

Quick Silver messenger

Nigel Pennick Interview : Part Two

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Quick Silver messenger

Landscape Myth Consciousness

NUMBER 12
ISSN-0260-7484



Editing
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3 Issue Sub Rates: UK £4.00
Europe £5.00
Overseas \$16.00

Quicksilver Messenger deals with geomancy, traditions and experiments which aim to make deeper and more meaningful contact with the living earth. It is also part of an international conspiracy to liberate the imagination enslaved by orthodoxy. Join us.

EDITORIAL

This issue contains the concluding part of the Nigel Pennick interview. There is an article by Colin Bloy in which he makes comparisons between feng shui and Western leys and dowseable lines. We carry a review of a new book on feng shui by a Chinese Singaporean and a strong letter of correction by John Michell.

QSM 12 may well be a transition issue with material of a more oriental flavour appearing. However, the new section 'Strange, but True...' tells the story that anything can happen. And you know as well as I do, it often does.

One of the problems with being half a hemisphere away from the seed ground from which this journal sprang, those islands in a silver sea (use your own adjective), is that even with the development of what some call the 'global brain' and together with the

undoubted best efforts of the postal services, your editor is beginning to feel somewhat cut off from the mass hallucinations and individual inspirations of the fertile earth into which this seed bag falls. In other words, people, keep in touch. Contributions are always welcomed. In fact I'm so out of touch that I haven't even read an in depth account of the Stonehenge atrocity yet.

Change of Address (!)

Any mail sent to the old UK address won't be read for some time so, if you need to contact QSM do so at its Oriental headquarters: c/o ELTI, Hotel Wisata International, Jl. Thamrin, P.O. Box 2457 Jkt., Jakarta, Indonesia. You can send subscriptions here, cheques only.

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Nigel Pennick Interview Part Two

In this second part of the interview a wide variety of subjects are touched on including: N.P.'s lectures to academic institutes in Continental Europe on the subject of geomancy, healthy houses, the subterranean kingdom, the realm of the dead, the Hell Fire Club, a Red Indian crawling through a cave full of rattlesnakes, the disillusionment with landscape geometry, the Organic Architects Collective of Amsterdam, the myth of Watkins initial ley concept and electional astrology. And now, read on.....

QsM.: Recently you've taught a course in Switzerland, I understand you've got plans to do more courses in the Future. What have these courses been on exactly?

N.P.: Well, when I was over in Switzerland I was doing things just on geomancy in general. But I've found there is certainly a great interest in practical geomancy and actually going and doing it. Of course what is really required is quite a long course with background information. Rather like the history of the subject, the possibilities and the practice of the subject. Next week I'm in Holland at a conference of the Organic Architects Collective of Amsterdam. I'm speaking there and I'm also speaking at the university of Eindhoven where there's an alternative architecture group who are interested in the geomantic side of things. In fact, in Holland they're definitely getting into geomancy as a sort next stage from the organic architects thing because I think, it originally started off with the idea of energy efficient houses and then it got into the idea of orientation and of course orientation is important in geomancy. And, beyond that, now they're getting together a kind of co-operative of companies who'll be able to provide attested organic building materials such as wood that hasn't been treated with harmful chemicals and various other kinds of things like that. And so I think on the continent at least we're moving towards an awareness and actual practice of geomancy in its widest sense.

QsM.: I'm getting the impression that seminal ideas are coming up in this country through researchers like yourself, whereas, on the continent these ideas are being taken up and put into practice. Is that correct?

N.P.: Yes definitely. It's another one of the old British syndromes. They always say 'it was invented in Britain and applied somewhere else'. That of course is a narrow nationalistic point of view. But effectively I think what is happening is that there's a general European wide consensus. Although it seems that it tends to be Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, rather than the French speaking areas. I think France has put all its eggs in the ultra-tech. basket. France is the leading European nation in things like rocketry, aircraft and they've just opened a computerised metro system in Lille, all that kind of thing. They've got the state of the art in trolley buses now. In fact, that's interesting because at the beginning of last year I was part of a small group of people who put in competition entry for a park in Paris. Do you want me to explain that or.....

QsM.: Yeah.

N.P.: Right. Well, there was myself, Colin Murray and Adrian Fisher who designs mazes. We went in for a competition for a park on the site of the old

slaughter house complex on the 'Ar-vil-e-et' (sorry-ed!) in Paris, on a geomantic plan. This was again a westernised Chinese type thing. We were using some of the stuff here from the 'Water Dragon Classic', the principle, because of the canals running through it. And we were having certain land forms and certain geometrical forms symbolising, for example, the seven planets. A maze was designed for that and so on. But of course we didn't even get a prize. Concrete, straight lines, hi-tech and glass and that kind of stuff won it.

QsM.: There seems to be a terminological problem concerning leys. The dowers concept of a ley and Watkins definition of what a ley is. Would you like to make a few comments on this?

N.P.: We've got an even worse problem than that. We've got the ley and the ley line! And we've got other kinds of lines. The kind of hippy view of leys is that Watkins was sitting on his horse in 1921 and suddenly he had a flash of vision. You know, all good stuff, erroneously put into the folklore by John Michell and despite other people's attempts to eradicate it it's still there. Stuart Hollroy's book has got this amazing painting of Watkins sitting on his horse with all these lines laid out. It's a really nice painting but it's wrong. Anyway the big problem is.....

QsM.: What is the true story of Watkins 'vision', then?

N.P.: Well, Watkins..... you can see it in 'Early British Trackways'. I can pull the book out and find it if you like. The story is that Watkins was on his horse. Suddenly, in a flash of vision, he sees all these lines laid out in a fairy chain across the country and it's all good stuff. The reality of it is that he was out one day in his car. Which may have been steam or petrol powered, 'cause he had several cars, he was a motoring enthusiast. He was in his 60's anyway by then. The horse thing seems to be based on the fact that his business name was an outrider which is just like a commercial traveller. And indeed he did drive horses around the countryside in the 1880's. But I think it's just a misinterpretation of him being an outrider. In fact he went to Bredwardine and not, as is said, Blackwardine. Blackwardine isn't on a hill. He sort of happened to look at a few OS maps and got the idea that there might be a few straight lines of sites. And that was it. There was no big deal of him having this flash of vision.

