

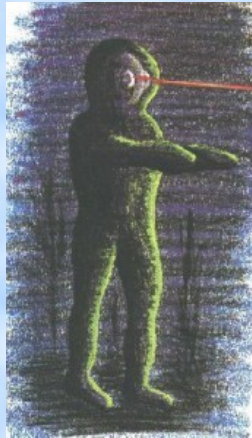
1978: Risley, Cheshire, England

March 17, 11:30 pm

Source: Janet & Colin Bord from *Modern Mysteries of Britain*,
and from *The Curse of the Silver Man* by writer Rob Morphy



Risley



The Silver Man

At approximately 11:30 pm. on the evening of March 17th, 1978, a 39 year-old service engineer by the name of Ken Edwards was making the 15-mile journey home to Warrington New Town development following a union meeting in Greater

Manchester. By all accounts, Edwards was a straight-laced, hard working man who was not prone to wild flights of fancy or belief in the paranormal.

Nevertheless, as the exhausted Edwards drove down an isolated stretch of road through the mostly derelict industrial district where the Risley atomic energy complex was located, something utterly unbelievable snared his attention... something that would challenge his understanding of reality.

Edwards claimed that he first spied what he thought was a “man climbing,” but he quickly realized that he was looking at a gargantuan, humanoid figure lumbering down the steep embankment adjacent to the nuclear facility. The startled engineer immediately hit the brakes and his van slowed to a halt near the curb of the road some 50-feet away from the hulking humanoid, which was now illuminated by his headlights.



The entity, based on Ken Edward's sketch

Edwards stared in astonishment at this bipedal beast — which he would later dub the “Silver Man” — as it lurched down the hill with its arms outstretched, utilizing strange, stiff-legged movements, like someone who was born without knee joints.

In fact, Edwards’ description and the sketch he made of this being makes it hard not to conjure images of some kind of enormous, intergalactic Frankenstein’s Monster.

Edwards also noticed that this creature assumed an odd “stooped” posture as it scrambled down the hill, which seemed

impossible for a human to emulate without toppling over. This would be confirmed by investigators who inspected the scene and were unable to imitate the thing's gait, forcing some to wonder if perhaps this Silver Man — like Apollo astronauts leaping about on the moon — was not susceptible to the same laws of gravity as the rest of us.

At this point the eccentric entity paused at the edge of the road and Edwards got his first good look at it under the glare of his high beams. The anxious engineer estimated that the figure was at least 7-feet in height and was either clad in some sort of reflective silver fabric akin to a radiation suit or had a dull metallic epidermis not unlike Alabama's Metal Man of Falkville.

He also claimed that the figure's roundish face was black — or that it was covered with some sort of mask — with no discernible features except for a pair of glowing eyes. Furthermore, it had two, thin arms that were not attached at its shoulders, but stuck straight out of its chest like a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

Edwards tensed as the bizarre being trudged into the road directly in front of his car and turned to face him; staring into his eyes with its own self illuminated orbs. The moment must have felt excruciatingly long as these two foreign species fixed their eyes on one another, separated only by about 30-feet of asphalt and a windshield... and that was when things went from weird to horrifying.

Without warning, two pencil-thin “energy beams” of white light shot from the humanoid's eyes directly into Edwards' van. The engineer claimed that as soon as he was struck by these intense ocular beams he was overcome by a “dizzy” sensation and lost all sense of time. Edwards also claimed that there was some kind of invisible force that had apparently paralyzed him, which he compared to:

“...someone with two enormous hands pressing me down from the top. The pressure was tremendous... it seemed to paralyze me. I could only move my eyes. The rest of me was rigid.”

Stranger still he claimed that he was overcome with unconventional thoughts rushing through his head all at once, but he only remembered one that kept looping over and over in his brain:

“Is this something from outer space and what does it want with me?”

A moment later he regained control of his muscles and realized that his fingers were throbbing and covered with what looked like sun burnt flesh. Even more disturbingly he noticed that the circuitry of his pricey radio transceiver had completely burned out during the ordeal. It's worth noting that there are some exaggerated reports that erroneously claim that the device itself (or even his vehicle) actually exploded — this was *not* the case.



When Edwards looked up he saw that the entity had apparently lost interest in him and was heading straight for the 10-foot high, barbed wire topped security fence that surrounded the fire station opposite the nuclear facility. Once it arrived at the fence the Silver Man raised its finger-less hands upwards, paused, lowered its arms and then walked directly through the barrier like a cosmic phantasm.

