of amber, orange and white lights in triangular formation moving over the Vale of Neath in South Wales. The lights were silent and '*moved in an unusual manner like a feather or a cork bobbing on water.*' The family of five who spotted these lights were so amazed they pulled their car over to the side of the road to watch (DEFE 24/2623/1 p 229). Others were convinced the lanterns were '*moving under control, against the wind*'. A woman from Liverpool rang the UFO hotline in October 2009, to say '*...can you tell us what these things are as my children are terrified that they are aliens; my son has seen these on two other occasions and is very worried.*' (DEFE 24/2465/1 p 239)

During the summer of 2009, maritime authorities dealt with a spate of false alarms triggered by people releasing 'Chinese lanterns'. In September coastguards in Cumbria and the North West received dozens of 999 calls from people who thought they had seen distress flares (DEFE 24/2464/1).

UFO sighting by soldiers in Shropshire

A UFO sighting was made by a group of soldiers of the Royal Irish Regiment in June 2008. The objects were spotted flying over Tern Hill barracks, near Market Drayton, Shropshire, on 6 June 2008 by soldiers on fire picket duty (see DEFE 24/2625/1 p107-121; DEFE 24/2624/1 p211-228).

One soldier filmed 13 flying objects on his mobile phone. The images were described as '*show[ing] lots of multi-coloured dots and zoom in on a cube-shaped object which then flattens.*' The soldier emailed the footage to a national newspaper who subsequently published the story as a front page exclusive on 25 June 2009 under the headline "ALIEN ARMY".

Meanwhile a TV broadcaster on 25 June reported that the landlord of a hotel near the soldier's barracks claimed to have solved the mystery of the UFOs seen by the soldiers (DEFE 24/2625/1 p 111 & 107). He revealed the lights were Chinese lanterns released from a wedding party. After the story was published the UFO desk officer told the Army *'I do not intend to investigate any further as I think we have our answer'* (DEFE 24/2625/1, p111).

Rendlesham Forest

A FOI request in 2008 revealed that documents on the 1980 sightings by military personnel at RAF Bentwaters, Suffolk, were held on 109 separate files (DEFE 24/2450/1, p. 79) and MoD had received numerous requests for information on the incident that had become known as *'Britain's Roswell.'* But, responding to an inquiry from the USA in 2008 MoD said: *'The incident was over a quarter of a century ago and despite the assertions of many people who chose to believe in the existence of UFOs or extra terrestrials, the MoD had little interest in the matter at the time and even less interest now. Put simply, we consider the incident closed'* (DEFE 24/2628/1, p144).

Wind turbine incident

In January 2009 MoD was asked to comment on tabloid stories suggesting that damage to a wind turbine in the Lincolnshire Wolds, had been the result of a collision with a UFO. MoD said the incident had not been reported to them *'other than via the media and [we] are not aware of any substantive evidence to suggest the turbine was hit by a UFO...unless we receive clear physical evidence of an aircraft or other object flying into the turbine, we do not intend to investigate'* (DEFE 24/2451/1, p173).

Police helicopters and UFOs

A sighting of a small object that flew close to a South Wales Police helicopter was reported to Cardiff airport in June 2008 (DEFE 24/2624/1, p200-210). Nothing was seen on radar and MoD said they received no formal report from the police. Another near-collision with an *'unidentified aircraft displaying non-standard lights'*, reported by the crew of a police helicopter on patrol over Birmingham city centre, was the subject of a formal investigation by the UK Airprox Board but nothing seen on radar (see DEFE 24/2450/1 p42-44). The inquiry looked at several possible explanations including a radio controlled model purposefully flown towards the helicopter by someone *'messing around'* and *'the possibility of a clandestine flight'* but was unable to explain the incident. A third sighting, by the crew of an Irish Air Corps helicopter over Dublin Bay, was reported in August 2006 (DEFE 24/2628/1 p83-84).

UFOs on Radar

An account of a retired RAF Flight lieutenant who witnessed the tracking of a UFO on airfield radar at RAF Lyneham in 1993 (DEFE 24/2454/1, p156-59) notes the phenomena was also sighted visually by two members of a security patrol. Another

file contains the story of a former national serviceman who recalled watching an unidentified 'blip' on radar at Beachy Head, near Eastbourne, in 1953. The blip was over the English Channel and moved at a speed four times that of normal jet aircraft at that time (DEFE 24/2455/1, p147). At DEFE 26/2623/1 p198 there is a sketch of a 'UAP' (Unidentified Aerial Phenomena) spotted from the ground as it appeared to cross the path of an airliner near Portsmouth Hill, Portsmouth, in December 2007. This sighting was referred to MoD by a NATO official for investigation. The RAF studied radar tapes and identified the 'UAP' as possibly one of a number of light aircraft flying at lower altitude to the airliner in the same area.