But it goes back even more wierd than that because Watkins was actually living in Hereford in the same town where William Henry Black gave a talk about alignments in 1870. Watkins was born in 1855 and he would have been 15 when Black gave the lecture at the Green Dragon Hotel to the British Archeological Association. Black gave this quite important talk and it was covered quite widely in the local press because it was quite a big event in a small town. And he went on about Grand Geometrical Lines running about the countryside. The person who was actually the chairamn at the meeting was Dr. Bull of the Woolhope Antiquarian Society. When Watkins joined the Woolhope Club in 1888 Bull was still around. Bull chaired several meetings where there is evidence that Watkins was present. So it's quite likely that ideas were kicked about. And Watkins would have heard about Black's ideas. Even if he wasn't actually conscious that Black had had these ideas later on they may have set the seeds in his mind. But to some people who are worshippers of Watkins this is absolutely heresy.

QsM.: So the fairy chain idea is almost a pipedream, is it?

N.P.: Well, I think it's interesting that both he and Wilhelm Teudt, who did work in Germany, gave the idea of this line linking these sites. But the idea of it being anything more than trackways, which Watkins really emphasised, is very much, er, wild. Maybe Watkins did speculate on it being something else, I'm not saying that, but there's no real evidence that he connected them with energy. That really tends to be later writers.

Now Watkins is important of course because he wrote The Old Straight Track and popularised the idea. So a lot of credit has to be given to him. He worked damned hard and his photographs are absolutely brilliant. He really popularised the idea and that's why the ley hunting fraternity exists to this day. But the connection between that and the magical side of things or the energy side, seems to be a bit more obscure. There are hints in for hintance Petit Pierre, who I mentioned before. He stated that ley lines carried energy and that his mentor at Barrow-le-Marsh Seminary was (Gilbert Shaw his name was) was teaching at the time of how the druids and others used to send bursts of psychical energy along lines to blast people. Now whether this idea had been put in around Black's time or maybe it goes back further to Edward Duke who taught about the druidical monuments of Wiltshire in 1848, where he claimed there were lines running across the countryside. But, anyway, whatever the origin of that and whether it was received witchcraft or other sorts of traditions, occult, masonic traditions maybe or traditions within the Church of England - mystical Christianity perhaps - within the Order of St. Benedict, which these people were members of. Whatever the origin of that this man (Gilbert Shaw - ed.) was doing something in 1926 which was only a year after the Old Straight Track came out. So it's probable that there's some other kind of tradition in there.

Now Dion Fortune was writing about this kind of stuff in the 1930's. Mid 30's 1935, something like that. I think it's in 'The Goat Foot God' that she actually mentions Avebury being connected by lines to other places and people using them for magical powers. There's a part where they travel along a line and find some sort of site in one of her novels. Anyway, then Arthur Lawton in 1938 put forward the idea of these kind of things carrying energy and also several dowsers round about the same period were discussing it. People like Francios Perre in France and others thought there were earth energies. That was the time when Underwood got into it too.

QsM.: At present it all gets rather confusing as the dowsers and the classical Watkins ley hunters are talking about 2 different things.

N.P.: That's absolutely right. Watkins claimed there were straight lines running between sites and that they had been trackways and so there were pieces of road along them. And, that the sacred sites that exist now were ones which had been put there in antiquity. Whereas, the other people who call them ley lines (of course Watkins never called them ley lines, they were always called leys) seem to have picked up on this idea. I think it probably comes from Lawton and other people in the 1950's and 1960's who connected leys with orthotonies, these supposed lines along which UFO's were alleged to fly: Amé Michell in 1954. So, in the late 1960's when the present ley hunting fraternity was getting off the ground in a big way, or on the ground in a big way all these ideas were extremely mixed up. Then you get people like

Colin Bloy talking about telluric lines. And you get the Germans talking about 'gissenets' and grids on the ground and Saboch Harderlich and his earth grids so there's this absolute mix up of ideas now; The Fountain Project in Brighton claiming to create big grids across the country and so on. So really it's got so mixed up that what's needed is a completely new terminology. But of course they're not going to do it because there's no overall authority, which is great! The fact that there isn't someone who says, "This is orthodoxy, this is isn't orthodoxy. We're the boss and you're out on your ear unless you toe the-line." Because there isn't that kind of thing, the whole lot gets mixed up.

I was on the radio the other day. They took me down the Hell Fire Caves at West Wickham and they were talking about energies underground and all this kind of stuff. And they even mentioned ley lines as if they were energies. So, I think in the general consensus of people who don't know much about it they think that ley lines are energy now.

QsM.: How does your work on the Subteranean Kingdom fit in with EM and Geomancy?

N.P.: Well again we're getting back to the old Etruscan thing again. The idea that you've got a link between the underworld and the upperworld. They have the central point to which the roads from the north, south, east and west come and then you've got this underworld thing, the 'mundus', which is blocked by a stone but represents the Realm of the Dead. So you have a link between the underworld and the upperworld at the cosmic axis. And a lot of initiation rites in antiquity were done in caves. You put someone down this cave and they had to go through it and were generally terrorised in it. Infact the Red Indian holy man who has a great following, Swift Deer, he gives seminars in various parts of Europe, he is supposed to have been through a cave full of rattlesnakes in about 1970 to be initiated.

QsM.: What's the symbolic significance of a cave then?

N.P.: There are various ones like the descent into the earth and coming up again. There's the death and rebirth thing like the third degree in masonry. In the Christian myth of Christ dying and coming up again from the grave at the centre of the world. Then of course you're cut off from all the other aspects like all the radiation which is outside. You're cut off from solar radiation. And if you're underground for any length of time you are not aware of day or night, you're not aware of the seasons because caves are usually at constant temperatures. If you're in the dark you begin to see hallucinations. You begin to feel presences that are there. You're very aware of any kind of fields or anything which impinges upon the body, psychical, electrostatic or whatever. And you're actually in the body of the earth and so on you are removed from the realm of the everyday. And I think that that's what the key to it is.

