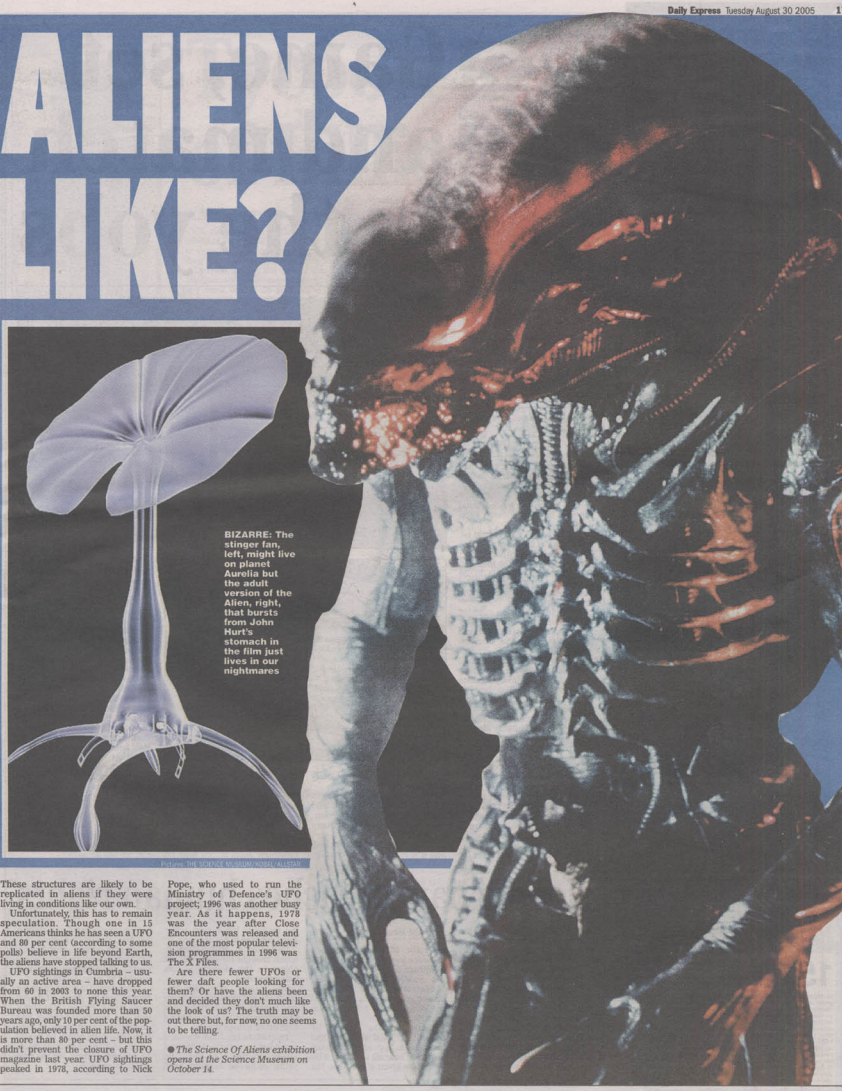


# ALIENS LIVE?



**BIZARRE:** The stinger fan, left, might live on planet Azealia but the adult version of the Aliens, right, that bursts from John Hurt's stomach in the film just lives in our nightmares

Picture: THE SCIENCE MUSEUM/ANDREW ALLEN

These structures are likely to be replicated in aliens if they were living in conditions like our own.

Unfortunately, this has to remain speculation. Though one in 15 Americans thinks he has seen a UFO and 89 per cent (according to some polls) believe in life beyond Earth, the aliens have stopped talking to us. UFO sightings in Cumbria – usually an active area – have dropped from 66 in 2003 to none this year. When the British Flying Saucer Bureau was founded more than 50 years ago, only 10 per cent of the population believed in alien life. Now, it is more than 80 per cent – but this didn't prevent the closure of UFO magazine last year. UFO sightings peaked in 1978, according to Nick

Pope, who used to run the Ministry of Defence's UFO project. 1996 was another busy year. As it happens, 1978 was the year after Close Encounters was released and one of the most popular television programmes in 1996 was The X Files.

Are there fewer UFOs or fewer daft people looking for them? Or have the aliens been and decided they don't much like the look of us? The truth may be out there but, for now, no one seems to be telling.

● *The Science Of Aliens* exhibition opens at the Science Museum on October 14.