

SOLID LIGHT PHENOMENON OVER IRLAM

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This is a report compiled for UFOIN and Flying Saucer Review

ORDINARILY, a report of this nature would receive scant attention since it can be classed as but a medium-definition sighting, with no associated effects. It was also made by two twelve-year-old boys, who will not be regarded by some as ideal reporters of such a phenomenon. However, there are two basic reasons for compiling a report on this event. One is that in many respects it ties in with the solid light phenomenon observed many times in the past, and in Dorset during the present UK wave,¹ and elsewhere.² The other is that it corroborates a sighting at Marple in Cheshire, on the same night, in rather a spectacular fashion.³

The events

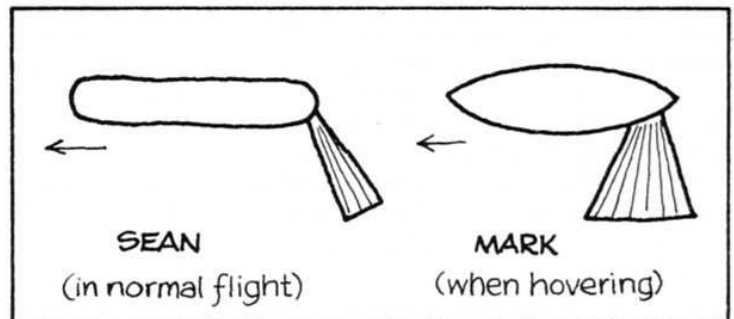
The two boys are schoolfriends, but were not together when the sighting occurred. Both live on Harewood Road, in Irlam, a town on the fringe of Greater Manchester which is mostly surrounded by open country. (It is also the home town of Jenny Randles, Secretary of UFOIN.) To the north is a vast area of barren land known as Chat Moss, and to the south is the Manchester Ship Canal, with industrial complexes lining its banks. Harewood Road slopes down to the canal banks only five hundred yards away, and immediately opposite are fields, a railway line, a power station and many national grid lines and a petroleum depot. Despite the fact that the boys place the sighting over a housing estate in Flixton, no further witnesses have been found.

Sean O'Sullivan saw the object from his kitchen at approximately 9.45 p.m. on Tuesday, July 5th 1977. Mark Nealon saw it from his bedroom. Both stories agree as to basic details, with one exception, which will shortly be referred to. The time is also in doubt, although one thing the boys are certain of is that it was at least 9.45 p.m. From their descriptions, however, the sky was darkening with stars being visible, and the moon rising, this time would seem too early, and investigators feel it probable that it was closer to 10.30 p.m. The boys agree this is feasible. The question of time is important as the Marple sighting began at 10.40 p.m.

The object seen was described as a fat cigar, mostly glowing white, but with a yellow tint. It was described as about the size of a "Biro" pen held at arms length, which means it was large indeed. It seems that it was, therefore, directly over the canal, and within a third of a mile of the boys. The light pulsed at about one second intervals, with even its lowest brightness being brighter than starlight. At its brightest it was very intense, and was much more yellow in colour. Mark Nealon felt, however, that the cigar remained constant in brightness and that only its protruding beam altered.

The beam was projected from the rear end of the object and was at first at an angle of 45°. The object moved quite slowly from the south to south east and was said to be only a hundred feet or so above the canal. As it moved along it stopped on several occasions for 30-40 seconds. Sean believes it stopped 3 times while Mark says 4 times, though of course it is possible that Mark observed it for longer. When stopped the beam moved from its angled position to one of projecting vertically downwards. During one of the stops the beam moved slightly beyond the vehicle to a slight angle in the opposite direction. After all stops the beam returned to its normal 45° backwards angle, and maintained this whilst the object was moving.