As soon as it “melted” through the fence, the creepy, luminous-eyed creature clambered up the hill next to the fire station and disappeared into the woods beyond. Needless to say, Edwards was stunned by this entire episode and took a moment to compose himself and wonder what the hell just happened.

Edwards later claimed that he remained motionless on the roadside for just a few minutes before he threw his vehicle into gear and sped home, but when he arrived at his house nearly an hour later, at about 0:30 am. — following a drive which should have taken no more than 5-minutes — the engineer knew that something was not quite right. Even so, he simply chalked it up to the trauma of this harrowing event making him lose track of time:

“...[It] seems like a long time I know, but I was petrified and I do not want to go through that again.”

While that may be the case, the fact that Edwards had no direct memory of the time he lingered in his van forces one to wonder whether or not this might have been an example of the “missing time” phenomenon that is so often associated with alleged alien abduction cases.



Perhaps Edwards didn't spend that entire span of missing time sitting behind the wheel, semi-comatose with shock. Maybe he was inside some kind of hyper-technological space craft undergoing a scandalously evasive alien examination.

If that were the case either Edwards had no recollection of the event — as most do not until the “lost” memories are unlocked through hypnosis — or he simply refused to speak about it; although some researchers claimed that he was haunted by thoughts of abduction.

Regardless of whether or not Edwards had any additional “alien” contact that evening, when he finally arrived home his wife, Barbara, immediately knew that something was terribly wrong. Just before she could read him the “riot act” for being

so late, Barbara watched as her pale husband walked past her directly to the liquor cabinet to pour himself a shot of bourbon. The trembling Edwards threw back the whiskey, hoping that the liquid fire would calm his jittery nerves, then turned to his apprehensive wife and said: “*I’ve seen a silver man.*”

Edwards fixed himself another drink and told his wife about his run-in with the bizarre, shimmering-eyed fiend. She claimed that she wasn’t sure how to react to the story, but that she supported her husband:

“He had been very badly shaken and I don’t know what to make of it. I would have to see it myself to really believe it, but he saw something very strange, I know.”

Later that night, Edwards was getting ready for bed, when he abruptly stopped and began putting his clothes back on. He knew that he would have to set his fear of ridicule aside and report this abnormal event, especially considering that it happened in such close proximity to an atomic reactor. Anxious and feeling the effects of the whiskey, Edwards said to his wife:

“I think I’d better go to the police. Will you take me?”

Barbara, of course, complied and drove her husband to the Police Station at Padgate, which was located less than 2-miles from their home. The police constables on duty — including officers Roy Kirkpatrick and Rob Thompson — were understandably skeptical, but rapidly realized that Edwards was still clearly scared. It was then that they began to take his admittedly unbelievable account very seriously.

After some convincing, the uneasy Edwards agreed to accompany the officers back to the scene of the encounter



where they met up with a team of twenty, baton armed, UKAEA security guards.

It bears mentioning that one of the men on the scene later stated that when the UKAEA security team was told of Edwards strange sighting none of the men so much as offered a smirk. Is this because they were stone-cold professionals or could it be that they were familiar with this peculiar night visitor?

Unfortunately, the search party found no sign of the creature, nor any indication that the fence had been tampered with, but the UKAEA men all refused to enter the forest where Edwards had seen the physics defying figure vanish. It wouldn't be until well after four in the morning that the traumatized engineer would arrive home and attempt get a few restless hours of sleep. His insomnia would last for days.

THE NEXT MORNING

A few hours later, Edwards rolled out of bed and noticed that his manual watch had stopped at 11:45 pm., which is presumably when he and his van were immersed in the entity's eye beams. He later claimed that all attempts that were made to repair the watch were for naught.



Edwards then realized that the “sunburned” fingers on his right hand were scarring with three dark marks that ran the entire length of the fingers. These strange marks faded within 3-

weeks. Edwards felt this was particularly mysterious as he was not prone to getting sunburned or any other type of skin ailment.

Almost as bizarre as his enigmatic night time sunburn was the effects these allegedly alien energy beams had on Edwards' transceiver. The expensive device was the property of his employer and was necessary for his work as a service engineer, so when Edwards discovered that it wasn't working he immediately took it in for repairs.

According to UFO investigators Jenny Randles and Paul Wetnall, who researched the event, it took the better part of 3-weeks before the engineer discovered that the damage was too prolific to be repaired. He also found out what the probable cause of the damage was. According to Randles:

"Apparently there had been a massive power surge through the set which had burnt out the whole of the transmitting diode circuit, and most of the capacitors."

The service repairmen who had preformed the diagnostic on the device surmised that the damage was likely the result of a massive surge being picked up by the aerial and blowing its circuitry apart, which would seem to coincide with Edwards' account of events.