UFO Sightings at UK Landmarks

The files contain reports of UFOs spotted hovering opposite the Houses of Parliament in February 2008 (DEFE 24/2623/1, p113), above Blackpool pier in October 2008 (DEFE 24/2456/1, p.186-90) and another sighting spotted near Stonehenge in January 2009 (DEFE 24/2451/1).

Sighting reports by geographical location

Highlights

A caller to MoD UFO hotline reports that he has been '*living with an alien*' in Carlisle for some time (DEFE 24/2625/1, p.123)

A Cardiff man claimed a UFO abducted his dog, car and tent whilst he was camping with friends in 2007 (DEFE 24/2623/1, p. 167);

A Coventry woman saw '*two orange balls*' hovering in her back garden in July 2008 after her Springer Spaniel '*unusually ran back in*'. Frightened by what she saw, she locked the door and reported her sighting to the UFO hotline: '*She said what do these things want and could she and her dog be contaminated*' as a result of the experience (DEFE 24/2625/1, p58-59).

A letter from a schoolchild in Altrincham to MoD UFO desk shows a flying saucer with an alien pilot waving goodbye. The letter says: '*...me and my father have seen little aircraft in the sky – 2 little lights dancing around each other...please send a letter telling me the answer...I have the right to know*'. The UFO desk sent her a bag of 'RAF goodies' (DEFE 2457/1, p 66-67).

And finally, a woman in Poole, Dorset, reported seeing '*a bright white fireball*' that *entered her house through her kitchen window on 4 August 2009. The fireball fell into a carrier bag and was followed by 'blinding white sheet lightning'*, but no trace of any burns was found in the kitchen (DEFE 24/2462/1, p 43).

List by Geographical Location:

The list below is a representative sample of the more interesting and news-worthy sighting accounts, chosen by The National Archives.

Note: this is not a comprehensive list of all the UFO sightings in the 10th tranche of files. A spreadsheet listing all sightings logged by MoD in 2008 and 2009 is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ufo-reports-in-the-uk>

Bedfordshire:

DEFE 24/2451/1: p. 155;
DEFE 24/2625/1: p. 173;
DEFE 24/2462/1: p. 180;
DEFE 24/2464/1: p. 73.

Bristol area:

DEFE 24/2623/1: p. 28;
DEFE 24/2625/1: p. 166-69.

Buckinghamshire:

DEFE 24/2627/1: p. 30.

Cheshire:

DEFE 24/2457/1: p. 65-66;
DEFE 24/2459/1: p. 42.

Cumbria:

DEFE 24/2451/1: p. 134-36;
DEFE 24/2625/1: p. 123, 104-5;
DEFE 24/2449/1: p. 106;
DEFE 24/2460/1: p. 190;
DEFE 24/2464/1: p. 229.

Derbyshire:

DEFE 24/2451/1: p. 78-9;
DEFE 24/2623/1: p. 137;
DEFE 24/2625/1: p. 134;
DEFE 24/2460/1: p. 118-19;
DEFE 24/2462/1: p. 56;
DEFE 24/2465/1: p. 98-100.

Dorset:

DEFE 24/2462/1: p. 43.

Co Durham/Cleveland:

DEFE 24/2624/1: p. 4-6.

East Yorkshire:

DEFE 24/2449/1: p. 82-96.

Essex:

DEFE 24/2457/1: p. 78;
DEFE 24/2454/1: p. 246-7;
DEFE 24/2628/1: p. 112;
DEFE 24/2461/1: p. 135-38.

Hampshire:

DEFE 24/2628/1: p. 130-34;
DEFE 24/2623/1: p. 197-200;
DEFE 24/2460/1: p. 131-32.

Hertfordshire:

DEFE 24/2460/1: p. 23.

Kent:

DEFE 24/2623/1: p. 124;
DEFE 24/2624/1: p. 32;
DEFE 24/2463/1: p. 113.

Lancashire:

DEFE 24/2628/1: p. 103;
DEFE 24/2451/1: p. 134;
DEFE 24/2456/1: p. 186-90, 179;
DEFE 24/2624/1: p. 8;
DEFE 24/2459/1: p. 218.

Lincolnshire:

DEFE 24/2451/1: p. 19, 173-74
DEFE 24/2459/1: p. 144;
DEFE 24/2452/1: p. 6;
DEFE 24/2627/1: p. 73, 65.

