

UK 1978

'Glowing UFO

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● George Wiseman . . . "like rocket exhausts."

MINISTRY OF Defence experts will investigate sightings of an Unidentified Flying Object which several people said passed over South Wales in the early hours of yesterday.

First to report the bright white-orange-red object was a police constable on his beat in Cardiff city centre who radioed his UFO-sighting to headquarters.

Police-constable Max Jones was walking down Bridge Street with another officer when he spotted a bright light moving across the sky towards the Bristol Channel.

"It was a white ball with an orange tail, with what looked like

pieces breaking away," he said. "Although it was difficult to estimate, I would say it was at least 5,000 feet high, and heading in a south-east direction."

He said he had seen many small meteorites in the past, but this was the first occasion he had seen anything as large.

Reports followed from people in South Glamorgan and Gwent who, startled by what they had seen, contacted the authorities.

Housewife Mrs. Eileen Morgan, of Lynmouth Drive, Sully, was taking her cat and dog for a walk at 1.10 a.m. when she saw the UFO flying towards Penarth.

'reports pour in

I Reporter 17/4/78

"At first I thought it was an aircraft on fire, but then I realised I could not hear any sound of engines," she said. "It was glowing like a red ball, with a tail of fire like a rocket on its side. It then stopped, separated and shot off at speed, suddenly disappearing."

Mrs. Morgan, aged 57, said she was glad other people saw the UFO — "My husband has been teasing me about it, and asked me how many green men fell out of it," she said.

Production manager Mr. George Wiseman, aged 50, of Hendre Gardens, Llandaff, was standing with his brother, Leonard, near

Ystradowen in the Vale of Glamorgan when the UFO appeared at about 1 a.m.

"It was like rocket exhausts going horizontally across the sky, not a fireball or a comet, more like the glow from a V1. It went from above the television masts at St. Lythans to about 20,000 feet above Cardiff, stopped, fired again and then disappeared," he said.

A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence in London said a number of sightings of the object, which travelled east-west across Britain, had been reported all over Southern England.

"There are all sorts of possibilities which will have to be checked out," said the spokesman. "Almost without exception there is a logical explanation for these sightings, but we have a set procedure for investigating these things and our experts will have a look at it before we are able to say anything for sure."

Initial investigation by air traffic controllers at West Drayton in London show that no scheduled civilian or military aircraft was flying in the Cardiff area at the time of the sightings.

A spokesman for Cardiff-Wales Airport controllers said there was no air traffic in the area between 19.30

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● And this is Western Mail cartoonist Dorrien's impression of the UFO drawn after talking to witnesses.

p.m. on Saturday and 8.30 a.m. on Sunday.

Professor Chandra Wickramasinghe, head of the department of astronomy at University College, Cardiff, said the descriptions were common with what people had been reporting as UFOs for some years.

"Work has been done in the United States by two committees, but the only result to come from their study is that 99 per cent. of UFO sightings usually have a mundane explanation," he said.

"The reports in Wales at the weekend would seem to rule out natural phenomena, and are some of the one per cent. which are genuine."

Professor Wickramasinghe said the descriptions were consistent with a large metallic object passing into the earth's atmosphere at a shallow angle and burning up, such as a satellite in a disintegrating orbit.

● A spokesman at Jodrell Bank radio astronomy station said that the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration had been worried about the orbit of its Skylab programme, but this was not due to re-enter the atmosphere for sometime yet.



● CONSTABLE MAX JONES . . . reported sighting.