

Riddle of The Thing in the sky

By JOHN ROBERTS

FLYING saucer spotters and the Men from the Ministry fell out yesterday over The Thing.

Hundreds of reports poured in from Scotland to Cornwall. All told of a bright light travelling westwards, sometimes hovering, sometimes moving at high speed.

The Thing was 'round, with a kind of cotton-woolish rim,' when Unidentified Flying Object spotter Mr Ivor Beeston saw it in Manchester. 'I saw it move behind a cloud, but it was so bright it shone right through. Then it moved off at fairly high speed.'

No one seemed to agree what it looked like, let alone what it was.

Over Guildford, Surrey, The Thing was 'a white ball.' Over Weybridge in the same county, it had suddenly sprouted flames.

Watchers at Tavistock, Devon, said it was 'yellowish-white.' At Bude, Cornwall, police said it was a 'blue blob.'

The saucer men were determined The Thing was not of this world.

But the Ministry of Defence came up with the theory that it could have been a noctilucent cloud—a vapour cloud still reflecting sunlight.

Chemical

They were backed, in a way, by officials at Glasgow Weather Centre. They said: 'It was a fluorescent chemical cloud at a height of about 50 miles which was ejected by a meteorological research rocket launched from South Uist, in the Hebrides.'

Mr Arthur Tomlinson, co-ordinating officer of the Direct Investigation Group, Aerial Phenomena, said: 'The Ministry are idiots. You would find no cloud so widely reported and moving at different speeds.'

Mr O m a r Fowler, another saucer man, said: 'There seems no earthly explanation. I checked with the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, and they said the sightings certainly had nothing to do with rockets, clouds or Russian satellites.'

Mr Fowler said: 'After this little lot, it's highly likely we will organise a nationwide watch.'

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