

'THINGS' IN THE SKY RIDDLE

From Page One

four in the perfect formation of a cross. They hovered for about another three minutes and then disappeared."

What could they have been?

"At first I thought they were a formation of 'choppers' (helicopters) with their landing lights on," he explained.

"But helicopter lights don't shine sideways with that brilliance."

Flares or fireworks?

"Impossible — they hovered far too long."

Venus?

"I don't think so—why were there seven different lights?"

Hampshire police are looking into the mystery.

The chase

REPORT Number Two was from police motorcyclist Bryan Cawthorne, 29, at Halland, near Lewes. Time: 4.45 a.m.

The object was "large," "bright," and "in the shape of a cross," he reported to headquarters.

A few moments later—from a patrol car travelling along a nearby country road known as The Broyle — came **REPORT** Number Three. They had seen the same thing and chased it. But it vanished.

REPORT Number Four was virtually simultaneous — from another patrol car crew at Bolney, 20 miles away. But they too lost it.

As soon as the reports were received at East Sussex County Police headquarters at Lewes other police officers rushed out into the night to see the "object" disappearing below the

line of some trees. "It was moving slowly from the north-east to the east" one of them told me.

For their pains, all the Sussex "witnesses" got a summons from bed at noon today from the Chief Constable of East Sussex, Mr. G. W. Terry. He wanted to get to the bottom of it.

"A full transcript of the statements by the 11 police officers was taken and was being published later today."

The illusion

Meanwhile, the Royal Observatory was taking the evidence apart.

"Always be suspicious of reports from moving vehicles," a spokesman suggested. "Their own motion often makes the object seem to be moving. The cross shape was probably an optical illusion. A star seen through a windscreen is often distorted—the light seems to get pulled out into points.

"Always distrust reports of sightings in the Eastern sky in the early hours. Venus is at its finest then.

"The sudden appearances and disappearances of the object may be due to the movement of clouds which may not always be apparent to the observer."

The astronomer added: "Of course, we are not trying to spoil people's fun—all we are trying to do is boil the report down to fact."

In the daytime

But later the UFO lovers had their revenge.

From another police patrol

car came **REPORT** Number Five. And this time the sighting was in daylight.

The Z-car was just leaving Spelsbury, Oxfordshire on the Chipping Norton Road. Time: 7.50 a.m. The crew reported seeing "two very dark-coloured objects at a height of 500 to 600 feet."

The sky was cloudy at the time.

Robot spacecraft sent from Venus to have a look at the Earthmen who shattered the peace of the planet last week?

Or raindrops on the wind-screen?

The argument goes on.