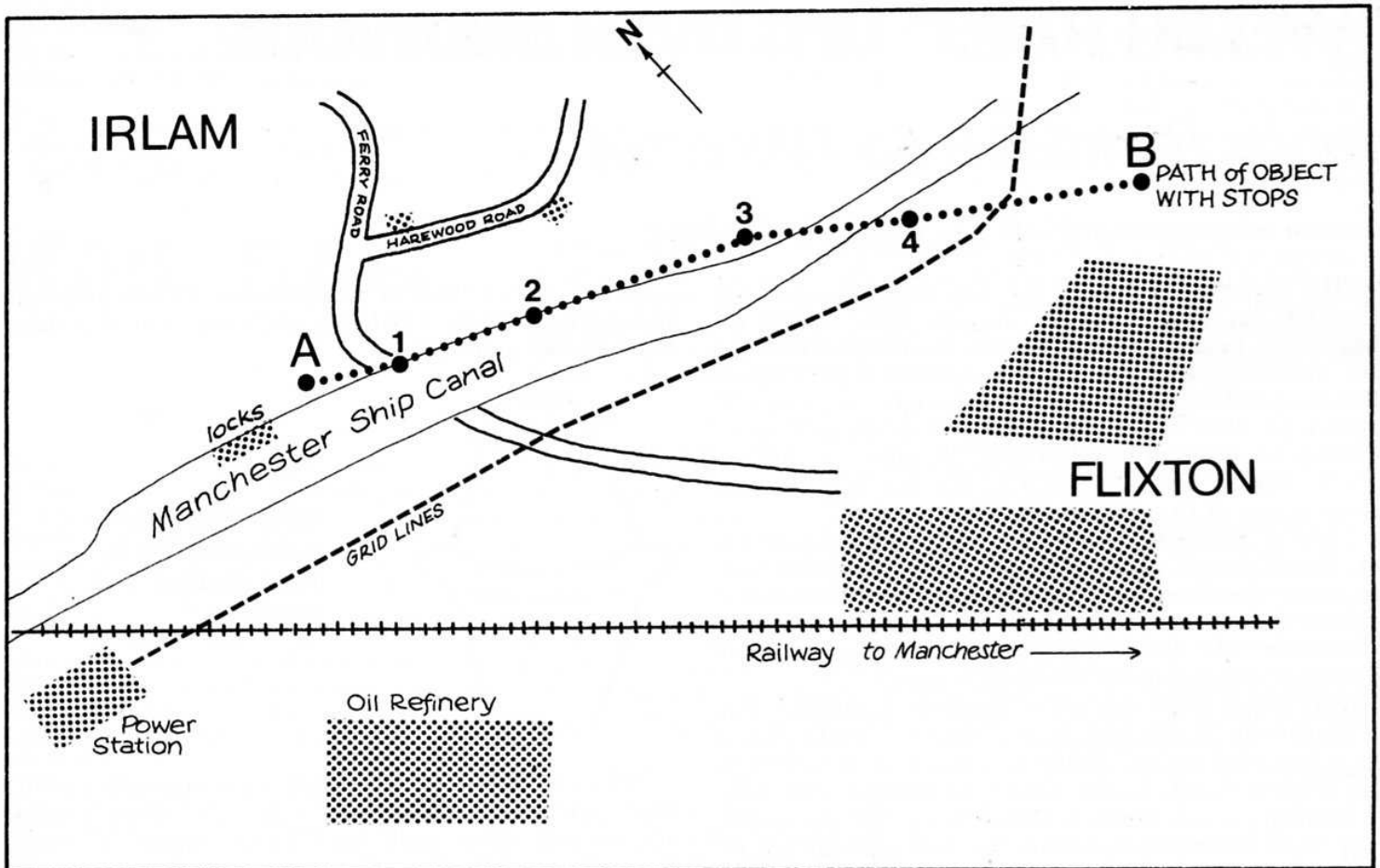
The beam of light was a definite yellowish colour, and was conical, but only very slightly so. It did not reach to the ground but stopped suddenly in mid air. In length it was less than the length of the object. When projecting downwards it illuminated the ground and surrounding area with a yellowish tint. This area of illumination was about twice the size of the actual object.



After moving slowly across a 90° arc of sky and being in view for approximately 10 minutes (investigators feel this is slightly exaggerated), the object began to climb slightly and accelerate. It moved out of view of both boys and, as it did so, grew in brightness, and consequently became more yellow.

The investigation

I made extensive checks in the area for corroborating witnesses but found none. The lock-keeper on the canal had seen nothing. The boys were interviewed on four separate occasions and struck firm to their story. However, rumours did filter through that they had told friends that they had "made it up." When questioned about this the boys admitted they had said this, but pointed out that they had come in for considerable ridicule, and that their "hoax" explanation had put a stop to this. However, they insisted that their story was true. It is quite within our impressions of the boys that they should



have acted in this way. Mark, especially, is a very shy boy.

One is obviously faced with the possibility of a hoax — but this seems unlikely on several counts. The boys have no great interest in UFO stories, and it is thought highly unlikely that they would be able to fabricate a story which contains basic elements found in other UFO encounters, though not particularly well-publicised ones. More importantly the object seen at Marple, Cheshire (some 14 miles to the southeast — note direction) is very similar in description. This sighting is completely independent, has never been publicised, and there is no way in which the boys can have known of it.

Obviously the greatest puzzle here is how such an object could be seen by these two lads (who just happen to be friends) and yet by nobody else. If their story is true, then there seems little probability of a solid, objective phenomenon being witnessed by only two people. This leads us to the possibility that there was a non-objectivity about the sighting — i.e. that was perhaps existent in a subjective reference

mode. Perhaps only these boys, of all those in a position to witness it, were receptive to the particular frame of reference. This aspect is of course by no means uncommon in the UFO phenomenon. Note also that the Marple object was first detected by young children. Also notice, once more, the close proximity of power lines (also a factor of the Marple sighting). Is this just pure coincidence?⁴

Weather: Clear sky, warm day, slight breeze from the east.

Aircraft: None in area.

References

1. Harris, L. *Solid Light Phenomenon in Dorset* (FSR Vol.23, No.4).
2. Berger, E. "Snail feeler" enters a room (FSR Vol.23, No.1).
3. Randles, J. *Strange object near Childrens' Home* (FSR Vol.23, No.4).
4. Randles, J. *North Staffordshire flap, with humanoids reported* (FSR Vol.23, No.1).

ANNOUNCEMENT

We are pleased to announce that Miss Jenny Randles has joined the FSR team as Secretarial Assistant with effect from 1st February, 1978.