QsM.: So you're out of time, space and general usual context. So what were you doing talking to the BBC in the caves of the Hell Fire Club then?

N.P.: The BBC put on a 4 part programme about underground Britain. And as I'd written the book 'The Subterranean Kingdom' they got me to talk about the mystical and legendary aspects of tunnels. They'd been crawling around in a

sewer underneath Oxford and they'd been down a coal mine and a tin mine in Cornwall. And I was the right person to do the mystical aspect. I was talking about initiation and this kind of stuff and the legends of people going underground and not coming up again, the blind fiddlers and that kind of thing. This was generally the mythos of the subterranean world. This is something which is very little known. In fact they did cut out, because of time I suppose, the haunted underground station in London which I was talking about. But then that doesn't really tie in with the mythos of the underworld that I was talking to them about in that respect.

QsM.: I see, yeah. In your 'Subterranean Kingdom' do you go outside of the mystical?

N.P.: Yes, well the 'Subterranean Kingdom' is concerned with every aspect of British Subterranea from ancient mines such as Grimmes Caves through to the underground dwellings such as the ones they had in Nottingham. Nottingham's interesting because its original name was 'Tig-na-ukabalk', that's a mouthful isn't it? which means the house of caves. The sandstone there is absolutely great for digging into. One of the geomantic things associated with the caves was St. Annes well at Smenton which had the turf labyrinth, it had a holy well dedicated to St. Anne and a Benedictine hermitage was cut into the rock. so it the real nexus of everything. The whole area was dev stated. It was ploughed up in the enclosures and now the only remains of it is the Robin Hood's ace garage, which is the site where the well was. So that's the ultimate in modernisation and spectacle.

But the 'Subterranean Kingdom' brings things right the way through to bunkers in London and the construction of obscure structures for wartime purposes and all thst. And also the mysteries of Elusius and the oracles of the dead and so on. Also really wierd things like chalk mines that suddenly opened up underneath people's lavatories and things like that.

QsM.: One of your early books was on terrestrial zodiacs. How do you think these things came into being? Do you think they were of conscious intent or were they subconscious structures?

N.P.: I think it reminds me of the science fiction story I once read where they had linked up every computer in the univrese. And they asked it a question, "Is there a God?" and there was a big buzz and all the switches welded themselves in an on position and it said, "There is now!" And I think terrestrial zodiacs are there now because they have been recognised to exist. There have been some body blows to ancient terrestrial zodiacs made in recent years such as an article which was I think in 'Current Archeology' a couple of years ago which went to Glastonbury. It pointed out that quite a lot of the parts of it there were of relatively modern date, say late/post medieval. So it appears that these kind of things are taking on some kind of form. Now whether it is a phenomena such as something we recognise and therefore it takes on that form, like the the labyrinth at Glastonbury for example. This didn't exist until 1968 when it was recognised and now people actually walk around it. I was talking to somebody who went

around it last week and she said, "Oh! I went to the Glastonbury labyrinth." And I said, "Well, you know there isn't really a labyrinth there or not an ancient one at that." She said, "Oh! yes there is one there now." I said, "Yes there's one there [^]now, yes." But I think zodiacs are like that. I used to take the point that they were ancient of origin but I don't think that's a tenable position now in terms of recorded information. So you've either got to dismiss them all as somebody's hairbrain looney scheme, which I don't because there's more to them than that. Or as some kind of manifestation which is beyond the ordinary realms of a materialist interpretation of history.

QsM.: So one of the things you're saying is that they are there because they are perceived to be there. Would that put them in the Rohrschach inkblot position, then?

N.P.: Well, it's interesting that you mention that because in a book that Bob Forest and Patrick Moore were working on which never came out, they invited me to write about terrestrial zodiacs and they mentioned the Rohrschach test. I said, "Nobody ever got all the signs of the zodiac out of the Rohrschach inkblot!" Well, it's symmetrical for a start. (laughter). But that aside I think it's more complicated than that. We may be dealing with other levels of reality which can't be defined in those terms. It's very well to recognise it as such and the old simulcra idea that you notice something. There used to be an amazing lions head on the side of a sandbin on the A604 main road into Cambridge. It was quite amazing. It was a beautiful head of a lion, a mane and everything. And that was just rust that had gone into that shape. When I did go to photograph it they'd demolished it, so no one will ever believe me now. But that is a recognised thing. We do get this kind of thing occurring where someone will see the face of Christ appear in the stains on a wall in a church. Then everybody goes and offers to it and so on. I think that with Mike Collier's elephant ('The Sussex Elephant' published by the author, 83, Montpelier Road, Brighton, England,) where that trunk actually formed and all that kind of stuff is just so amazingly wierd that it has to be interpreted in an entirely different way. To put it as the Sumerians turning up in 2700 BC and actually getting their plans out and doing it is just not tenable on several levels.

QsM.: At present you're running the 'Society for Symbolic Studies'. In what way does this relate to your interest in geomancy?

N.P.: Well, I formerly operated The Institute of Geomantic Research. That was founded in 1975, by several people but unfortunately right at the beginning several people dropped out of it who'd actually been founder members. It developed in a way which was somewhat like it should have been but lacking the funding that it should have really needed. We got a lot of good stuff out such as the German geomantic material in English translation and a lot of very interesting material. I think we did great value there in bringing this material to public attention. We were hammered very hard by several factors, namely the great inflation in printing prices which occurred in the late 1970's and we were finally knocked out as unemployment rose and various subs dropped off and so on, postal increases. I eventually wound it up

in 1983 because it was no longer performing any useful function in that respect and things had gone on beyond the geomantic side. It had got more into the symbolic type of thing in any case. So I founded the Society for Symbolic Studies at the beginning of this year in order to further the whole thing. I mean, we'd been carrying stuff on tavernology for instance, which is concerned with the names of pubs and what the symbolic side of it is. We're doing work on the Old Mother Red Cap thing which is concerned with this traditional name of witches, Old Mother Red Cap, and you see it in different places, and what the actual significance of this was, and what the red cap was and what it looked like and all that sort of thing. The next issue of The Symbol, which is our magazine, we've got an article about a dog which was buried in 1898 under the stables in a pub as a foundation sacrifice, or at least as a propitiation of geomantic energies at that point. And so we're covering a wider sort of catchment area than we did with just geomancy. I think since the mid-70's there's been something of a disillusionment with landscape geometry.

