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UK Meteor Blast Mystery

From: David Clarke <dclarke14@compuserve.com>
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 1998 14:58:45 -0400
Fwd Date: Sun, 12 Jul 1998 15:09:26 -0400
Subject: UK Meteor Blast Mystery

The following is directly from the Press Association News Wire service this morning:

Mystery Lights Were Meteor Shower

The mystery surrounding a series of lights seen high in the sky over western areas [of the United Kingdom] was solved today when officials said it was caused by a meteor shower descending to earth.

The sighting brought reports of UFOs and messages from space last night [Friday, July 12] Coastguard stations and police from Scotland to Cornwall were flooded with calls from concerned witnesses, many reporting lights in the shapes of the letters "Z" and "Q" or the number "2".

Many calls were centred around the Isle of Man where a large explosion in the sky was reported.

Mystery deepened when a statement from Liverpool Coast Guard about the lights said: "Coastguard and air traffic control are satisfied this is not aircraft related, so we can only assume whatever it is comes from out there."

But shortly after midnight the mystery was solved when an airline pilot who landed at East Midlands Airport reported seeing a large meteorite entering the atmosphere when he was flying to the UK from France.

The meteorite began breaking up as it entered the atmosphere and left a long trail in its wake.

The pilot said he watched as winds formed the trail into shapes resembling letters which had been reported on the ground.

A spokesman for Liverpool Coast Guard said today [Saturday]: "It appears to be a meteor shower and two parts may have hit each other.

"We had over a hundred 999 calls here alone with people reporting UFOs, coloured lights, meteors, comets and space debris.

"They were reported right across the northwest, but thankfully nothing appeared to land anywhere."

Bungy Williams, watch manager at Belfast Coastguard said the "Z" shaped lightys were in the sky for 45 minutes.

"I can say I've never seen anything like it before," he said.

"It was a larger shape than the moon but as we were unable to measure the distance it was impossible to judge its actual size.

"I made a drawing of the object which shortly before midnight began to fade."

A report in the London Sunday Mirror today quotes Williams as saying: "When we first saw the object, it was not completely dark. Whatever it was, it appeared to be moving very slowly westwards. It seemed larger than the moon and higher than the clouds."

Teeside air traffic control tower, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, also reported a sighting.

They also quote defence officials at RAF Fylingdales in North Yorkshire, the MoD's front line early warning station, as having had "no undue activity" reported on radar. A Coastguard spokesman added: "It was a mystery at the time - but it was not an alien craft."

Compare these sightings with the reports describing a brilliant meteor re-entry over western and central areas of Britain reported by dozens of people on Thursday, June 11 this year.

This object lit up the sky with a dazzling flame-like trail over Worcestershire, Herefordshire, and Shropshire before disappearing in a flash over North Wales.

On that night 268 calls were logged by police and coastguard in a 90-minute period from 11.02pm - with reports ranging from "a flying saucer and a blazing aircraft to the end of the world" (Daily Mail, June 13).

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