

Dales 'UFO' a balloon

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A MYSTERY object which appeared in the sky at Arkengarthdale, Upper Swaledale, was a harmless helium-filled balloon.

Members of Contact UK — a group which investigates unidentified flying objects — visited the area at the weekend, to find out more about the sightings.

They finally traced the "UFO" to the home of a postman, Mr. John Metcalfe, of Conan Gardens, Richmond, who had taken it with him after finding it in a field at Kekswith on Friday.

This was two miles away from where it was first seen by Mr. Clark Stones and his wife, Greta, of Pepper Hall Farm, Arkengarthdale, on Thursday morning.

Mr. Graham Birdsall, of Contact UK — who carried out the investigation,

said yesterday: "It was nothing more than an elaborate hoax. The balloon was filled with helium, and had some plasticine underneath to act as a ballast.

"Apparently, Mr. Metcalfe, found it in a field while he was doing his rounds, so he just popped it in the back of his van, and took it home. He thought no more about it until he heard we were in the area investigating."

Mr. and Mrs. Stones and a friend, Mr. Stanley Watson, of Stockton on Tees, described the object as about two ft. across and nine inches deep, and looking like shiny metal.

It hovered less than 20ft. away from them at one point, but then moved back and up into the sky.

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