In the early '70s people were interested in leys and landscape geometry. They were really doing this stuff. I mean, John Merron and his people are still doing that sort of material. But in general there isn't the interest that there was. This largely came out of John Michell's book 'The City of Revelation' which had the whole thing connected with Goring-on-Thames and White Leaved Oak and all that and I think also some of the work we published by Kurt Gerlach and that. In the early to mid '70's landscape geometry was a big thing and we published quite a bit of stuff: Michael Behrend's work on Landscape geometry in Southern Britain, which was very equivocal in its actual results. Then there quite a few people doing this and that but it tended to die out. And I don't know what the actual reason for this was. Whether it was the fact that certain things such as the St. Michael's alignment had been disproved conclusively by Michael Behrend or whether it was the fact that the statisticians, the people such as Bob Forest had come into the field and we'd published them, we'd been very open minded as far as that was concerned. We'd put contrary articles as well in the Journal of Geomancy. Maybe that undermined of kind of belief in the whole thing. And there's very little of it happening now. And it seems, that ley hunting itself again has kind of died back in that respect. I don't think that there's as much coming out now as there was in the early '70's. It may relate in some way to the publication of books. Perhaps when the Earth Mysteries Book comes out, the one Paul Devereux and I have done, maybe that'll stir things up again. Maybe if someone on tv does a programme on leys or something like that it'll stir it up. But probably the interest was generated by people like John Michell, Janet and Colin Bord and maybe Francis Hitching as well. Now, however good or bad their work actually was in terms of accuracy or in terms of authenticity, it stirred up a lot of interest. And maybe it's faded away. Also, 'The Unexplained' is not being published anymore and that has had its effect. This is related to spectacle of course.

QsM.: Yeah, Finally what shape do you think the EM movement is in at the present time?

N.P.: I think that in this country, like everything else, it's suffering from a lack of money. I think that the times are pretty hard. And that because

it's alternative in the best sense of the word, there are liable to be a lot of people in it who are not 'well to do', who are not in good jobs or any jobs at all. There are people who are finding it hard to survive and so the first thing that goes is the subscription to a magazine. And magazines tend to be the nexus, the concentration, the focal point of this sort of research or of the groups. I mean as far as groups are concerned there is a great degree of interest. The Northern Earth Mysteries Group for example or the London Earth Mysteries people. In Cambridgeshire we have the Cambridgeshire Ancient Mysteries Group which is infact at the present moment investigating foundation stones of buildings such as the colleges in the universties with regard to electional astrology. Patrick McFagan and Mark Shakespeare who are working on it, they have definitely got some really good stuff together.

QsM.: What is electional astrology?

N.P.: Yes, well electional astrology is, um, well let me start again... I got interested in electional astrology when I saw a picture, a photocopy, of the horoscope of the Royal Observatory at Greenwich, which was drawn up by John Flamstead, the astrologer Royal in 1675. And he actually drew up the precise moment of the foundation stone placement. Now again, this about 4 or 5 years ago that I saw this. Now in both Chinese geomancy and in Vastu Videa, the Hindu-Indian geomancy, um, we have the foundation of a building as being very important. And the time of the foundation being related to obviously its future. You know just as the birthdate of a person produces a, er, whatever effect in them. You can elect to lay the foundation stone of a building at a specific time in order to achieve these effects. And that's where the electional part of astrology comes in. And you elect to found it at that point. Now electional astrology is not a very well known thing. I'm not an astrologer myself. I know a little bit of course but I haven't got all the Ephemeris and everything. And I haven't got the time to work it out either. But astrologer friends of mine have done various things. Prudence Jones, for instance, used electional astrology to found the...well, she was asked to use electional astrology for the foundation date of the Greenwave Magazine which is an alternative magzine in this area. And it's been doing very well 'cause she actually elected the appropriate time for it. Other people are starting to do that in this area, to do things at a specific time because it's an electionally good time. Consequently the investigation is going on into these kind of things and also now the investigation amongst astrologers is looking at the whole of the city of Cambridge and the good and bad periods it will be expected to go through, the different parts of the city, the foundation of say the church at Arbury which is an incredibly wierd bit of foundation. There's obviously a very long tradition of it but nobody has investigated it. They'll be something coming out on it at sometime probably in some major astrological journal. For instance, there was a wierd thing that occured at a school in Cambridge. The Bishop of Ely in 1980 came along and laid a foundation stone on a brick wall that had been put there specially for the purpose. He came along on a certain date, laid the stone, pictures taken and everything, then they all went away, knocked the wall down and took the stone away! Now the only reason for that can be, well, ludicrous spectacle for no good reason and in any case they would have done it at the time they were building the building, or, electional astrology. There's no other explanation for it, it's totally bizarre. And that was another thing that triggered us into the whole realm of this aspect of things.

QsM: The story that you just related hints at some kind of occult conspiracy in the Church of England.

N.P.: Well, there is the great interesting masonic connection within the church. Certain places having it and perhaps others not. For instance, Peterborough Cathedral, if you go there and walk about the outside you see at the NE corner, of course - important position in masonic terms - there is a square block with a square and compasses on it and there letters for the number 1923. Now whether that 1,923, which means the father and the spirit in gematria, or whether it actually means the date 1923, I don't know. If you go inside there's a plaque in Victorian brass and it states how the tower was broken down in 1882 and reconstructed and how it was reconsecrated by the Earl of Caernarvon acting on behalf of the Worshipful Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of Britain, the Prince of Wales and how it was reconstructed according to full masonic form. The Freemasons were knocking about in Truro in Cornwall in 1880. There was a masonic foundation stone put in and the Freemasons were involved with the construction of Guildford cathedral in the 1930's to the 1960's. And there's lots of that kind of stuff. So there's definitely a masonic tradition there which obviously, if there's any kind of electional astrology, it goes back at least to the 17th century because people like Flamsteed and Sir Christopher Wren and all those bods who were in the kind of, the OK circle of King Charles II, were into this type of thing. So it may be a continuous tradition since then or maybe earlier.