London:

DEFE 24/2623/1: p. 113;
DEFE 24/2625/1: p. 119;
DEFE 24/2623/1: p. 142;
DEFE 24/2626/1: p. 156-57;
DEFE 24/2627/1: p. 33;
DEFE 24/2459/1: p. 43-45;
DEFE 24/2463/1: p. 80;
DEFE 24/2464/1: p. 147.

Manchester:

DEFE 24/2452/1: p. 56-58, 59-61;
DEFE 24/2623/1: p. 226.

Merseyside:

DEFE 24/2465/1: p. 236-39.

North Wales:

DEFE 24/2628/1: p. 135;
DEFE 24/2625/1: p. 56-57;
DEFE 24/2460/1: p. 104.

North Yorkshire:

DEFE 24/2457/1: p. 73;
DEFE 24/2455/1: p. 65;
DEFE 24/2463/1: p. 88-91.

Norfolk:

DEFE 24/2623/1: p. 222;
DEFE 24/2461/1: p. 51;
DEFE 24/2464/1: p. 182-83.

Scotland:

DEFE 24/2451/1: p. 59-60, 66;
DEFE 24/2459/1: p. 185;
DEFE 24/2462/1: p. 47-8;
DEFE 24/2625/1: p. 39, 61-2;
DEFE 24/2456/1: p. 235;
DEFE 24/2464/1: p. 49;
DEFE 24/2465/1: p. 158-9.

Shropshire:

DEFE 24/2625/1: p. 75-6, 107-111, 120-21;
DEFE 24/2460/1: p. 56-60;
DEFE 24/2624/1: p. 210-228;
DEFE 24/2449/1: p. 223, 227-34.

South Wales:

DEFE 24/2628/1: p. 84, 99, 174;
DEFE 24/2624/1: p. 56, 200-210;
DEFE 24/2451/1: p. 104-7;
DEFE 24/2460/1: p. 7;
DEFE 24/2462/1: p. 161;
DEFE 24/2623/1: p. 131, 167, 195, 229.

South Yorkshire:

DEFE 24/2623/1: p. 82, 93-5;
DEFE 24/2456/1: p. 146;
DEFE 24/2461/1: p. 30-36.

Staffordshire:

DEFE 24/2465/1: p. 219;
DEFE 24/2465/1: p. 100.

Suffolk:

DEFE 24/2627/1: p. 9;
DEFE 24/2461/1: p. 85;
DEFE 24/2462/1: p. 157; Rendlesham Forest
DEFE 24/2628/1: p. 50, 119, 141-44, 166;

DEFE 24/2448/1: p. 46-52, 66-75, 136;
DEFE 24/2450/1: p. 79-101;
DEFE 24/2456/1: p. 5-9.

Surrey:

DEFE 24/2459/1: p. 7.

Sussex:

DEFE 24/2623/1: p. 146, 219;
DEFE 24/2624/1: p. 66;
DEFE 24/2460/1: p. 80-82;
DEFE 24/2448/1: p. 240-49;
DEFE 24/2455/1: p. 147.

Tyneside/NE:

DEFE 24/2624/1: p. 41;
DEFE 24/2459/1: p. 122-26.

West Midlands:

DEFE 24/2625/1: p. 58-59;
DEFE 24/2448/1: p. 229;
DEFE 24/2450/1: p. 12, 40, 42-4;
DEFE 24/2454/1: p. 16, 75;
DEFE 24/2465/1: p. 168.

West Yorkshire:

DEFE 24/2626/1: p. 8;
DEFE 24/2460/1: p. 29;
DEFE 24/2462/1: p. 12-14;
DEFE 24/2464/1: p. 144.

Wiltshire:

DEFE 24/2451/1: p. 158-61;
DEFE 24/2626/1: p. 154;
DEFE 24/2454/1: p. 156-9;
DEFE 24/2456/1: p. 130-33;
DEFE 24/2461/1: p. 62;
DEFE 24/2460/1: p. 87.

Worcestershire:

DEFE 24/2624/1: p. 85.

Outside UK:

Australia:

DEFE 24/2451/1: p. 91-93.

Canary Islands:

DEFE 24/2451/1: p. 55.

Germany:

DEFE 24/2449/1: p. 50-51.

Irish republic:

DEFE 24/2628/1: p. 84.

Israel:

DEFE 24/2452/1: p. 72-73.

Portugal:

DEFE 24/2628/1: p. 90.

Thailand:

DEFE 24/2452/1: p. 79-81