



PETER FAIRLEY

*Evening Standard Science Reporter investigates the stories of strange things seen in the sky*



The 'Thing'

# SPACE RIDDLE OF THE FIERY CROSS

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IS EARTH being visited by "things" from outer space? And—even more delicious—is Britain going to be "their" chosen landing place?

Or are people mistaking the planet Venus—now incredibly bright in the sky—for a spaceship?

## Stars and spangles

The great Unidentified Flying Object argument raged again today with fresh reports of sightings from 13 terribly respectable policemen and a Wing Commander with an impeccable pedigree.

All situated in different parts of Southern England.

The policemen were scattered about Sussex and Oxfordshire. The Wing-Commander was in Hampshire. Most reports tallied with what two North Devon police officers yesterday described as "a large object like a star-spangled cross, radiating points of light from all angles."

"A pound to a penny it was Venus," suggested the Royal Observatory, at Hurstmonceaux, coolly.

"We always expect a crop of reports of UFOs at a time like this when Venus is amazingly bright in the sky. The brightness always seem to surprise people and they say 'Good gracious, what's that?'"

But the "witnesses" were less sure.

**REPORT** Number One came from Wing Commander E. A. Cox, of Penton Paddock, Hyde, Hants. Time: 11.05 p.m.

The Wing Commander—a former RAF engineering staff officer—was driving from Cadnam to Fordingbridge with his wife.

He told me: "My wife suddenly spotted lights in the sky directly north of us in the direction of Salisbury. At first I pooh-poohed it but she persisted. So I stopped the car and got out.



There were seven lights close together and they appeared to be hovering over the trees and pylons.

"After about three minutes three of them suddenly disappeared leaving the remaining

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