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20

# 'UFO' SIGHTINGS EXPLAINED

Report by Maurice Smith

THE "UFO" sighted in by two Armadale policemen last week was more likely to be a meteorite falling from space, the Royal Observatory in Edinburgh said this week.

Spokesman Mr Russell Eberst said that gases given off by a fireball as it approaches the earth would account for the bright orange image spotted by Sergeant Jim Begg and PC Tom Murphy as they sat in their patrol car last Monday night.

## STRANGE

Two similar sightings on different evenings have been made locally. One man who saw the strange object in the sky, Mr Fraser Mitchell, promptly took a snapshot (pictured right).

And unemployed Seafield teenager Howard Kelly reported a similar sighting on December 30 — one week before the two policemen's encounter at Armadale.

Howard (16), 20 Cousland Terrace, was returning home from Bathgate on his motorcycle at around 8.30 p.m. when he saw a bright orange pole-shaped light in the sky to the east of Seafield.

Howard was so excited he dashed home and reported his experience to the Royal Observatory. "I really got a good look at the shape, which was travelling very quickly before disappearing into the ground," he said.

## SHAPE

"I have seen shooting stars before, but this was nothing like that. It was a clear night and the moon was out, and I saw the shape just as I passed Redhouse School going towards Seafield."

News of last week's sighting by the two policemen prompted Pol-

both man Fraser Mitchell to report a similar experience he and his girlfriend, Jill Totten, had one night before Christmas.

## COUPLE

The young couple were returning home from the cinema when they saw a bright orange object.

The couple sat in Fraser's car for around 30 seconds watching the object before he dashed into his home at Chapelton cottage and returned with his camera to take this shot.

## HORIZON

"The object stayed on the horizon above Seafield, about one-and-a-half miles away for about five minutes, before dropping below the trees and out of sight," said Fraser.

The incident took place on December 14, at around 10 p.m.

Mr Eberst said that meteorites, or "fireballs", begin to vapourise, giving off a brightly-coloured trail, after they enter the atmosphere.

## REPORTS

The Royal Observatory receive similar reports each month, and record all incidents. Mr Eberst added that man-made satellites falling back to earth can give a similar impression.

"Often people may think the object has landed nearby but it can, in fact, be many miles away. It is very important for people to record exact times and details of the direction and speed that an object is travelling," said Mr Eberst.

The UFO spotted over Seafield by Courier reader Mr Fraser Mitchell.