QsM: Fascinating. To finish then, I'd like to ask you about your publishing plans at present.

N.P.: I'm still continuing to bring 'The Symbol' out against all odds, but it's coming out as regularly as it will allow. There's no plans for that to close down. I've just started up 'Runestaff Crafts' which makes things, geomantic objects and pieces like the mirrors. We've had a mirror put on the outside of a building and it deflected a road by that means, well, that's what I'm saying anyway. Runestaff Publications which are going to start coming out very soon, starting with one on labyrinths: their geomancy and symbolism. This covers the whole geometric and symbolic side of labyrinths. Also I'm planning to produce several others in that series. One will be on the kind of mysteries and geomantic connections of traditional board games, such as Nine Mens Morris and Tablet and other kind of games like that. And in addition, I shall be producing something very soon on natural measure which is the Ancient Measure of Britain, the natural foot and the relationship between capacity and length and various geomantic things. Of course next year there's plans for the 'Earth Mysteries' book to come out. Also I've written a small book on practical geomancy for somebody in Germany and I hope that will be out sometime next year. But that will be in German translation.

QsM: It's not coming out in English, is it?

N.P.: I hope somebody will take it up but that depends really. It depends on how it goes there.

QsM: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

N.P.: Oh yes, I think that geomancy is really coming into its own now after so many years of research from various people. We're getting to a point where it's coming to be recognised as something which has got validity. Especially on the continent with organic architects and other people who are that way inclined. People have come to it from the other end. They've come to it from solar architecture, from the orientation of houses to make them energy efficient and the realisation that symbols and the construction of buildings has got a psychological effect on people who live within it. And the whole idea of organic architecture as now practiced. The idea of the healthy house and this kind of thing will eventually merge with a new geomancy which takes into account such as, the ancient practices of northern Europe, the Ancient Practices of the Americas, the ancient practices of China, the Hindu systems and all those. The common features of all these will be merged together to form a completely new geomancy which will eventually at least take its place as something which is done, practised, which of course at the present moment it isn't.

QSM.: Thank you very much.



Chris Ashton (photo)

NIGEL PENNICK.

LETTERS from John Michell, London.

Dear Chris,

In the preamble to your interview with Nigel Pennick you do him an injustice by saying that he was responsible for republishing Ernest Eitel's classic 'Feng Shui'. In fact the edition of 1973, exactly a hundred years after its first publication, was designed, printed and published by John Nicolson at the Cochaygne press, Cambridge, from the first edition which I found in the erudite Bob Gilbert's Wise Owl bookshop in Bristol. I wrote the Forward to it and published another edition of it in 1979. That quickly sold out and the book was brought back into print in 1984 by Synergetic Press of London with my new Forward, an Afterword, bibliography etc. They also sold out and are now reprinting. Meanwhile there has been a German edition and another printed in Singapore for distribution in the Far East where, interestingly enough, the book has been very popular. →

(continued p. 20)

Strange, but True...

The following cuttings are all taken from the incomparable JAKARTA POST and constitute a new intermittent series. Contributions welcomed.

Huge, flesh eating catfish

MACON, France (AFP): Residents along many of the rivers in this east-central region have declared war on a new East European invader: a huge, flesh-eating breed of catfish which is devouring bream, pike, carp, tench, crayfish, fresh-water mussels and even waterfowl and ducklings.

This ugly, stout-bodied, large-headed species of catfish is said to measure up to two meters (6.6 feet) in length and to weigh up to 60 kilograms (132 pounds).

The fishes' size has been attributed partly to their eating habits, which are playing havoc with residents' normal fishing and hunting activities.

Some fish stories — for example, the unverified rumor that the catfish have even attacked children —

have spread a veritable piranha panic or "jaws" fear about bathing.

There are the tales about fishermen's boats being picked up off the water by giant fish on the River Saone, and about divers inspecting bridge structures scared off by huge, dark shapes.

Her bed crashes when men fail

ANNAPOLIS, Maryland (AFP): A woman racing down a hill here on a wheel bed to raise money for muscular dystrophy patients was paralyzed after her bed crashed into an electric light pole, police said Monday.

Mrs. Carolyn Pike, 38, crashed at a bend in this city's steepest street when men pushing the bed lost control of it.

Giant, red Chinese salmon

PEKING (UPI): Chinese scientists have identified a group of 10-meter-long (33-ft.) red fish in a remote lake in northwestern China as the biggest species of salmon ever discovered, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Numerous local legends are associated with the "monsters" of Lake Hanas in China's far west Xinjiang autonomous region. One old Mongolian resident spoke of seeing a "lot of big fish" in the lake in the 1930s, not long before a major earthquake hit the area, Xinhua said.

A massive earthquake that killed 80 people rocked the province last month, a few weeks after scientists first reported sighting the huge fish which they mistook for boats and a mass of seaweed.

Sept. 2, 1985

FV6

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Freak heat, weird freeze

BEIJING (UPI): Scientists are studying a strip of land in northeast China where temperatures plunge below freezing in summer and soar to balmy warmth in winter, the official China Daily newspaper said Wednesday.

The "bizarre spot" lies along a narrow stretch of land 1,000 meters (yards) long and 15 meters (yards) wide running down from a hill to a river in Huanre county in China's northeast Liaoning province, the paper said.

"In winter, when the temperature around about drops to 36 degrees centigrade below zero, the strip is 17 degrees above zero," the paper said.

"In summer the reverse occurs. Then the rain hits the ground and immediately turns to ice. The ground freezes to a meter (yard) below the surface."

10 Sept 1985

Sport:

Female teachers cheated

JAKARTA (JP): Two female teachers have lost money and jewelry valued at about Rp 1 million after befriending a public transport passenger who they later suspected to be a sorcerer.

Mrs. Titi Sitianah and Saryati from Tunas Harapan kindergarten school in Cijantung, East Jakarta, were on their way to the East Jakarta mayor's office on Jl. Jatinegara Timur, Monday morning when an unidentified man flagged the public transport vehicle they were in down.

