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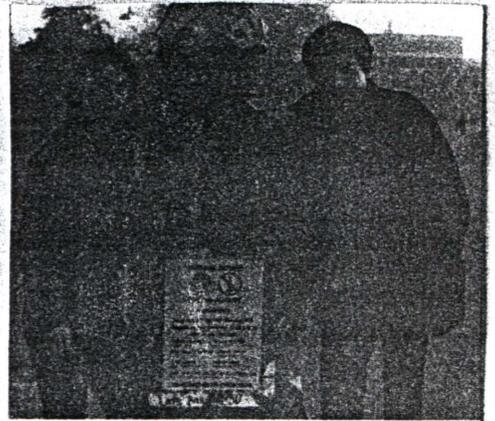
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# THE SHAMAN

No. 4  
1984



LEY-LINE  
DETRACTORS  
IN  
QUESTION

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THE

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SHAMANI

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LEAD-IN.

O.K. so this is not the issue promised in No. 3. The John Michell special is in hand and will appear during 1984. There are many causes for this change, not least being the publication of LEY-LINES IN QUESTION, by Tom Williamson and Liz Bellamy. For topicality much of this issue specifically deals with this book. The authors were invited to submit an article on their aims and this appears along with reviews by Anthony Roberts and myself. Also before it is forgotten I discuss the ley connection and "Coronation Street". Consequently the reviews section is truncated this issue, but everything submitted will be reviewed eventually.



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THE PIPES OF P.A.N. Magazine of Pagans Against Nukes, an organisation seeking banishment of nuclear technology and creation of harmony; co-ordinating pagans in political and magical work for Gaia. New Age eco-pagan sentiments and political activism.

John Cooper Clark has a poem called "You Won't See Nipples in The Daily Express". However, if you do want to find them they can be found in this magazine. For instance No. 11, has a naked moon goddess on the cover -- nipples and all. Page 3, like another organ, has three breasts depicted plus naked Pan (he's also on page 2); page 8 has a naked girl playing an instrument and there's a knobbly-kneed Viking on page 13 to show it's not chauvinistic. No. 13. Page 2 has a naked girl -- breasts, navel and pubic hair, to boot. For the lady readers' titilation page 6 has Pan with impressively endowed genitalia, though drooping. Plus Fellowship of Isis, meditation, pets, Sylvanus meeting story, poetry, vivisection, astrology, beacons at bases and green ray No. 14. Guy Ragland Phillips on music and poetry, ritual work, creation myth winner, radical feminism, astrology, darkness, more Sylvanus, and a winged female nude spirit on page 5.

Elsewhere in THE SHAMAN I take to task two people and two other people feel they have taken me to task. THE PIPE'S OF P.A.N.'s Philip Cozens and Nicola Miles write: "We were somewhat surprised by the cover of your latest issue. Don't the gutter press degrade the Old Religion adequately, not to mention perpetrate the worst sort of sexism, without you joining them?"

Firstly there was no intention to degrade the Old Religion. I do not think the cover would imply any trivialising of paganism or degrading of women. The poses were artistic and, in fact, the pictures of model Minette Macfarlane accompanied publicity from the British Safety Council to draw attention to the dangers of bonfires and fireworks. Perhaps it is indicative of our society in general that we require to be

(cont. p. 12)

OUR REASONS AND AIMSBy TOM WILLIAMSON AND LIZ BELLAMY

In the foreword, LEY LINES IN QUESTION is described as being a book about archaeology for ley hunters and a book about ley hunting for archaeologists. Both groups may feel that for us to write such a book is unnecessary, or a liberty, or both. So we are pleased to take this opportunity to explain why we wrote the book and our aims in doing so.

Indeed, given the immense popularity of the study of leys, it seems to be high time that there was some explanation for the blatant hostility to the subject exhibited by the academic establishment. Ley hunters complain bitterly, justifiably and often of archaeologists' failure to enunciate their objections and counter the claims of the so-called "fringe". We hope that we have provided a clear account of the archaeological arguments against the existence of leys, and have done so in the context of a rundown on recent ideas and developments in orthodox archaeology.

We hope that by doing this we will not be branded as wholly hostile to those who believe in leys. We thoroughly appreciate, and have always greatly enjoyed reading, the writings of ley theorists. There is a poetic truth in their ideas, related to far older strands of thought in literature. Furthermore the ley concept seems to be associated with a love of the countryside and an emotional contact with its past of a kind which is often sadly lacking in the work of orthodox archaeologists. We do not mean to knock this poetic kernel of ley theory, but merely its scientific shell. For we feel that, since many ley writers present their ideas as incontrovertible scientific facts, it is reasonable for us to study them in these terms. Having done so, we are unavoidably led to the conclusion that -- at least for the moment -- there is no evidence for the existence of leys.

Thus although the idea of the lines is deeply appealing, we are inclined to think that ley hunters would be better employed elsewhere. For there are so many fields of research, in both the study of the paranormal and in the orthodox realms of archaeology and landscape history, that are only held up by the lack of enthusiastic workers.