In the days following this event both police officers and independent investigators combed the location looking for any sort of clue that might indicate what this Silver Man was and where it had come from, but only two things of note were discovered at the scene. The first was an oval shaped patch of flattened grass atop the embankment that the being had descended, which some feel may be an indication of a landing site.



The second unusual thing found by the investigators was the dead body of a rabbit that had no evident injuries. While this poor bunny may be completely unrelated to the Risley event, there are some who have speculated that it might have been a (perhaps unintentional) victim of the Silver Man's energy beam or conceivably it succumbed to some sort of extraterrestrial radiation poisoning.

Others surmised that the pitiable critter had simply been "scared to death." The carcass, however, was left to rot, making all of this wild conjecture at best.

The police pursued the investigation for days and even tried "surprising" Edwards by showing him a man in a silver, fire retardant suit, but Edwards was nonplussed and insisted that it looked "nothing like it." It wouldn't be long before the police would discard the inquiry altogether and dismiss the whole thing as:

"...just one of those odd incidents that happen from time to time."

THE SECOND ENCOUNTER

At about midnight, on Thursday March 23, 1978, a mere 6-days after his frightening run-in with the unknown, Edwards once again found himself at the site of the event, this time with a man who is only identified as a "freelance UFO investigator

from Leeds.” Edwards claimed that for a second time he felt himself being overcome by the disturbing mental and physical sensations that had flooded him during his “staring match” with the Silver Man.

Fighting his urge to immediately leave the scene, Edwards forced himself to get out of the vehicle and began walking up the embankment with the man from Leeds. Once they reached the top, he and the investigator went their separate ways and that’s when Edwards noticed the Silver Man standing in the distance. As quoted from Randles’ and Wetrall’s article:

“...it was then, in the distance, that he saw the figure again, atop the wasteland and walking away from him. “

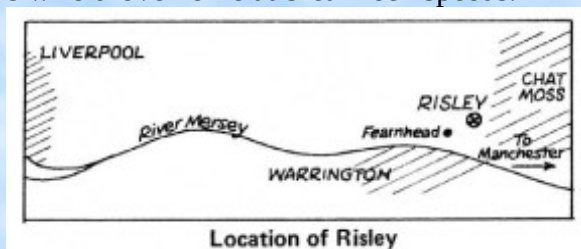
It was at this point that the grotesque apparition abruptly vanished never to be seen again. The courage that had inspired Edwards to accompany the investigator to the top of the hill all but evaporated and rushed down the slope and sped home, evidently leaving the Leeds fellow behind.

THE FINAL ENCOUNTERS



The next strange incident occurred on April 2, 1978, but did not involve an actual sighting. According to Edwards, he and his wife were driving home along the usual route that took them past the nuclear power plant at about 2:00 am. following a day-trip to Yorkshire, when he was overcome by that same disquieting “feeling” that had gripped him twice before.

For reasons he was unable to explain, Edwards felt compelled to bring his van to a halt at the location of his first sighting. Edwards then climbed out of the vehicle and stood in the center of the road, where he claimed the sensation only increased in intensity. It was then that he blacked out. When Edwards came to moments later, he speedily scrambled back into the van and he and his wife drove home at breakneck speeds.



It was then that the engineer pledged to never travel by that road again no matter how far out of the way he had to go.

The final weird incident in the Risley ordeal happened in the wee hours of April 12, 1978. Edwards claimed that he had been awoken in the middle of the night by a deep electrical hum that seemed to fill his house. Edwards climbed out of bed, careful not to disturb his wife, and began searching for the source of the strange hum.

The engineer searched his home assuming that something mechanical had been left on, but when he found nothing running he decided to check outside. According to Edwards the sound increased in volume as soon as he opened the window, but he could still see nothing.

Eventually the noise faded and he returned to bed. A few days later it was discovered that two residents of Risley had also heard the hum and when they looked skyward they realized that it was emanating from an oval, red UFO. While there's no direct correlation between the UFO and the Silver Man, it's difficult not to make at least circumstantial connections.

While on the subject of UFOs, researchers discovered that on the same night as Edwards' first encounter, four unidentified

youths were said to have spotted a cigar shaped craft floating over the University Research Reactor area. This flap included eight other allegedly confirmed sightings in the weeks preceding the Risley event.

Constables Thompson and Kirkpatrick took a particular interest in these strange goings on and decided to look into nearby universities to see if all of this might have been a hoax, but they could find no indication that it was. In response to the suggestion that he might have been the victim of some overeager college pranksters, Edwards responded indignantly:

“I wish they could tell me how they did it. How they blew up my radio and walked through a fence, some stunt.”

