

UFO sightings bring town to a standstill

A crowd of 100 stunned stargazers brought a town centre to a standstill when five mysterious UFOs were spotted hovering in the sky.

Drinkers spilled out of pubs, motorists stopped to gawp and camera phones were aimed upwards as the five orbs, in a seeming formation, hovered above Stratford-Upon-Avon for half an hour.

The unidentified flying objects lit up the otherwise clear night sky above Shakespeare's birthplace in Warwickshire on Saturday.

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Although Air Traffic Control reported no unusual activity, some witnesses were convinced they were witnessing an extra-terrestrial spectacle.

The strange episode started just after 10.30pm, when the lights were seen hovering slowly over the town before three of them formed a triangular shape with one positioned just to the right.

A few minutes later a fifth came into view travelling towards the others at breakneck speed before slowing down and stopping a short distance away.

Sceptics dismissed the UFOs as nothing more than hot air balloons, fireworks or even lanterns which had broken loose from a local rugby club.

Others, however, claimed the speed and agility of the objects was unlike any known aircraft and said the odd movement, lack of noise and the length of time in the air discounted any man-made explanation.

Tom Hawkes, who captured these amazing images, spotted the lights during his girlfriend Kate Lyall's birthday at the One Elm pub.

He and the 15 other revellers were in the bar when they spotted some commotion outside.

Tom, 30, said: "We walked outside and there was at that time a growing crowd of about 60 people looking up at something in the sky.

"I saw this light appear, then three others. They came over our heads in formation but then manouvered into different positions.

"Three had formed a triangular shape and one was to the right. Then another one came hurtling towards the rest at what looked like a very fast speed. But as it neared them it suddenly slowed and stopped altogether.

"By this time more people had poured out onto the street. Two pubs had emptied, some people had come out of their houses and drivers slowed their cars.

"The objects were there for about half an hour. It was very eerie because they didn't make any sound and they stayed still before moving slowly beyond the horizon. There were no stars in the sky, just them.

"It was the most extraordinary thing I've ever seen and the way in which everyone gathered in the street to watch them reminded me of a scene from Independence Day."

The extraordinary scenes were also witnessed by some of the staff of the One Elm pub.

Chef Kern Griffiths, 26, said: "I saw five lights, we all thought they were hot air balloons at first because the glowing spheres looked like a burst of flames. But I couldn't see any outline of the balloon itself and they were travelling far too fast.

"Suddenly someone shouted 'look' and there were these bright dots fizzing across the sky.

"It was weird, the way they moved did look alien. Some people reckon they're fireworks but they were lit up in the sky for far too long, the local rugby club say they were lanterns that blew loose over the weekend but these objects were far too fast and too high up.

"They were unlike any aircraft I've seen. It's a mystery."

Hillary Potter from The British Earth Aerial Mystery Society (BEAMS) said they were being inundated with similar calls from across the country but said it was rare for such phenomena to be witnessed by so many people.

She said: "Such incidents have been on the increase recently. There are reports at the moment coming in from all over the country.

"We've had many reports of people seeing quite large unidentified objects in the skies. It's not going away, It seems these incidents are becoming more bold.

"People don't know what to do when they witness such sights and that's what we're here for. We take the reports very seriously."

A Mod Spokesman said: "The MoD does not have any expertise or role in respect of UFOs or flying saucer matters or to the question of the existence of extra terrestrial life forms, about which we remain totally open minded.

"I should add that to date the MoD knows of no evidence which substantiates the existence of these alleged phenomena. The MoD examines any reports of unidentified flying objects it receives solely to establish whether what was seen might have some defence significance.

"Namely whether there is any evidence that the UK air space might have been compromised by hostile or unauthorised foreign military activity.

"Unless there is evidence of a potential threat to the United Kingdom from an external military source, and to date no UFO report has revealed such evidence, we do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each sighting reported to us.

"We believe that rational explanations such as aircraft lights or natural phenomena could be found for them if resources were diverted for this purpose but its not the function of the MoD to provide this kind of aerial identification service."

Frankie Spray, from Wellesbourne Airfield, just outside Stratford, added: "The lights were nothing to do with us. None of our aircraft fly at night at this time of year.

"It's very bizarre but I've got no explanation as to what the lights were."

Birmingham Air Space which covers the skies over the town said they had not heard of any unusual activity showing up on the radar.

