

Did the cornfield flying saucer return to an old haunt?

Mystery twinkler above the Downs

Report by JUDY MOORE

A MYSTERIOUS shimmering, twinkling object hung suspended above France Bottom near Alfrington early on Thursday morning: A UFO, an optical illusion or the Christmas Star?

Young mother Tazze Coleman of Littleington was the first to spot it through the window as the family sat at breakfast.

"It was like a very bright star, a large twinkling light above the hill," she said.

Her husband Christopher and children Ella, nine, and Barnaby, two, also saw it, although five-year-old Tikka did not.

"When we first saw it the object was stationary and flashing, then after about three minutes it moved off very, very fast towards Lewes," said Mrs Coleman.

"I've never seen a UFO before and I've always been slightly sceptical, but this couldn't possibly have been an aircraft."

It was a cloudy, overcast morning and the flashing light was hanging below the cloud base. Mrs Coleman said two of her neighbours—also spotted the mystery object.

"I joked 'here they come again' when I first noticed it because it was so close to where fire circles appeared overnight in a cornfield recently. People were saying they were the marks made by flying saucer jets."

An Air Traffic Control spokesman at Gatwick said there were no helicopters operating in the area at the time. He then suggested far pouring cold water on the UFO story by suggesting it was a plane.

"If the aircraft were coming towards the spotter with its lights on it would appear to be stationary, then as it altered course it would look as if it were gathering speed," he said.

"We get quite a few reports of sightings in similar circumstances. I would say it was an aircraft coming in from France on the normal flight path over that part of Sussex."

But UFO researcher Barry Gooding, who collate reports of British sightings in an American scientific establishment, said the happenings near Alfrington are almost identical to an unexplained mystery in Wiltshire 18 months ago, only in reverse.

"A very bright light was seen near Westbury, and the next morning a cornfield directly below the Westbury White house was covered with stings," he told the Express.

Mr Gooding said he was unable to say what it was the Coleman family saw without more details. He would like to hear from anyone else who saw the twinkling star and from locals with information about the cornfield rings. "But no crack-pots, please," he said.

Above: a flashback to the summer's day when locals woke up to find these strange circles in a cornfield. Were they made by flying saucer jets when visitors from outer space landed or was it an elaborate hoax?

Was this a big hoax?