An interesting postscript to these events came when Randles and UFO investigator Peter Hough exposed the fact that, what they termed as, “unusual experiments” were being carried out in a Atomic Energy Authority building adjacent to where the Silver Man was seen. However the nature of these experiments has not been revealed, leaving this tidbit to languish in the purgatory of the “unsubstantiated.”

A TRAGIC ENDING:

Within a year of his now infamous sighting, just as things were starting to return to normal, Edwards became unexpectedly ill. He experienced a loss of energy and suffered from severe stomach pains.

Edwards decided that he needed to go to the hospital, where, after a battery of tests, he was diagnosed with cancer of the kidneys. Edwards underwent major surgery to remove the cancer, but within a few months the insidious cells had reappeared in his throat. Within five years of his encounter with the Silver Man, Ken Edwards had tragically succumbed to that horrible disease.

While I think it is a shot in the dark at best to associate Edwards' sorrowful demise with his encounter there are some investigators who have publically wondered whether or not the

Silver Man's optical discharge might have mutated Edwards' once healthy cells. Randles, one of the most prolific investigators of this event, expressed her opinion on Edwards' demise:

"The after effects of this event were dramatic, perhaps even tragic. As for Ken, he over the next five years began to develop multiple cancers whilst still in his late 30's. He died from what may, or may not, be related injuries. How could you have ever proven that?"

Okay, assuming that this freaky, phantasmagorical fiend was real and not the figment of Edwards' imagination, then the question we are forced to ask is...

WHAT THE HELL WAS THE SILVER MAN?:

Much like Ichabod Crane and the notorious Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow, it would seem that yet another unsuspecting young man, while traveling down a dark and lonely expanse of road, came across a dastardly (and potentially supernatural) creature, which may have been responsible for prematurely shortening his life... But what was it? The general consensus in the Fortean community at the time was that the Silver Man must have been an...

CONCLUSION:

It's difficult to know what to make of Ken Edwards and his fantastic tale. By all accounts he was a reasonable man who was not inclined toward exaggeration or outright fabrication, and who certainly would have been hard pressed to concoct a fable as patently ludicrous as the one he presented as the simple truth. A story that Edwards' conveyed with such sincerity that even the initially skeptical police were swayed by it.

Still, in many ways it's a hard pill to swallow, especially considering his second sighting, which all too "conveniently" occurred while he was separated from the Leeds researcher.

Nevertheless there are certain elements that lead to believe that this unfortunate fellow just may have been telling the truth.

The first factor that lends veracity to Edwards' story is the fact that he reported it to the police and not the media. This, to me, would seem to signify that he was less concerned with receiving attention and more worried about the safety of his community. I mean, what reasonable individual would want any sort of shady character lurking around an atomic reactor that's less than a 5-minute drive from their home — whether or not they're from Pluto or Poughkeepsie?

Secondly, the engineer never attempted to capitalize on this phenomenon. As far as I've been able to discern he made no effort to strike any television or book deals. Nor did he try and sell his story to Hollywood or endeavor to start a cult-like following like known ufological charlatans such as George Adamski.

All the evidence indicates that he loathed the attention that was heaped upon him, regardless if it was in the form of ridicule or accolades. In fact, it seems that the only thing he gained from this life altering experience was the unenviable reputation of a man who was either a crackpot, a fraud or immensely gullible. If Edwards were in this for the fame or fortune, then he did a god-awful job of exploiting it.

Thirdly, is the tragic death of Edwards himself. While I'm still reluctant to support the conjecture that his cancer was related to the Silver Man and his "laser-eyed" assault, the fact is that when one is staring death in the eye, one tends to assess his or her life in a more honest and critical light. This is why so many with secrets feel compelled to give a death bed confession.

Bearing that in mind, I can't help but to presuppose that if the outwardly outlandish occurrence that this working class guy stumbled across that winter's eve was nothing more than a silly hoax perpetrated out of boredom or some other unknown motivation, that he would've felt compelled to reveal this fact

and not let his legacy rest on a lie — especially considering that, at least in the public eye, this event that would come to define his life.

Whatever the true answer to this enduring enigma may be, there can be little doubt that the case of Ken Edwards and the Silver Man will remain one of the most intriguing mysteries to emanate from the British Isles... and we can only hope that wherever Mr. Edwards may be... he finally got the answers that had eluded him in life.

Reliability evaluation:

- medium -

one witness only for the main event;

**incomplete investigation; some events not exactly in
relation with the incident;**

**witness really shocked by something or someone;
possible fabrication of additional details**