We believe that there is one field in particular where such people are urgently needed. At the moment our heritage, the ancient countryside of Britain, is facing the greatest ever threat to its survival. We hope that in LEY LINES IN QUESTION we have gone a little way towards indicating the complexity of the human forces which have shaped our environment over the millenia. The appearance of our landscape is intrinsically tied to its antiquity, and serves as a monument to the endeavours of the common people of the past. Today this environment is in danger of being irrevocably lost, through the imposition of modern agricultural and constructional methods which do not adapt but rather destroy all that has gone before.

We firmly believe that it is only by understanding our countryside that we can attempt to conserve it, and perhaps this ~~golden age~~ understanding is hampered and not helped by a concentration on "golden age" views of the past and erroneous conceptions of the patterns in the landscape. There is a danger that, while worrying about the removal of markstones, the whole face of the countryside may be irretrievably erased.

Nevertheless, although we have tried to highlight the deficiencies in ley theory, and perhaps demonstrate some of the appeal of more orthodox landscape studies, we do not intend to "get at" ley hunters. As we have said, we have considerable sympathy with the terms in which they conceive the past. Indeed, as we try to make clear in the book, we feel that not only could archaeologists learn a great deal from aspects of ley theory but in some ways, they have already been influenced by it.

We appreciate that, like any other subject, ley theory is a fluid corpus of opinion, and many of the ideas which we vilify may not now be, or never have been, held by every ley hunter. Nonetheless we hope that at the very least the book will help to clear away some of the dead wood from the field of fringe science. Indeed, we hope that it may demonstrate to some readers that although the academic establishment has its faults, the conventional study of the past is not the dusty prosaic process of





# Ley-line theory to explain TV show jinx

**EXTRAORDINARY CLAIMS** have been made in a national Sunday newspaper concerning the seeming jinx associated with the TV programme "Coronation Street" and supposed powers of evil transmitted along alleged invisible, supernatural lines of energy.

Beginning on the front page of the Sunday Mirror this week and monopolizing the entire centre spread, was an article suggesting that the multitude of recent problems affecting the fortunes of the programme and its stars could be the result of some strange occult power.

Pat Phoenix (Elsie Tanner) first drew attention to the theory and it has been supported by William Roache (Ken Barlow) and psychic detective Robert Cracknell.

Their thesis is that where the show's rehearsal room lies, two lines of subtle power cross and this has caused the calamities in the personal lives of the actors and actresses who appear in the programme. On the face of it the theory might seem as ludicrous, scatterbrained, and far-fetched as many of the show's storylines, but it might be as well to see if the soap opera stars' story washes.

First to voice the ley-line theory in public was Pat Phoenix. The blonde-haired flowers Return temptress surprised her audience during a questions and answer session at a concert school. The audience in Altrincham, Cheshire, heard that problems arose when the cast began to use some converted studios as temporary rehearsal accommodation and changing-rooms while Granada TV built a new building.

In the "Street" she plays the down-to-earth siren of the screen, but regarding the problems she suggested: "I am convinced there must have been ley lines there or something like that."

So firstly what are these ley lines?

## Current notion

The theory certainly has its complexities, but at its most basic level there is a belief — backed by much scientific monitoring — that across the globe exist lines of subtle energy pulsing a mysterious power. The ramifications of the nature of the energy hardly convince many researchers, but agreement that there is such a system of force has been generally accepted by many people in all walks of life.

Alignments of prehistoric sites, and by the process of continuity of occupation also pre-Reformation churches is a verifiable concept which firstly supposed that such lines marked ancient pathways. Their rediscoverer, Alfred Watkins, named the system "the old straight track" and the lines he called leys. That was during the 1920s.

Since then all manner of theories have been grafted on to the original concept. Certainly the current — no pun intended — notion is that some invisible force pulses along the lines at certain times, transmitted by the types of structure constructed along these hypothetical lines. This not the place to detail or examine in depth the merits of the somewhat heretical — at least as far as orthodox archaeologists are concerned — thesis. Simply the argument is that if four or more prehistoric or other ancient sites of sanctuary fall in a dead straight alignment within, say, ten miles then one has discovered a ley.

I do not know what criteria the Sunday Mirror writers or "Coronation Stars" have for suggesting that the stables they focus upon have to justify a ley crossing point, but the article mentions two cathedrals.

Before looking to the wider aspects and justifications for the stars' fears, just what are the jinx elements involved?

● Pat Phoenix quits. William Roache reckons the energy at the Stables helped "crystallize the options open to her."

● William Roache himself. "My own situation is a good example of how the energy can be used in a wholly positive way . . . I suddenly felt this tremendous energy coursing through me. I was able to press my case with more determination and success upon the producer and writers . . . Now a lot of interesting things are going on in the life of Ken Barlow."

In other words the force was with him — to put it in "Star Wars" language. But for others . . .

## Close to death

● Peter Dudley died recently. "Working at The Stables," says William Roache, "broke him up and he became almost a wrecked man."

● Barbara Knox. She came close to death, after being struck down by a mystery virus holidaying in Sri Lanka.