The man reportedly shook hands with them and read their palms the moment he got into the automobile on Jl. Dewi Sartika. Soon they got involved in an apparently very friendly conversation during which time the women believe the man

cast a magic spell on them the daily Merdeka reported Wednesday.

The newspaper said the man then asked the ladies for their money and jewelry and they immediately gave them to him. It was reported that the alleged sorcerer subsequently asked them if they had given him their belongings willingly and they said they had.

A few minutes later the man got out of the vehicle. The two ladies said they were not aware of what had happened to them before the driver of the illegal public transport vehicle they had been using asked them to get off somewhere in Cawang — only half way to their destination.

The lady teachers reported to a nearby police precinct.

15 Jan 1986

EUROPEAN LEY-LINES and ORIENTAL DRAGON LINES:

SOME THOUGHTS. by COLIN BLOY.

Chinese Geomancy or Feng-Shui is a complex affair and for all the scholarship of Western interpreters like Stephen Skinner, or Stephen Feuchtwang: An Anthropological Analysis of Chinese Geomancy - Ventiane, Laos, I am not sure if we have really penetrated it in a way which would permit a Westerner to perform as a dragon-man - for earth energy is the dragon for them. What is certain, however, is that the majority of the Chinese landscape and urbanisation has been developed according to a complex system of criteria relating to earth and sky energies publicly unrecognised in the West.

Vocabulary and imagery are divisive. Frithof Capra showed how the Dance of Shiva may be seen as the ^{scientific} motion of the electrons of an atom around its nucleus. Yet it has been a Western/convention for hundreds of years that if a concept is not expressed in Greek or Latin neologisms it cannot be valid. That is not a plea for a Gadarene flight into the subtle imagery of Eastern philosophical and religious systems but simply to point out that Western modes of expression have no particular monopoly of truth.

In pre-Marxist China, for several thousand years past, to construct anything without consulting the Feng-Shui master was the height of folly. In Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore they have always been accepted and consulted; and in post-Mao China, they have surfaced again.

Whereas the Feng-Shui master operates with a compass with a complex scale around it, which tells him many things on an astrological, geographical and meteorological basis, and he describes the energies he is looking for or seeking to avoid in terms familiar to the ley-line fraternity in Europe, he does not apparently dowse for these energies but works out where they are by topographical observation and basic common sense. Indeed, where the dragon, a particular hill formation, lies down with the tiger, another, the Feng-Shui is good - combined with meandering rivers and undulating hills. "Secret Arrows", like straight avenues, railway lines, highways, straight escarpments, or a line of projecting hills or even buildings are to be avoided, as these drain away the good "chi" too quickly.

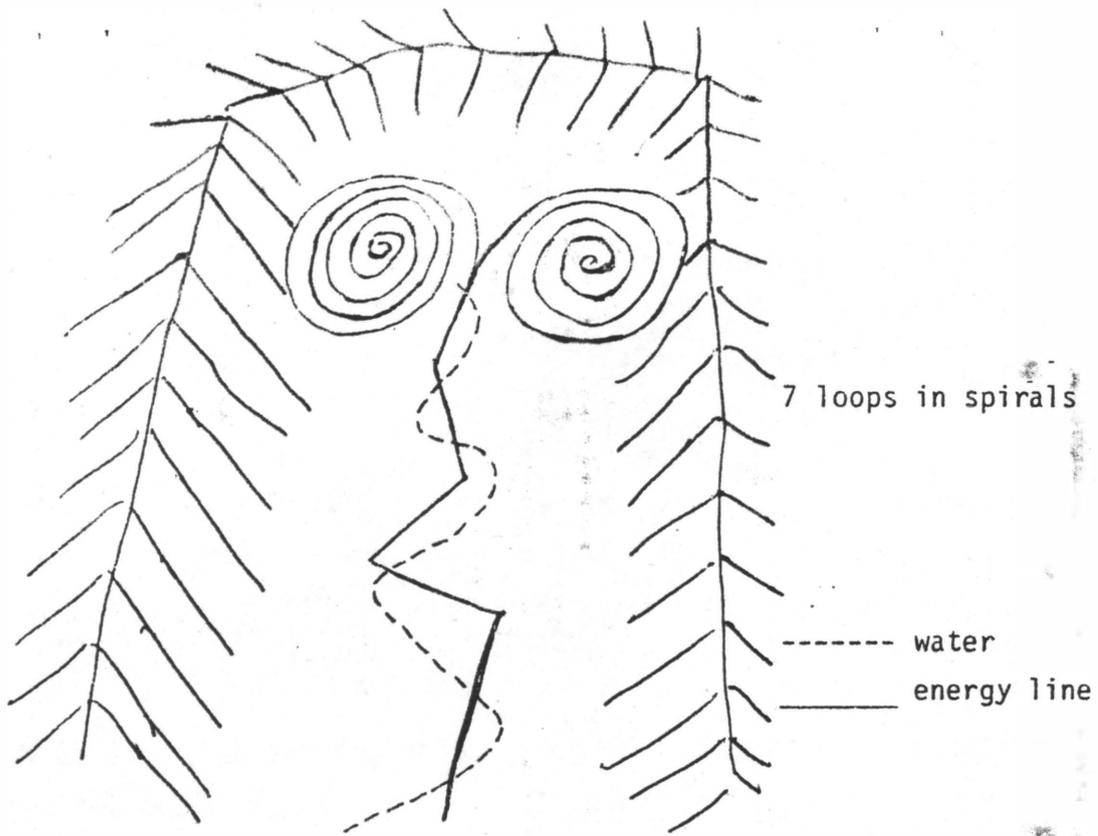
The perfect site, or dragon's lair, is, says Skinner, like the description of a blind spring. (He does not mention Guy Underwood or his seminal work "The Pattern of the Past"- but it was Underwood who spoke at length about the dowsing of blind springs at sacred sites - a seven-looped spiral). Skinner "It is logical to postulate that here the dragon is, of course, in his lair, because it is from here that the water (i.e. the dragon) emanates before crossing the land as a stream, or being evaporated, to form dragon clouds. Water courses are the most obvious flow lines of "chi" and a curved and tortuous course is the best existence of "chi" concentrations".

