

"Aluminium sheet" in sky puzzles astronomer

A vice-president of the Victorian branch of the British Astronomical Association, Mr John W. Boyle, has reported seeing "an unidentifiable object like a rectangular sheet of aluminium" flying over the southern suburbs of Melbourne on Sunday.

Mr Boyle, who is a cartographer with the Department of Lands, has been interested in astronomy for about 26 years.

He said, "I've never before seen anything in daylight that has been as puzzling to me.

"I have always kept an open mind on the things that people claim to have seen in the sky. Now I am convinced that there is something peculiar going on."

The object was in view for 15 to 20 seconds.

"As it rocked from side to side, it flashed in the sunlight like a sheet of aluminium. Each time it flashed, a purplish halo appeared around it," he said.

"I am certain it did not give off any light of its own, and there were no

own, and there were no vapor trails or jets.

"It was impossible to estimate its height, but at the time I calculated its speed would be about five degrees a second.

"That means that if the object were flying at, say, 30,000 ft. its speed would be about 1800 miles an hour,

and it would be about 60 ft. wide.

"A lot of sightings could possibly be explained by mirages and many of the things seen at night are almost certainly meteors, but I cannot find any explanation for what I saw."

Reports from 13 people who claim to have seen "flying saucers" and other objects over Melbourne in the past few weeks were received by the Civil Aviation Department on Monday.

Fifty reports have been received by the department

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in the last week.