● Peter Adamson was sacked. Against all common-sense he sold a "kiss and tell" series to a newspaper.

● Doris Speed. The land-lady taken ill twice.

And so it goes on.

It all sounds like a rattling good yarn. An easy, if not weird, way of explaining a set of unhappy circumstances. A plot more exciting than the programme's own series of storylines. But is there any substance?

For this I take counsel from a higher authority. Dom Robert Pettipierre is arguably the Church of England's senior exorcist and certainly its most colourful. Now 80 years old he definitely believes ley-lines "exercise a rather mysterious influence even today."

Because of his prominent position as the recognized Church's spokesman on occultism and ley-lines, I feel his comments to me are highly relevant — and also affect every one of us.

The controversial linking of a mysterious power transmitted by lines linking ancient sites which has been suggested a possible cause of the jinx surrounding the TV programme "Coronation Street" has been examined by Mail writer PAUL SCREETON. He is a former editor of the magazine The Ley Hunter and author of "Quicksilver Heritage: The Mystic Leys."

# Stronger than fiction

## Sense of humour

Dom Robert invited me to meet him when staying in a small hotel in Wall, near Hexham. Our conversation tended to be amiable rather than too deep as we had fundamentally different viewpoints. The polarization partially occurred because I had a far greater trust in humanity's usage of the ley-lines in question here. He regarded them as suspicious and stated: "I know from experience that where a ley-line exists, its influences will not be helpful in clearing up later difficulties."

More of his beliefs can be found in his book "Exorcising Devils" — ghost written he told me with a puckish sense of humour — and not all of which I would agree with.

We sat at the bar and I must admit it seemed strange to watch a monk downing halves of beer as we discussed horrific exorcisms. We tended to clash with regard to my interest in pagan culture as non-commensurate with a Christian ideal. (I have two children at a Church of England school, so that should show where my sympathies lie).

But what further has he to say regarding leys?

Sceptics could say that he was superstitious. But others at two churches feel themselves being "accompanied down the aisle where a ley existed." He concluded: "I cannot avoid the impression that the presence of a ley-line 'tingles up' and keeps alive imprints from the past association of the place."

During our conversation I found myself agreeing and disagreeing by turns, but well aware that involvement with occult occurrences can probably rub off on to the most cautious or innocent. In fact, he conducted what he calls an "antiseptic exorcism" on a manufactured head which I had been given earlier that day, while I was not watching, saying afterwards something like "in case there was something nasty there."

He argued against the Church of England theologians who claim exorcism (or as he prefers to term it, "healing and deliverance") to be irrational as a pagan practice by stating: "Simply because an idea or attitude or belief was pagan has never automatically meant it was wrong."

He told me: "The more we unearth the past and the more we study not only the pyramids but those great Bronze Age monuments that litter the countryside of the British Isles, the more we realize the ancient peoples were far from being unintelligent."

"Here were people with considerable scientific knowledge who had no difficulty accepting the idea of non-human minds and probably were capable of communicating telepathically with each other."

## Startling proposition

A startling proposition, but the opinion of a well-respected man with a wealth of experience of the demonic.

In his book "Christ, Psychotherapy and Magic," Newcastle vicar the Rev. Anthony Duncan also warns that black magic practitioners have used ley power for their ceremonies and anyone on such a line can receive unpleasant impressions.

Church of England vicars, unlike it seems Roman Catholic priests or clergy of other denominations, seem the only clergymen to take leys seriously. I was it one time corresponding with a vicar in Cramlington on the subject, as he particularly associated a spate of suicides in the new town with a pattern of leys which had been pointed out to him.

All this may sound rather alarming, but I would hasten to add that though there are certain pointers to baleful influences created by certain lines, these are in the minority. Most commentators and persons involved with earth mysteries research regard leys as beneficial.

As for The Mail's circulation area, the most significant ley-line stretches from St Hilda's Church on the Headland to Monk Hewden and Castle Eden Churches, taking in Jack Rack.

Another runs from St Hilda's to Stranton Church and on to Redmarshall Church (a major crossing point of three leys) and on to a tumulus.

The Sunday Mirror quoted the doven of ley hunters, John Michell, as saying: "I would say it likely, others would say that undoubtedly certain, the ley-lines play a crucial role in the "Coronation Street" problems."

After the traumas of recent months, let us hope that the only lines of importance regarding "Coronation Street" are its storylines.

LEY-LINE DETRACTORS IN QUESTIONBy PAUL SCREETON

If ever a book\* failed so miserably to satisfy its two main objectives then this is the one. The authors (for simplicity henceforth W&B) see their book as "about archaeology for ley hunters, and a book about ley hunting for archaeologists. Both may find its conclusions controversial." It is controversial only in how such a work of gross incompetence came to be published and the means by which a seeming endorsement from ley hunters was solicited. As one of those receiving "special thanks" in the acknowledgments, I would like to stress that Williamson has admitted that after getting my permission to quote from my book, and the friendly reply he received from me, the way I have been projected in the book was, to quote him "shabby." Well, that is an understatement as regards his treatment of me and others. I am not normally given to discussing people's morality -- or lack of it. On their consciences -- if they have any -- be it.

