

— ‘I’ve never seen anything bloody like it’ —

Orange glow's a UFO

TOO low to be a satellite. Too quiet to be a plane. Too slow to be a weather balloon. Too weird for words, frankly.

As far as locals are concerned, the brilliant orange-red ball that has drifted above King Island most nights since Thursday last week is a UFO.

But only in that it is an object that flies and remains unidentified.

“I don’t want people to think I’m nutters,” one local said, “... but I’ve never seen anything bloody like it.”

Too many people have seen it — three pilots, two police and two teachers. Add this to a bunch of townies and farmers and it’s hard to disbelieve.

Most of the sightings have been by people who live in and around Currie, in the island’s south-west.

By RUTH LAMPERD

A flying saucer? A military test? An elaborate hoax? The police tend to take the latter view.

In his report, Acting Sgt Craig Crawford wrote that the stories came from “quite respected people”. After three nights, he also caught a glimpse.

The UFO first appeared on September 24, and then the next three nights. After a two-night break, it reappeared last Wednesday. Each time it appeared between 7pm and 8.30pm and could be seen for five to 15 minutes.

It appeared below the clouds in the north and flew either south or south-easterly.

If it is a hoax, Acting Sgt Crawford is confident they’ll find out soon.

“If we find him? I’ll probably just laugh in his face,” he said.



I spy: Audrey and Wayne Hamer look to the skies for answers. Picture: JON HARGEST

THE glow in King Island’s crisp night sky etched a memory, eerie in its telling even 20 years later, that Audrey and Wayne Hamer will never shake.

The spinning oval light they saw changing from orange to green, red and yellow that night was disturbing enough.

But when a week later, in October 1978, a young pilot went missing off the island’s coast the mystery darkened for them.

Saw a spinning light before pilot vanished

Pilot Fred Valentich and his plane disappeared without trace after a final, chilling account to base of unexplained lights hovering about his single-engine Cessna.

Audrey Hamer, 36, said

of the light: “It was oval-shaped, like a football, but about the size of a small car, just sitting there, spinning.

“It only looked to be 4-5km away so we drove fast to find where it landed, ... but we lost it.”

They weren’t the only ones to see it. She says a hovering bright light followed her uncle along a lonely road not long after.

And the weird stories have continued. Retired schoolteacher George Cunningham says a “brilliant green light” lit up the paddock one night about five years ago.

“It scared the daylight out of me,” he said. “For a split second, I could see forever.”