

Extract from  
Western Mail, Cardiff

28 OCT 1967

# Constables chase a 'flying cigar'

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While the U.S. air force was preparing a statement early yesterday claiming that the "burning crosses" sighted over South-West England were probably planes on refuelling exercises, three Lancashire policemen were chasing the latest unidentified object, a "flying cigar" with port-holes.

Police-constable Brian Earnshaw, on duty at Bacup police station, got the first hint of something unusual "in the air" when he noticed interference on the police radio equipment.

He went outside to look at the aerial and saw an object about 50ft. long and 10ft. in diameter — surrounded by an incandescent glow — about 250ft. above him.

Two other policemen also observed the object, which moved slowly towards a golf course.

The three policemen gave

chase in a squad car, but after about half-a-mile, the object suddenly rose and disappeared in the direction of Burnley.

A spokesman at the U.S.A.F. base at Ruislip, Middlesex, said last night, before the Lancashire sighting was made public, that refuelling exercises took place on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, the days on which most of the recent "flying cross" sightings were reported.

The exercises on Tuesday and Wednesday took place over Scotland. The Thursday exercises were concentrated over South-West England.

He explained that the giant jet-tanker plane carries powerful lights under its fuselage, on its tail and along both wings. The aircraft to be refuelled fly alongside showing red navigation lights.

Four aircraft can be attached to the tanker by fuel lines at any one time, he added. The lines—lit by the powerful tanker lights—would form a sort of cross-shape.

On Thursday night, three formations of four planes refuelling over South-West England.