There is a telling comment about this book's genesis where W&B note: "When preparing this book we wrote to many ley hunters in order to get permission to quote their work, and we were most touched and not a little embarrassed by the incredibly friendly and helpful response that we received. We could not imagine receiving quite such encouraging letters from establishment academics." It may well be that, like me, not all those canvassed were aware of the nature of thrust of the projected book and might not have been so easy-going had they anticipated the hatchet job attempt.

I have spoken twice subsequently to Williamson and found myself somewhat grudgingly willing to take the book seriously. He, too, has responded in a friendly fashion, quickly submitting at my request an article to explain their motives. Not only that, but I suggested using a photograph of the duo on the cover of this magazine -- even though warning that I would be slating their book -- and they had photographs taken specially for THE SHAMAN as they had none of them together previously. I can't imagine Aubrey Burl having sent a posed picture of himself with a hedgehog to illustrate my literary pistol-whipping of him in THE SHAMAN No. 2.

However, the more I have read and re-read the book in question the more angry I feel about W&B and the book's contents. So can we trust their motives as stated above in the objectives of the book? They at least work from the correct premise that ley hunting has great popularity and ley philosophy has been widely influential. In other words, the subject is commercially viable to publishers and financially beneficial to authors. The scissors and paste plunder is on? Well, not quite. But ley's tackle the nastiest aspects of the book headlong right now.

They rightly perceive one of the aspects of archaeology which angers ley hunters. That they, as taxpayers, fund practices they find abhorrent (ghoulish gravedigging, ritual site desecrations, and so on), pick up the tab for high table discussion over pheasant and port which does not include any appreciation of their alternative ideas, and are publicly denigrated in the media by the people they fund.

As for this negative reaction, W&B are at least positive in challenging the Establishment's ostrich attitude and examine this phobia. An even more extreme version was how Immanuel Velikovsky was treated like a leper and Wilhelm Reich martyred. Books such as my QUICKSILVER HERITAGE are still for burning (most of the paperback edition actually went up in a warehouse conflagration! Is there an arsonist archaeologist around?).

The authors also admit that "no other intellectual discipline has such a convincing and coherent rival." This must surely be seen as heartening.

It is, in fact, more convincing that they give it credit. For they make many ill-founded assumptions, either through choice or working from too many outdated books.

--- \* LEY-LINES IN QUESTION by Tom Williamson and Liz Bellamy (World's Work, £9-95) -----

6.

They have concentrated on a small number of books and not bothered to read the many magazines -- such as 90+ issues of THE LEY HUNTER -- and other articles on the subject.

Even the whole crux of modern ley hunting is not reached until page 177, where, with some seeming surprise W&B take up Tom Graves' suggestion that the "ley line system was not necessarily the result of a conscious design by man, but might have been caused by the forces of nature." This they dismissively regard as the "lunatic fringe of the lunatic fringe" and are mistaken because it is central to current thought.

Before this they spend much of the early part of the book demonstrating that alignments connect sites and features totally unrelated and created over a wide span of time. In fact, they harp on continually about non-Neolithic sites on leys. Ley hunters accept all this. The argument is not totally one of surmised continuity of sites but that the "ley power" is perennial and so the sites need not be necessarily of prehistoric origin, though ley hunters assume the basic pattern was first laid down in the Stone Age. This clearly wipes out the W&B argument. This persistent fallacy in the book that "ley theory ascribes the origins of everything in the British landscape to the Neolithic period....." is entirely wrong and clearly preposterous. Ley hunters do appreciate the timespan involved and changing cultures, and would challenge W&B over their dismissal of continuity documentation. Unfortunately they keep battering home to the unwary reader this falsification so that when they move to a different criticism the effect is comparable to that of the feeling after one has been banging his head literally against a wall.

Then W&B doubt that after finding and confirming several leys this pursuit must necessarily become monotonous and increasingly less exciting, but this is an "own goal", for surely cannot we apply the same criteria to archaeologists who must weary after digging up their ninth or tenth midden. Not forgetting T.C. Lethbridge's apposite observation of these people, that if one digs up the entrance to a fort, like sheep other archaeologists must do so likewise.

The difference between ley hunters and archaeologists is that one thinks in straight lines and the other is aligned to a straitjacket; ~~one~~ one looks for lines in pockets and the other lines his pockets.

W&B note that in today's recession the demarcation between amateur/professional is blurring, yet argue archaeology cannot adapt to ley hunting's "egalitarian organisation". This barely disguised superiority attitude is compounded by the "unlicensed use of metal-detectors" stamping of feet; views contrary to any libertarian or civil rights viewpoint.

As for ley hunters' ignoring supposedly "illuminating analogies" which might lessen the "mysterious" nature of monument erection, this is nonsense. What about the controversy over microwave aerial/dish constructions on sacred hills or Centrepoint as a modern "folly"? Neither does it take a hierarchical society to make a construction. A colleague who was too lazy to build a garden wall invited all his friends for a barbecue and booze-up and they built his garden wall -- though I wonder whether it ended up ley-straight at the end of the session.

