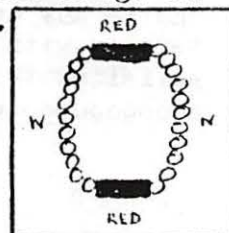


Aerial activity in Ireland inevitably gets compared with the present day military situation. Could it have been a helicopter, for instance? But at least we can rule out all possibility of such an explanation for this first case.

1796 }
"The great light"... It was Spring 1796, long before the word UFO was invented. George Blackler was returning to his home at Seagoe, near Portadown, as darkness fell when he saw a great, glowing light in the sky which made him fear his home was ablaze. But as he reached Seagoe he found startled villagers looking up at the bright object passing majestically across the sky. Several ran after it but it outpaced them all! It headed off towards Lurgan. The countryside was allegedly kept awake much of the night swapping tales from those who saw "the thing", as it later came to be called. People at Bannfoot, the western side of the River Bann, the surrounding hills and at Drumnakelly all observed it. Much alarm ensued. A religious interpretation was put onto the event at the time, not surprisingly. The only obvious 'rational' explanation would seem to be a meteor. However, Armagh Observatory have no records that confirm this... and it seems unlikely that such a prominent meteor, IF it were high in the sky and not therefore local to the Portadown area, would have been missed for what it was. Of course, if UAPs exist now then presumably they must have done in 1796 too!

**Note
paranoid
Scientist
Skepticism**
"The UFO in the trees"... April 1980 and the observatory at Armagh, after a gap of 184 years, are back in the UFO investigation business. Donal Strain (aged 23) and two colleagues were relaxing in their kitchen at Ballinaskeagh after a day spent manuring. It was 3.30pm. They suddenly saw a grey, shiny object floating down out of the sky. On a windless day it came low down over a ditch and hovered, held at an angle. When the sun peeked out it simply shone reflectively, very bright. The three men went out into the yard, and then alongside it in the road. Their close-up view did not resolve the issue. It appeared like a grey car wheel but flatter. The 'UFO' then seemed to get caught up in a neighbour's tree. The neighbour and a friend were working in the garden so they were called to watch the object too. As they looked it freed itself and climbed higher and higher into the sky until the five bemused witnesses were left staring at thin air. Armagh Observatory were unable to explain it but added, "It certainly was not a flying object - such a craft would be picked up on radar long before it entered earth's atmosphere." Remarkably he went on to comment that he had not got a clue what it was... "but it certainly was not a flying saucer". I wish we had this ability to be so sure that Armagh Observatory seem to possess! As a thought - what about a balloon, such as those which SCUFORI and PROBE investigated in their indispensable UFO/IFO booklet. (£1 from 16 Marigold Walk, Bristol BS3 2PD... if you don't have it GET IT!)

**1983
Belfast News #103: 25/Aug 1983**
"The Lough Neagh UFO"... Coming right up to date, March 22 1983. Armagh Observatory are at it again! Their resident skeptic adamantly announced, "Most sightings of lights in the sky can be given some rational explanation and we certainly don't believe in flying saucers. But I couldn't really say what these lights were without seeing them for myself." Yet several witnesses did see them, especially on the shores around Lurgan and Craigavon. Two men in a car-park here at 19.00 saw 10 red lights "swarming like bees over trees in the south east of the lough". A larger light was seen above these flashing red, yellow and white. At 8pm they decided to drive home. As they passed down a country lane an object shaped like a rugby ball and twice the size of a helicopter began to 'buzz' them. It had two long, rectangular red lights and white lights in a circle between them. As they got to the main road the object left them. The army were insistent that it was not a helicopter and "I cannot give you any explanation. But it certainly wasn't the army". Readers might like to compare the close encounter object depicted above with the one shown on the next page, which also seemed to inspect a car on a country road (in England three months before.) The far from minor similarities are most interesting.



When you see 'coincidences' like this you do have to wonder if there might not, after all, be a real craft behind some of the strange reports!!