T. Edkins writing in 1872 said that the dragon may be traced to its source. It is observable in the flow of the mountain stream or in the contour of the earth. The hollow river bed, and the variety of hill and valley are caused by the dragon. Trace the water of a valley to its source. That is the point from which commences the influence that controls human destiny Since the dragon gives prosperity it is important to consider the position of the water"

Elsewhere Skinner says "In some ways the organic lines are as typical of Chinese civilisation as rectangular Cartesian lines are the hallmark of Western civilisation. Basic to the nature of dragon lines and Chinese civilisation generally is the curve as opposed to the straight line which expresses itself not only in Western architecture, but also in the ley-lines which have been often suggested are the European equivalent of dragon lines. They are, in fact, diametrically opposed. Straight lines, as we have seen, are anathema in Feng-Shui for they generate "cha" and secret arrows ..."

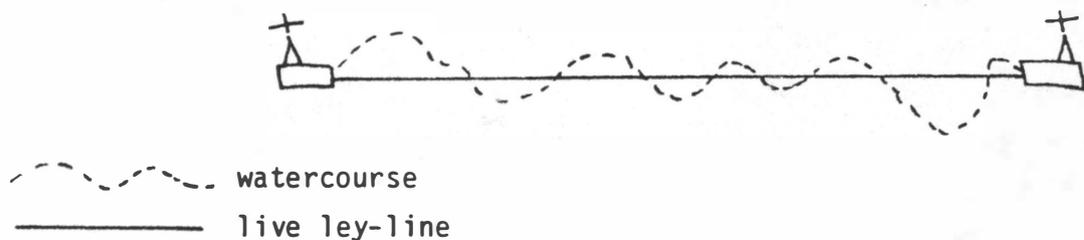
As said above, Chinese geomancers do not ^{apparently} dowse, and this may be the reason for the erroneous conclusion suggested by Skinner.

I have followed with the rod the "chi" of the dragon up water courses to the head of the valley in the Pyrenees on many occasions. Whereas the water-course is sinuous, the energy is effectively straight, dodging in dog-legs from rock to rock, on either side of the stream and have found the dragon - he looks like this



If you follow Guy Underwood's work, as a dowser, there is an important thing to remember, Guy Underwood was only looking for underground water - the fact that he did not find overground energy lines may be explained by the fact that he was simply not aware of them and dowsers do not generally find what they are not looking for.

However, if you do dowse a Guy Underwood type site you will find the meandering, sinuous underground water course, but if you "think" ley-lines, you will find that overlaying the dragon is the straight line, through its median as in the stream from the head of a valley, viz.



In an earlier issue of the Journal of the British Society of Dowsers, I suggested that underground water may not have been determining in the choice of sacred sites but the result of choosing them, viz. Lourdes and Guadalupe in Mexico - the springs burst forth after the apparitions, Moses summoned the water.

What appears inseparable, is the relationship between flowing water, both underground and overground, and certain states of human consciousness. "Stalking the Wild Pendulum" by Istvak Bentov suggests how the focus of human consciousness on a particular site makes it sacred and phenomena thus result of "religious" nature.

Curious that the dragon is a common feature of Western and Eastern geomantic lore and no dragon bones have yet been found. Thus it may be, in a Jungian sense an important archetype to humanity generally, and I always feel that the idea represented by St. Michael or St. George killing the dragon, and God knows how many such dragon deaths are preserved in European legend, is not so much some form of mediaeval elimination of predators, but the organising of the "chi" or ley energy out of its primal spirals, down the valley and into constructive co-operation with evolving mankind, by using the spear or lance of higher consciousness.

The alternative image of the dragon being base chakra consciousness taking up the spine as the Kundalini to bring nirvana or total awareness is also relevant; it appears in alchemical symbology for similar reasons - the transmutation of the spirit .

It may be observed, and one^{of} the [^]raison d'êtres of the fast multiplying Fountain Groups around the world, that hyper-states of consciousness applied through meditative techniques, visualisation and projection have a discernible effect on the ley lines, and that if the mixture is right, the effect is beneficial for the community. Thus the dragon is killed with the spear.

Why is it then, that straight lines are anathema to Chinese geomancy, as interpreted by Western commentators.

I would advance the hypothesis that it is all to do with the evolution of consciousness. Now, much play has been made with the concept of Western individual ego-consciousness, as opposed to Oriental patience and submission. Indeed, the philosophical crisis in Western evolution may be seen in what was called in France, at the end of the 19th century "Le mal de fin de siècle" - "End of the century disease" and many authors and poets spoke in depressing /

/ terms of plunging into the abyss in their search for the absolute, their word for nirvana. (Baudelaire, Gerard de Nerval, Mallarmé, Valéry et al).

As far as I am concerned, it is a basic tenet of life that humanity is a unity. We are all going the same way, in the same boat, at the same time - but that doesn't mean to say we are all the same in terms of consciousness. Nor does it necessarily pre-suppose that one particular state is better than another. What does, however, seem apparent is that Western man has evolved further from tribal consciousness into ego-consciousness than Oriental man. This is not a moral comment. The fact that Japanese only travel in groups, and that you never meet or do business with one Japanese alone, is not necessarily without relevance. The whole organisation of Japan is collective, in consciousness terms, without being dialectically materialist in philosophical terms. Thus it is in China. Patience and submission to events in favour of longer term issues transcending individual lives.

Western ego-consciousness and subsequent disillusion gave rise to the age of reason, and the materialist ethic, plus the idea you've got to make it in this life-time. In science, medicine, philosophy, the arts, many individual names from the West, as original thinkers, are enshrined in the various halls of fame. Not so with Orientals, yet their collective application to technology is awesome - and we are just seeing the beginning of the Chinese application - give China another 30 years.

Frederick Bligh Bond the excavator of Glastonbury speaks cogently in his book "The Company of Avalon" of "the great return" that is to say the voluntary and aware submission of Western egocentricity to the collective consciousness as a virtually religious act and "The New Age" awareness is part of that process.

