

'Flying saucer' was a balloon

LONDON — London had its own "flying saucer" scare on Wednesday, when thousands of people stopped in the streets to watch a mysterious silver object floating high in the sunshine.

It was variously described as pear - shaped and boomerang-shaped.

Switchboards at the Air Ministry, police headquarters, and newspaper offices were jammed with calls.

Meteorological experts studied the thing for over an hour from the roof of the Air Ministry building.

Then came the official explanation. It was a 60-foot wide balloon released by scientists at Cardington (Bedfordshire) for cosmic radiation research. It carried photographic plates, and was expected eventually to reach a height of 100,000 feet before a timing apparatus would drop the scientific equipment by parachute somewhere in western England.

Professor C. F. Powell, of the Bristol University, said it was the biggest balloon they had ever launched.

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Asked what happened to the balloon when the equipment was released, he explained blandly: "It drifts on, and becomes 'flying saucers' over half a dozen different countries."