But W&B too went out -- left the ivory tower. They not only read THE OLD STONES OF LAND'S END studiously and analytically, but made their own pseudo-pilgrimage to West Penwith to attempt a demolition job on John Michell's work there. Their arguments appear as cogent as Michell's did originally, but they notably fail to explain away Michell's observation that each stone was "often at the extreme limit of visibility from the next in line" though have the courtesy to quote this highly-relevant fact.

Using statistics, the authors have no faith that mathematical probability work has provided a scientific case for ley reality.

They are equally emphatic that the archaeological evidence points irresistibly away from leys representing intentional alignments.

Their next step is to challenge the concept that folklore provides corroborative references to the ley system. Their analysis uses as its anchor point the Bords' book THE SECRET COUNTRY, a book which argues that the traditions and legends associated with prehistoric sites reflect their original function, allow for the picturing of a

megalithic science and add validity to the ley hypothesis.

When I reviewed this book years ago I made the point that I believed it dangerous to create such a reductionist argument. Any folk tale can usually be interpreted in all manner of ways to suit the preferences and belief structure of the individual. So I grudgingly find myself partially agreeing with W&B. Nevertheless all folklore has elements of importance and has its roots in mankind's shared psychic universe. They mention such folkloric themes as moving stones and just before writing this part of the review I passed our local graveyard, where my daughter assures me a particular headstone wanders around the churchyard. The authors would no doubt dismiss this tale as created simply because of the name on the perambulating dressed marble epitaph -- George Hopper. But is it not strange that a tradition associated with prehistoric monuments is still alive and well? My ten-year-old daughter certainly does not know the antiquity of this odd and recurrent belief.

With regard to published leys, they choose Devereux and Thomson's THE LEY HUNTER'S COMPANION as literary target and give the impression they can find flaws to floor each example. Whether they are being selective here and what defence D&T can offer remains to be seen. After which the denigrators turn to the fieldwork aspect and quote a couple of my "scene-setting descriptions" as "such bucolic scenes abound in ley literature." Maybe they are jealous that their jaundiced, arrogant and sterile vision and version of prehistory incapacitates their sensibilities from forming any arcadian appreciation of the countryside.

Then they look at long-distance leys. Frankly I have scant faith in these. Naturally they choose John Michell's "St Michael Line", which has subsequently been modified and renamed "geomantic corridor." They miss this opportunity to claim "1984 newspeak."

As for the style of writing there's a strange sentence which begins: "All ley hunters agree, most of the time, that the ley system..." which just does not make sense. However, generally the writing is competent, though they can be downright silly when trying to make a jocular point: "It is not entirely irrelevant to observe that as yet no one has discovered a church within Stonehenge."

As for others' style, if John Michell is in their eyes "prose poet of ley studies", I receive no such accolade. In fact, I take great pride in my writing style, though have a vulgar, self-effacing pride in some of the "rocky passages" (as Tony Roberts -- a sower of thunderous prose -- has drawn attention to). W&B take me to task for "an incomprehensible sentence of 240 words after I had embarrassingly stated that "no long-winded phraseology is demanded for setting out discoveries."

QUICKSILVER HERITAGE was written more than ten years ago and not bad, I think, for a novice writer in his early twenties. It would also have been polite to have canvassed whether I still agreed with all the points in the book. As might be expected, I have modified many of my views. My current opinions anyway are readily accessible in the serialized history of ley hunting which I had already written when approached by W&B.

QUICKSILVER HERITAGE was deliberately an "inclusionistic" book; an attempt to provide an all-embracing package of every speculative ley association from however bizarre a source. I did not endorse levitation or many of the other freethinkers' associations.

And did I write of "four harvests" a year as claimed on page 23? By page 113 we have a direct quote of "perhaps several crops a year were grown without consequent reduction of fertility", which is rather a different projection.

Their selectivity is also apparent where they are uncharitable enough not to give credit where credit is due, such as my criticism that astroarchaeological calendrical measurement was unlikely to have been given precedence over commonsensical natural ecological observation.

Then we come to "the plethora of errors and inaccuracies." This term appears on page 176. No, it is not the writers' own admission of guilt but a condemnation of others. There is a term "the pot calling the kettle black" and it could have been coined for just such a junkheap as this book. It is a voyage through misconceptions and the presentation of an everest of errors. Here follows a random presentation of W&B's mistaken understanding of ley thought and an alarming inability to check data.

LEY-LINES. Why not leys?

WATKINS' LEY REVELATION. This could have been cleared up simply by reference to Watkins' own account in EARLY BRITISH TRACKWAYS and Michell's elaboration in JOURNAL OF GEOMANCY. At least I got it right in Q.H.