Compare to case on back

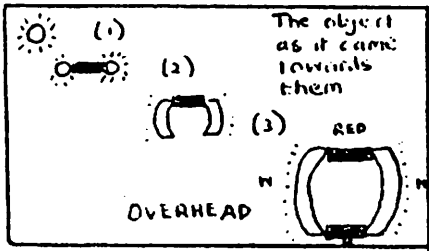
This case should be compared with the Irish encounter referenced on the previous page. It came to attention following the radio programme Jenny Randles did on Woman's Hour, one of the tiny few that did. It concerns Mr Low, his wife, and their 4 year old son Robin, who live in Bacup, Lancs, amidst the Rossendale Valley (for the relevance of that see The Pennine UFO Mystery). They were returning to Bacup from Burnley along the A 671 and approaching Deerplay Moor. This is mostly open hilly terrain (ASL about 1000 ft) with the first village of any substance near by being Weir...where a few strange things have happened over the past few years.

Mr Low was puzzled by a very fast moving and irregularly flashing light. He took it to be a plane at first but its unusual nature (and its blue/green colour) were sufficient to cause him to stop the car, at a convenient in-lay off the road. The light vanished to the east. At this point Mrs Low commented on a bright white light immediately in front of them (SE). It was low down, very bright and at first seemed stationary. As they watched it was obvious that it was growing in size and then resolving into two white lights side by side. Mr Low at this point decided to get out of the car. "Tell me if I'm seeing things" he requested, to be reassured he was not! Considering that the two lights were not moving in a straight line he tested the hypothesis by putting a comb on the roof of the car and using it to 'sight' the object. This proved that there was a zig-zag motion with the UFO following the line and then moving to the side, and then back again. It travelled in 'steps'.

The diagram is a top-down view of the sighting. It shows four stages of the UFO's movement:

- (1) A single light source (represented by a sun-like symbol) moving towards the observers (represented by a car icon).
- (2) The light source has split into two lights (represented by two sun-like symbols).
- (3) The two lights have moved further apart, forming a horizontal line.
- (4) The two lights have moved back together, forming a single horizontal line.

The diagram is labeled "OVERHEAD" and includes a note: "The object as it came towards them".



The lights were following the valley heading NW and coming straight for them. The motion was majestically slow and quite silent, even when the object was directly overhead. Needless to say it is very quiet out on that moortop at night and there was no wind (it being a still, cold night with scattered cloud). As it approached Mrs Low and their son got out of the car. It now could be seen to consist of two half circles of white light, very bright, with a red rectangular strip between them. Directly overhead a second red strip at the rear was also visible. In shape it was like a rugby-ball (just as in the Irish case). Whilst directly overhead two white lights, side by side, streaked across the valley moving in the same direction. They much higher (above the cloud) and went past the slowly moving object in the direction it was heading. They took just 5 seconds to pass the 4 or 5 miles visible to them from SE to NW. These new lights frightened both Mrs Low and the child, whereas the object above them did not. Eventually the big 'craft' (for they were sure it was a real object) moved away and seemed to accelerate on leaving them, vanishing behind the hills in the Burnley direction. They did not hang about but drove straight home. Duration of sighting of the large object from first view in the SE to rapid disappearance to the NW was 8-10 minutes. They are sure this is not an exaggeration. They estimate height as about 1500 ft ASL (ie just 500 ft above them) and definitely well below cloud cover. They did not really wish to guess its size but feel it was bigger than a light aircraft, for instance. During their observation they contemplated explanations. There was never any question of it being an aircraft because it was totally unlike one, they say. No navigation or flashing lights were on it. They pondered a hang-glider, but whilst overhead they saw it clearly enough to dismiss that idea. And in any event who would hang-glide in the pitch dark over treacherous hilly terrain, with pylons and the like such as is found in this valley? MUFORA are satisfied this is a genuine observation by sincere and puzzled witnesses.

[illegible]