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# Mystery UFO — 20

## was it Halley's comet?

WAS it a bird? Was it a plane? Was it Superman or Halley's Comet? Whatever it was it managed to stop people in their tracks last week.

Stargazing Mrs Kathleen Lawson thought she may have been one of the first Watford people to spot Halley's Comet on Thursday morning.

At first Mrs Lawson, of Parker Street, thought the object was a plane, complete with vapour trail.

She called her daughter Elizabeth and son Douglas to look and they soon became convinced that it was no ordinary sighting.

"It was about two inches long with a two-inch portion of vapour-like trail tapering off at the end," said Mrs Lawson.

"It was moving very slowly and gradually went downwards behind the rooftops," she added.

The Lawson family spent five minutes watching the

object with the naked eye on a clear morning.

"We were looking eastward and at first it didn't cross our minds that it could be Halley's Comet. Then we heard something from Oxford on the radio saying they had seen it," Mrs Lawson explained.

The mysterious object was seen in the east at exactly the same time — just before 8 am — by student Martin Bailey who was driving along Bushey High Street. He described it as being like an ice-cream cone in shape, with the head part about a fifth the size of the sun.

Mr Bailey, of Harwoods Road, Watford, said: "I was driving along the High Street where the war memorial is. Just there the sun is straight towards you at that time in the morning and I thought I saw what was Halley's Comet.

"It seemed to be moving from right to left, going downwards in a kind of arc. I watched it for about a

minute until some buildings got in the way."

But according to the experts the flying object might just as well have been an ice cream cone — it was no Halley's Comet.

The Watford Observer reported the sightings to Mr Frank Phillips, secretary of the South-West Herts Astronomical Society.

"At the moment it is just a fuzzy blob and you need to use your imagination to see any sort of tail on it," said Mr Phillips.

"In December you might see a tail on it but at the moment it is too far away from the sun and the tail is caused by solar winds," he added.

According to Mr Phillips, who has seen the "fuzzy blob" from the Hill Top Observatory, in Flaunden, last week was the earliest time the comet could be spotted. The next prime time for spotting it will be first two weeks in December. But be prepared, he warns.

"You need a good pair of binoculars to be able to detect it. It is quite a disappointing object for people who are expecting something more," said Mr Phillips.

"Many have seen the spectacular pictures of when the comet appeared in 1910 but this time round it isn't in such a good position."

Mystery still surrounds what Mrs Lawson and Mr Bailey actually saw that frosty morning, but if you know, let us know at the Watford Observer.