

obviously entailed long hours of hard work. Having gathered together the fruits of her own experience in this way, she gives everyone else the opportunity to benefit from it, and it is to be hoped that all aspiring UFO researchers and investigators will read it with the attention it deserves. And not only read it, but learn how to practise what Ms Randles proposes, and thereby help to improve the standard of UFO investi-

gation. If the present low standards are maintained, then we do not have the slightest chance of ever getting anywhere near to understanding the multifaceted UFO enigma. Fortunately, in recent years a number of books that really get to grips with the UFO problem have been published, of which Jenny Randles' is one of the most readable and entertaining, while not losing sight of its instructive role.

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## GUARDIANS OF THE MOTORWAY

*Alan Bell*

**Our contributor is an investigator for the group MIGAP (Merseyside Investigations into Aerial Phenomena), which is an associate member of NUFON. This is a UFOIN report. May 15, 1980. Moreton, Wirral, Merseyside. Level A. MED.**

**G**ARETH HUGHES is a young teacher residing on the Wirral. On the night in question, at about 00.40 BST, he was returning home along the northbound carriageway of the M53 motorway, which runs along the peninsula like a rigid backbone. The night was fine and calm and traffic at that time was very sparse (even during the day this is one of Britain's quieter motorways).

He drove down a slight incline approaching junction 2, which takes traffic off to the west towards Arrowe Park. To his right was Bidston Hill, which is not a particularly large or prominent hill, but which is rather noticeable as the Wirral is predominantly flat. On top of Bidston Hill there is a windmill, a meteorological station and an observatory, and some lovely countryside which provides popular walks.

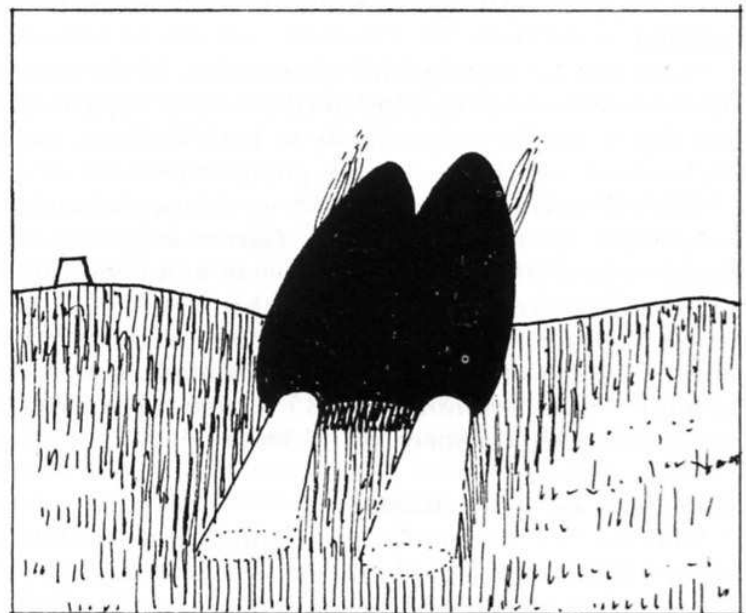
To his right the teacher suddenly noticed a very bright light. He could see that it was low down and close to the ground and his first reaction was one of puzzlement. Why had he never noticed this light before? He had driven this way very often. Presuming it to be a mast, or lighted tower, he was surprised, and stared at it simply because he had never seen anything there before. Yet as he came closer it was obvious he was mistaken. This was just a single, stationary light which lacked any substance behind it.

Gareth now drove under a cross-over bridge, travelling at only about 20 m.p.h., and wound down his side window to take a closer look. As he emerged from the bridge he found himself level with the thing. He was looking directly at it through the open window and could see that it was no further away than 300 feet, and no higher off the ground than an ordinary block of flats. At this distance and height it was immense!