DYSLEXIA. Persons' names spelled wrongly include (herewith their errors): Guy Raglan Phillips, Gerlack, Lesley Grinsell and Robert Forest. The Girt Dog of Langport in the Glastonbury Zodiac becomes Great Dog of Lamport. Watkins wrote "Round" and not "Around" in his Cambridge book. And so on and so on. Is this slipshod research or laziness over proof correction?

TYLER. They claim Major F.C. Tyler's THE GEOMETRICAL ARRANGEMENT OF ANCIENT SITES "has recently been republished by Pentacle Press." No date is given for this in their bibliography and I suspect this project was aborted before Pentacle Books of Bristol was submerged by financial problems.

THE FURNESS FORMULA. The statement that "ley hunters have employed more sophisticated statistical analyses, the most famous of which is that of statistician Peter Furness" is rather over the top. W&B fail to quote anyone who has actually used the formula. Anecdotally, when preparing QUICKSILVER HERITAGE, I sought Furness' permission to reproduce his formula from the original series of THE LEY HUNTER, which he gladly granted, and also sent the corrected formula -- the original being erroneous. I found the statisticians bogging down the content of T.L.H. when I was editor and so organized a postal folio in the original The Old Straight Track Club tradition, the whereabouts of which is now unknown to me and presumably to W&B.

OPPRESSED MINORITIES. Certainly among serious earth mysteries researchers there is no consensus belief automatically endorsing all manner of other paranormal aspects. Personal depth research into urban belief tales has made me extremely dubious about most claims in supernatural fields, and I am sure the intelligence and maturity of most other responsible investigators would testify a similar scepticism. Had W&B talked to major earth mysteries personalities they would have found persons far from the gullible clique they seem to lump us into; all very much individuals actually and far from showing a "party line" on UFOs, ghosts, elementals, spoon-bending, astral projection and 1,001 other occult claims. Credit us with due respect, please.

SCOTS PINE. A "mare's nest", perhaps, as it seems these were reintroduced to denote farms where cattle drovers could find a stopping place as they moved southwards. This seems feasible and is a case where W&B are ignorant of recent knowledge. And the trees were again real markers for those journeying.

THOM. Yes, Professor Alexander Thom does have alignments, but instead of using one three-letter word "ley", he uses another, "ray." Nice sense of dour Scots humour.

PROMOTION. Quick facetious point here. W&B state: "Indeed, there are few things at which the ley hunter is more extraordinarily adept than at the presentation and selling of his case." I find this enormously reassuring. Perhaps Saachi and Saachi require ley hunters in their advertising agency or I would be better off employed as a door-to-door salesman peddling window-glazing or cavity wall insulation.

COINCIDENCE. Anachronistic "mark points" are mentioned as falling regularly on leys which "demonstrate the peculiar workings of coincidence." But is it coincidence? One wonders if C.G. Jung's synchronicity is at work -- i.e. meaningful coincidence, or in other words, whether ley consciousness was at work at a subconscious level.

VIRGIN SITES. Guisborough Priory, built 1119, is claimed as such, but I have been there -- with Devereux & Thomson -- and photographed a markstone by a tree. This may sound spurious, but the stone looked significant enough to me. Why Devereux and Thomson chose not to mention it in their book is the only mystery I see.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S, ADDLESTONE. As they say this was built in the 1930s, but in fairness they should have added that its significance is that it is pyramidal and at the same scale as the Great Pyramid. It is a most impressive structure. The village also had an oak of great girth and the local Masons named their lodge after it. By not qualifying the reason for a ley hunter seeing this modern church as noteworthy, there is almost an act of deception by not stating the full extent of why this was mentioned.

FAITH IN "CONTINUITY". The best book on "continuity" is MEGALITHS IN HISTORY (Thames & Hudson). It is by a man of impeccable archaeological pedigree. His name is Glyn Daniel. He's the doyen of entrenched reactionary orthodox archaeology. Incidentally, his home is on a ley.

U.S. LEYS. Published after this book had gone to the printers, but extra confirmatory evidence are the lines discovered by a surveyor called Brannan. These are potentially as exciting as the material in Tony Morrison's PATHWAYS TO THE GODS, about which W&B are dismissive.

ARCHAEOLOGISTS' FLIRTATIONS. Some prominent members of the orthodoxy are noted as having "eccentric" leanings, but why was not Euan MacKie not castigated for his velikovskian catastrophism sympathies?

V.G. CHILDE. Another fundamental assumption about ley hunters which is directly opposed to current thinking is that modern societies have been created by a "very, very long continuing process" as proposed by the Marxist Gordon Childe. Such social Darwinism is an anathema to ley hunters and all but the most fascistic elitist climbers believe it. W&B are wrong to assume there is any "relevance to the society of today" in this vile mentality, for this is the direction to the gas chambers and burning crosses, this is the opposition to the view of the stability of societies with limited hierarchical structures and a shamanistic leadership by consent. The fact is quite simply that a continuity exists, but not one by a steady rise of social sophistication fuelled by imperialistic indignities to others and struggle towards technological perfection via the work ethic, but an essential dignity of the basic human spirit, stabilised by such factors as commonsense, collective consciousness, conscience and fundamental honesty. W&B seem to find such concepts alien to their view of past or present.

