

'THE THING' STARTS CASH TILLS RINGING

A NEW noise was heard in Warminster yesterday—the merry tinkling of cash registers.

Tourists from all over the country are pouring into the Wiltshire town (population 11,000) to go Thing-spotting.

Nobody knows what The Thing is. But the townsfolk of Warminster say it is responsible for the fireball in the sky, the weird sounds and other strange happenings reported in the district over the past two years.

'As good as Loch Ness'

And last night there was no room at any Warminster inn. At the Anchor Hotel, Scots landlord Hugh McLaren, 53, said: "This could do us as much good as the Loch Ness monster did for Scotland."

Over at the Weymouth Arms, Mr. Pat Kelly, 46, secretary of the local licensed Victuallers' Association said: "The Thing could keep our season going right through the winter."

The Big Rush to Warminster follows Friday night's public meeting at the town hall at which it was decided to set up a Thing observation post on the Downs.

Said council chairman, Mr. Emlyn Rees, who organised the meeting: "One man from London has already volunteered to man the post at weekends. We might even get the Observer Corps in on it."

The Londoners will join local volunteers equipped with tape recorders, cameras and binoculars to record any odd sight or sound.

But even townsfolk who are welcoming the tourists with open arms are maintaining a healthy cynicism.

Said retired travel agent Joe Brownell, 74, member of the town's Tourist Committee: "If these visitors expect to see the Thing I think they will be disappointed."