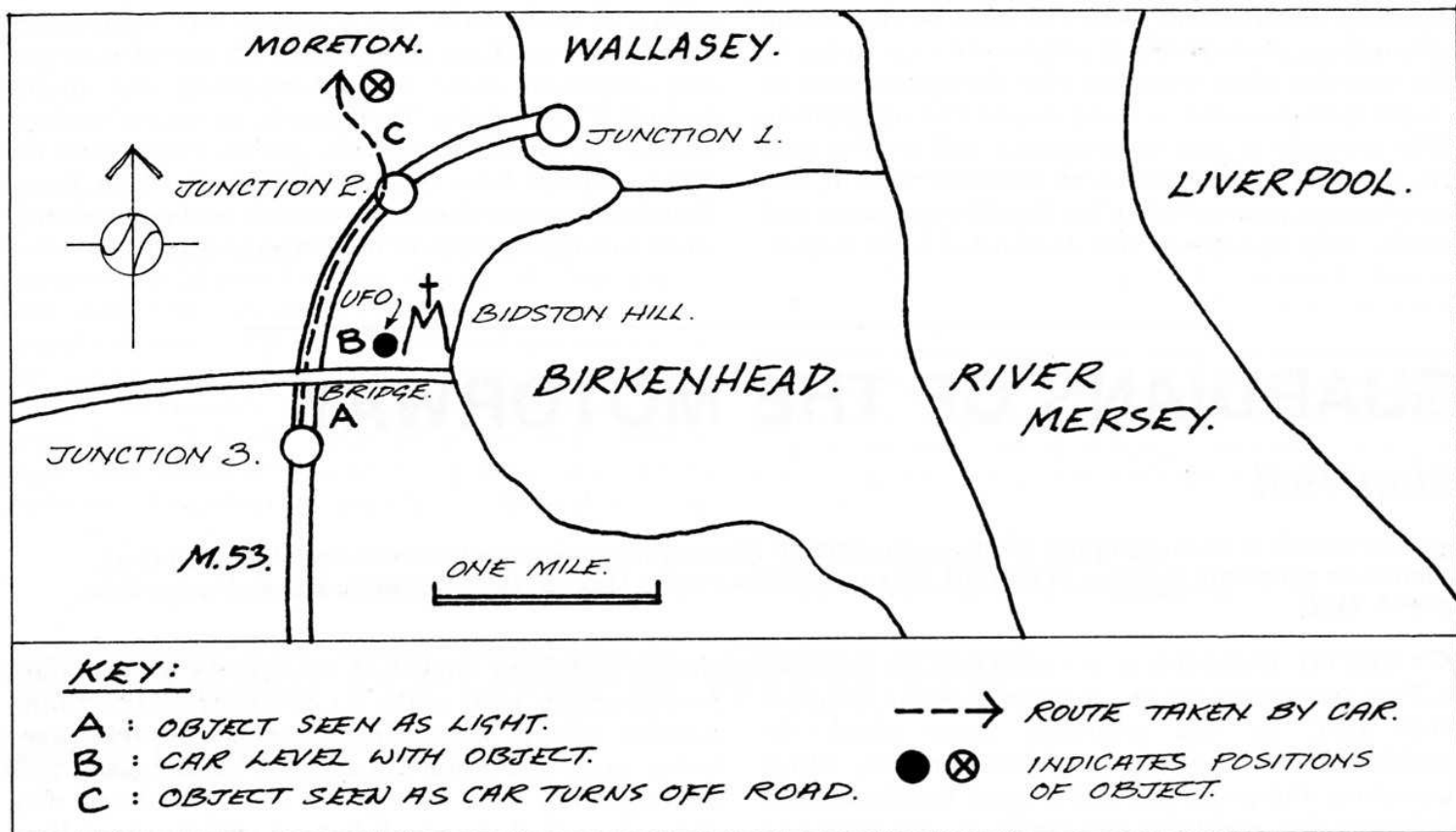
In size it was the equivalent of a golf ball held at arm's length, blocking out a considerable proportion of sky. The top of it was clearly outlined against a bright sky, and resembled two curved artillery shells,

side by side, but angled at 45 degrees towards him and seemingly parts of the actual superstructure of the massive object. Two shielded beams of light were being projected from the front of these shells, but although they were strong and clearly outlined they did *not* reach the ground, but cut off after travelling just a few yards. The portion of the object between the two beams was black, and merged with the background of Bidston Hill (this portion of the object was below the hill-line as he looked at it). However, it was apparent that there was a connecting shape there.

Gareth stared in amazement at this object and while he considered stopping (even though this is forbidden on a motorway) he admits that he was rather unnerved by what he was observing and decided instead to drive on home. However, before he left he says that he saw two reddish/pink jets of flame, one behind each shell. He presumes these must have come



The object, as seen at closest approach of car



on whilst he was distracted (perhaps looking round to confirm that no other traffic was nearby). He is certain he did not see them appear and also that had they been there before he would have noticed them as he drove up to the object.

He hurried on about threequarters of a mile to the turn-off (which was his own). On the spur-road he could still see the pinkish flames of the object, apparently still in the same position. His home is close to the motorway, and on arrival there he found his mother still up. They immediately drove back to the scene, but there was no trace of the object. He estimates that it had been visible to him for about four minutes.

Next day he reported his observation to the local *Wallasey News*, but they received no other reports of the object, despite its proximity to both Wallasey and Birkenhead, which are densely populated towns.

MIGAP investigations turned up no explanations to account for this observation. Gareth Hughes was found to be a sincere, slightly nervous, and believable witness. The weather conditions that day had been warm and sunny (temperature maximum of 21.5°C and 14.3 hours of sunshine with no rainfall). The temperature fell to a minimum of 8.7°C that night. Wind was easterly with a speed of 7.3 knots.

#### Comments by Jenny Randles

This is an extremely interesting and credible report. What infuriates me is that I was, at the time, living within one mile of the location, had walked Bidston Hill just a couple of days before, and had passed

the exact spot on the motorway about two hours before! Knowing the area well, as I do, it is obvious that there are no features in the vicinity which could possibly be misidentified. Had it been a helicopter that low and that close (even though it is inconceivable that Gareth could have mistaken such a thing) then there is no doubt I would have heard it from where I was at the time. Yet, in view of the populated locality, and the proximity to houses, one has to ask (yet again) why did nobody else see the thing? And, despite how quiet the motorway can be, I find it difficult to believe that no other traffic would have passed the spot in the four minutes or so that the object was visible; the drivers could hardly have missed the thing. Once more we have a classic case of the highly personalised UFO experience. Yet if we are to invoke the solution of "hallucination" we must answer what manner of hallucination it can be that is so remarkably enormous, so negatively emotive, and so persistent as to remain in view for four minutes and dwindle in size as if it were a real object. It is this kind of report that almost compels one to believe that it *must* have been a physical, controlled craft, keeping watch over the motorway. Which, as Vallée would have it, may just be the point.

Readers are also asked to note the sudden recent prominence of objects (usually dark, similarly shaped, and with projecting beams of light... in UFO phenomena terms virtually carbon copies) which seem to be acting as guardians of Britain's motorways. FSR Vol. 24, No. 1 had one depicted at Camberley by the M3.

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