DEE. W&B make great play on page 176 about ley hunters' oft-quoted endorsement that Elizabethan occultist John Dee discovered the Glastonbury Zodiac. John Michell, for instance, unfortunately still has it as such in THE NEW VIEW OVER ATLANTIS, but had W&B been diligent researchers they would have found an article where I lay this myth to rest. Richard Deacon (a pseudonym) made up this fanciful claim in his notorious book on Dee and has been unable to produce his source for the supposition. Not surprisingly therefore the "orthodox researchers into Deewhom we consulted had ever heard of this discovery", but had the undynamic duo consulted an "unorthodox?" researcher such as myself I could have given a full explanation of this seemingly perplexing, but actually simple, mystery. Deacon's motive is the only mystery in actuality and it is unfortunate that others have not shown suspicion about the reference. W&B's suspicion is admirable but they could have checked farther. But by bringing up the topic without thorough investigation W&B tar themselves with the same brush they use to paint a black picture of ley hunters. How many of the nonsensical claims made in their book are liable to enter into common currency and be repeated for decades henceforth? One cringes at the thought.

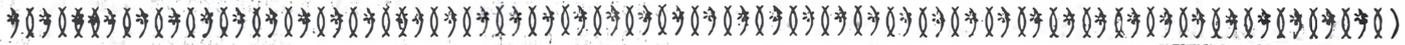
Towards the end of the book, W&B offer an unnecessary platitudinous pat on the back that in "contrast (to the "New" archaeology) ley hunting, bizarre though it may be, is at least a praiseworthy attempt to give the study of the past a vital

RETRIBUTION FOR DESECRATION. They state after barrow digging "no obvious harm to either archaeologists or farmers" has occurred, conceding "there can be no doubt that at some stage something bad happened to someone who had been present at the destruction of a barrow." Somewhere in archaeologist T.C. Lethbridge's writing is described just such a case, involving as I recall it a scary motoring incident. In fact the thunder and lightning folklore may well refer to ionization and be capable of scientific evaluation. Unfortunately the Bords and Grinsell beat me to the post with their books on folklore associated with ancient sites, for my manuscript THE LIVING STONES (more than half published in sections in magazines such as QUEST, PENDRAGON, THE LEY HUNTER, SERPENT STONE, LINCOLNSHIRE DRAGON, etc) would have put forward evidence and arguments W&B would have found to be a stimulating and intellectual bone to get their teeth into. And they are also flippantly superficial on dowsing practise and in the wake of several years of Dragon Project monitoring are scornfully dismissive and brief in their treatment of "ley power" manifestation aspects of the study.

role in the present." They then produce an appallingly insulting: "Nevertheless, ley hunters pose a pathetic alternative to conventional archaeology." When I read this sentence aloud to my wife, her sensible reaction was: "Can't you just hit him in the face?" Well, yes, but do you thump a woman, too?

Essentially there is a perverse futility to writing such a book as this. It is a probability that condemnatory/educative books such as White's demolition of von Daniken, THE PAST IS HUMAN, neither deflect pro-anceint astronauts believers or do anything but encourage ~~sympathy~~ belief in the absurd. W&B, however, are likely to create an atmosphere of sympathy for the ley concept and in this case it is one far from absurd.

Yet in the final analysis I have a suspicion that the authors wish they were part of the ley-hunting fraternity. They are like shy introverts envious of others having fun and enjoying themselves. They wish they dare cross the belief threshold and embrace an exciting viewpoint. They too could share if they wished that crystal clear persuasion of the ley hunters.



MORE REVIEWS ..... MORE REVIEWS ..... MORE REVIEWS ..... MORE REVIEWS .....

THE MEGALITHIC ODYSSEY by CHRISTIAN O'BRIEN  
(Turnstone Press, £4-95)

O'Brien is a freethinker who believes there is a strong argument for a group of itinerant sages teaching and civilizing primitive peoples. He chooses to depict here Sumerians of a superior culture settling in Britain and spreading their supposed benefits of society.

Under the chapter heading "The Genius of the Few", he puts forward an old theme. O'Brien seems unaware of John Ivimy's THE SPHINX AND THE MEGALITHS, which is similarly slanted. But equally -- and I do not endorse this -- someone could also easily argue for Neolithic Britons taking their megalithic blueprints across the globe. No one has yet argued a traffic in this other direction -- though it would actually make more sense. What is certain is that if we can collate all the material on megalithic sites there may be a common cultural denominator. Personal experience is that British sites are so diverse it is anyone's guess whether it is just a fluke people responded in this way, or that, or whether these diverse worldwide structures are truly a global system. Certainly I have little faith in O'Briens hypothesis.

Partly I doubt his theorising after reading John Barnatt's scholarly analysis of the astroarchaeological material (though O'Brien has defended himself since) and secondly O'Brien seems unaware of important earth mysteries literature, not least for instance Ross Nicholls on the Brown Willy complex in THE LEY HUNTER and Ivimy's book. The researcher seems to have worked in isolation -- and it shows.