What has this to do with straight and sinuous energy lines?

sadly
It is/very true that the worst excesses of Western town planning exist in the U.S.A. where a grid-based town is simply socked into the landscape. Most U.K. new towns are very like that. Great psychological disorientation is a result.

Strangely enough, one of the most beautiful man-made cities, (not San Francisco, that is a city born of its hills, where man has submitted) is in the U.S.A., namely Washington, designed by, for, and with comprehending Masons. Yet it is based on straight lines - but not grid-lines - radiating lines and low rise buildings.

Adolf Hitler, see Nigel Pennick "The Secret Sciences of Adolf Hitler - Neville Spearman" understood how energy and town planning worked. Albert Speer records it well in his memoirs, with extraordinary photographs of the models for the New Berlin. What matters is how you use it and what's at the centre.

What I am, in fact, trying to suggest, is that Chinese Geomancy is, perhaps sentimentally, rooted in the past, and it is certainly a deliberate attempt to maintain a form of collective consciousness in being, which prevents ego developments in a Rousseau-like way. That may be good, bad or neutral. I make no attempt to judge it - but the maintenance of traditional forms in complete harmony with naturally occurring earth energies should certainly achieve that. That may to some be a form of responsible guardianship. One cannot quarrel with it. And the fear of the straight line may be to do with the break-out of the ego. I would nonetheless venture to suggest that as well as conducting good "chi" out, a well constructed avenue, and they certainly existed at Imperial level in China, can equally conduct good "chi" in.

The emergence of the straight line occurs when man starts to separate himself from nature, when his consciousness is no longer totally related to the water veins of the earth but the emerging ley lines. They do seem inseparable from emerging consciousness. It will be interesting to dowse China shortly "in situ" but I suspect the fear of the straight line is the fear of ego-consciousness, and all the agonies and glories that has wrought for the Western World. It is perhaps arguable that for ego-consciousness to emerge, pass through its spiritual transmutation and go forward to its voluntary re-submission in an act of pure conscious love, is a process we are involved in, willy-nilly.

Some may say the Oriental has already been through it. I am not sure about that, but I am sure that Western man is now going through it, and has got to go through it and make the " Great Return" if this planet is to survive, and I do offer the thought that Chinese geomancers abhorrence of the straight energy line is more to do with the repugnance of individual ego consciousness rather than its intrinsic "badness". The fact remains that overground subtle energy-lines are straight and the question is as to whether a civilisation harmonises itself with underground subconscious sinuosity or overground straight-line ego consciousness.

The continuing focus of consciousness on sites important to man, be they religious or secular, sacred or profane, creates the straight energy-line; thus a T.V. transmitter can exhibit the same energy lines as a standing stone - but it is evidence of a moving away from that harmony with the earth that is the quintessence of natural man. I am quite sure we must return to it, when we have surmounted our straight line phase and get both working together - not for reasons for sentimental nostalgia for a lost millenium but through a conscious understanding of how ego may be transmuted alchemically into conscious love, and made the basis for a future millenium. The intermediate phrase is fraught with danger, as the legend of Atlantis instructs us, but the eventual outcome, if we make it, is a consummation devoutly to be risked.

LETTER: continued from p. 12.

Nigel is recognized as the most prolific and knowledgeable modern writer on feng shui and geomancy. The volume and quality of publications he has put out is quite amazing, and admirable. It is therefore unfair of you to confuse his record by attributing to him works in which he had no part. Nor is it fair to Cokaygne, who were also the first to publish Nigel's geomancy writings following their pioneering success with 'Feng Shui.'

As ever, John Michell.

Reply: Apologies all round. I stand corrected. But bear with me on this point: when you don't have your reference books on hand you can't check up on all the details like that. So if anyone does spot errors like the one John clarifies we'd be very glad to hear about it. Thanks.

BOOK REVIEW.

'A layman's guide to feng shui - Chinese Geomancy'
by Evelyn Lip, 1984, Times Books International, Singapore. 124pgs.

The author of this book is a Master of Architecture and senior lecturer at the National University of Singapore. She began to take an interest in feng shui after coming upon instances of building plans being sent back to the architect for modification on the instructions of 'professors of geomancy'. Her study of the subject appears to be quite wide. During research she consulted ancient Chinese texts and interviewed the 'professors of geomancy' i.e. feng shui practitioners.

The result is an informative up to date text which contains many examples of this ancient tradition being practiced in the ultra-modern cities of Singapore (especially) and Hong Kong as well as in Taiwan and Malasia. The product is rather like a small coffee table book with an excellent set of illustrations to which the text really acts as a commentary. Herein lies both its strength and weakness: at times the text reads like an abridged version made for popular consumption. But, to be quite fair the claim is not made that the book is anything more than 'a layman's guide'. The author tends to list information and you're sometimes given the impression that you're looking at someone's set of research notes that have been slightly expanded into proper sentences.

The author is Chinese and is not a feng shui mystic by any means. She attempts to give an objective view of the subject without being too harsh or too enthusiastic. She has a useful perception being from within the Chinese culture but also having the academic tool of objective analysis. She makes two lists of the practical application of feng shui, indicating and analysing their sources: one is practical and logical, the other is mystical.

Some interesting instances of feng shui's modern practice are given: "Choosing a location and an auspicious opening date for business premises through a feng shui expert is practically mandatory in Hong Kong. The 'New Nation' of 19 July 1978 reported an interesting incident. It appears that Chase Asia Ltd., Chase Manhattan's merchant bank in Hong Kong, lost four big business deals in a row. As a result an expert on feng shui was consulted. Business has improved tremendously since the implementation of feng shui remedial actions." (p. 101)

A comment she makes puts me in mind of something Paul Devereux said in his Quicksilver Interview (QSM 7). He was referring to dowzers on the Dragon Project when he said that they often contradict each other. Lip says something similar, "Very often two professors of geomancy give different interpretations of a particular site or building at the same time."

Though not the last word in English on feng shui by any means one gets the impression that there's a lot more detail where this book came from. Recommended.

C.A.