

4. Let us first consider the phenomena. There have always been strange things to see in the sky, and strange explanations have been given. Since World War II we have seen development of powerful rockets, and voyages to the Moon and planets. We have also seen the development of science fiction, where space ships can be switched to 'inter-stellar drive' and our hero can ~~come~~^{cross} the 2M light years to Andromeda Galaxy in a flash. We have also seen the development of ufology and the UFO industry, which accepts the delightful fantasies of science fiction as proven fact and interprets the phenomena in our skies as alien space craft. Most of the phenomena are seen unexpectedly and very briefly, and are gone before the eye has focussed. The words 'UFO' and 'space craft' have been firmly implanted and too readily spring to mind.

6. But what are the real causes of the phenomena?

a. Some have always occurred: tricks of light on cloud; comets, meteors or showers of meteors; meteorites; bright planets, or even the moon or stars in unusual atmospheric conditions. Venus is popular: there are recorded cases of pilots reporting Venus as an 'unidentified flying object following them'.

b. Meteorological balloons. The Met Office alone release 50 a day, which expand to 40 foot diameter and rise to 100,000 feet and can be lit by the sun well after dark. Many other organisations use balloons, some are much larger, and there are recorded cases of balloons being reported as UFOs by airline pilots.