

Is that a flying saucer or just a Russian rocket burning up?



UNLIKELY FLYING OBJECT: Just as you're dying for a cup of tea, along comes another flying saucer story to disturb the late-night picnic

THE truth is indeed out there – and it's less exciting than Mulder and Scully would have you believe.

Newly-released Ministry of Defence files claim there were rational explanations for two UFO sightings over Wales in the early 1990s.

Conspiracy theorists have focused on the nation over the past nine months since a South Wales Police helicopter crew reported a UFO over RAF St Athan in the Vale of Glamorgan and unexplained damage to a wind turbine just over the English border earlier this year.

The declassified documents, available on the National Archives website, detail investigations into two incidents over Wales.

The first happened on the border on December 9, 1991 at 4.50pm when "dozens of people" reported "burning white lights, flames and rumbling sounds".

"The object seen was a bright, white light at high altitude with flames (or an illuminated vapour trail) in its wake," says the file.

"Many witnesses believed they were witnessing an aircraft accident and some reports indicated the object broke up.

"A few seconds after the sight-

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Ministry of Defence explains two UFOs spotted over South Wales

ing, a low rumbling sound was heard and some windows were seen to be shaking."

It adds: "For the time being we are treating this as a UFO incident."

A senior RAF officer replies to the report saying: "I am afraid I am unable to shed light on the incident.

"It does, however, sound very much like an aircraft engine going in and out of reheat."

Debunking the existence of extra-terrestrial life, the MoD claims the incident was "traced to a USAF pilot who jettisoned fuel that was ignited by the aircraft's afterburner".

In a second UFO sighting during the early hours of March 31, 1993, a policeman in Merthyr Tydfil was among "hundreds, probably thousands of people" in South Wales, the West Country and South-West Ireland who spotted "two brilliant objects emitting bright vapour trails flying north to

south, quickly and silently, across the night sky".

Investigators found "significant UFO activity over a very wide area".

In a report from RAF West Drayton to the MoD, the unnamed policeman, one of 20 who reported the objects, described seeing "two very bright" white UFOs, "circular with tails" over Gelligaer Common.

He said they were flying "very slowly" north at about 400ft.

One witness said: "I thought they were a couple of meteorites, but instead of vanishing quickly, they kept on coming.

"They were travelling parallel to each other, travelling very precisely.

"They were like very big stars, They were as bright as Sirius (the brightest star in the night sky) and about four times as large."

The witness added: "The lights were white like stars and the trails were white like fog.

"The trails came from directly behind the objects and were a single thick trail, not like those given off by large airliners which are split in two.

"My first thought was, 'My God, what's that?' They were obviously some kind of controlled craft, but not like anything I'd seen before."

Another witness said: "There were two bright, shining orange lights moving at great speed.

"They had flown over the rooftop and were heading in the direction of the sea.

"There was complete silence and the speed was greater than any plane, shooting star or other object I've ever seen."

Two policemen saw the craft flying from South Wales over the Bristol Channel.

"Stopping their patrol car, they watched as the lights drew nearer to them," says the report.

"The lights or object(s) passed to the west, going in a south-east direction."

A pilot flying over Wales also reported the UFO.

Introducing the released files, the MoD says the sightings were "later traced to the re-entry of a Russian Cosmos rocket body

which burned up, decaying over the North Atlantic."

UFO expert Dr David Clarke, a lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University, yesterday said the files proved the MoD was "not in the slightest bit interested in aliens".

He added: "They're only interested in the defence implications. The question is, 'What are the Russians testing and could any of these sightings be something of that kind?' As soon as they have eliminated that, they're not interested."

Former MoD official turned UFO specialist Nick Pope said: "There are some UFO sightings here which had us genuinely puzzled. The UFO phenomenon provoked discussion, debate and disagreement, even within the MoD."

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