

Big cross in sky explained

METEOROLOGISTS resolved the mystery yesterday of a huge white cross which lighted the dawn sky over Bideford. Two postmen saw beams of light thousands of feet long forming a cross from the moon.

But the sighting was explained by weathermen in Plymouth as an optical phenomenon. Light from the moon was refracted by thin cirrus cloud containing ice crystals. "Each of the crystals acts as a prism and refracts the rays," the Meteorological Office said.

The spectacular Bideford light-show lasted only ten minutes. It was witnessed by Mr. Bill Taylor and Mr. Paul Downing, both postmen.

Cirrus cloud is known to cause several other optical effects, including "mock suns" and a "halo" effect around the moon.

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