So we would do well to treat with scepticism O'Brien's thesis, for even he admits: "Unfortunately, in a study of these remains there can be no certainty unless some definitive artifact or intelligible record should be unearthed." Surely with so much prehistoric "dustbin" material found, Sumerians would have dropped or broken a few identifiable objects? Surely they did not take all their rubbish home! Could, perhaps, the Countryside Code have begun with their civilization?

As for any seeming continuity in the crucial axis of the argument -- the stone circles -- he realizes the 12 are "so diverse in character that it is clear that they were not built to any standard pattern." This Bodmin Moor situation must surely cause concern, particularly if one is arguing for an elite of overseers involved in teaching skills to an indigenous population. And if they were the "gaffers" would not some tradition provide their meritorious services a mention? Stone circle legends are so diverse and ubiquitous that one would expect some mention, but O'Brien again admits: "That no tradition of the origins of the Cornish stone circles or any remembrance of the

designers has been passed down from remote times is indicated by the local legends that surround them." Yet other tales seem to date back to the Palaeolithic (Santa Claus even).

To balance the drawbacks I have pointed to, equally I find myself agreeing with many of his conclusions, though not always endorsing the more fanciful diffusionist hypothesis. For instance he sees Goodaver stone circle deliberately placed as an instructional centre; perhaps it was, we all must learn by example. Equally I agree that his censure of Department of the Environment for calling The Hurlers a centre for "religious purpose" is correct without proven foundation.

But I feel that his search for the builders of Bodmin Moor circles would have been better left as a pursuit after the indigenous population.

There are some pleasant pictures and a fanciful theory. I feel a bit of a killjoy criticising this book but that's my opinion of it. Yet it would be a duller world without the likes of Christian O'Brien.

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STONEHENGE VIEWPOINT. Printed on newsprint, S.V. covers archaeology, astronomy, geology and related arts and sciences. No. 56. John Michell warns of statisticians and describes his expedition with Bob Forrest attempting to prove to this sceptic in the field the validity of alignments. Paul Screeton produces the penultimate chapter of his history of ley hunting, SEEKERS OF THE LINEAR VISION, covering changes in the subject during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Editor Donald Cyr compares modern mirror created star energy with the Vaillian canopy model of ice crystal reflection. He also continues his "autobiography", covering his years as industrial engineer and scientific writer -- sounds dull on paper, but the anecdotes make it fascinating reading. Louis K. Bell has a second in a series article expanding his ideas on exchange and economic ratios in ancient monetary systems. Plus books for sale. Sub. for 12 issues £5 from U.K. Agency, c/o 3rd. Floor, 35 Great Russell Street, London WC1 (for U.S. 8 dollars from 2821 De La Vina Street, Santa Barbara, California, 93105, U.S.A.).

QUEST. Well-established magazine for practising occultists of the Magical Heritage of the West. No. 55. Challenging piece by Paul Devereux on effects picked up at ancient sites by dowzers as "mental litter" thoughtforms created by visitors' preconceptions, covering Dragon Project revelations and ideas on the nature of UFOs; rune lore via Tarot-style cards; a Gnostic connection for the Grail Cycle is argued; was Joan of Arc a bastard involved with the royal line of her time and totally misunderstood by history?; plus divining a timescale by the Tarot; mental attitude as aid to fighting cancer; how unemployment can be a boon to the occultist who uses the leisure time to good purpose; creating one's fireplace -- however modern and mundane -- as a shrine; plus gatherings announcements, Quest publications, course reports, cassette tape and book reviews. Sub: U.K. £3; U.S. 5 dollars (airmail 8). Make all crossed payments to QUEST and send to QUEST, BCM -- SCL Quest, London WC1N 3XX. No. 56. Usual wide range of articles including ABC of superstitions, beliefs and strange curses; Tree of Life style of Xmas tree; Derek Barton on SATOR ROTAS magic square so deeply discussed previously in issues of PENDRAGON; editor Marian Green on need for bridge-building to guide novices and also seasoned occultists to wider appreciation of the many paths to greater self-awareness; what the Tree Council does; Stephen J. Waters offers comfort and advice to those suffering along the path of initiation; and even a Wiccan bedtime story; plus advertisements and book reviews. New U.S. rates £4 or 10 dollar bills; single copies £1. or 3 dollar bills.

NORTHERN UFO NEWS. Varied forum of ufological matters from commentary to speculation to reports. No. 104. Editorial on selecting which UFO cases are really worthy of in-depth study and comments on Rendlesham Forest incident and reactions. More on Rendlesham; Cracoe Fell, Grassington, West Yorks. (not North); Bradford area and other Yorks. sightings (cont. 105); and a Midlands CE3. No. 105. Precedence of chequebook journalism connected with U.K. ufology (I wonder what my editor will say the next time our modest slush fund piggybank is raided to pay some loony who has only now noticed Venus?). William Dillon on the UFO stimulus as an intimidatory tool; Andrew J. Cummings rambles inconsequentially about ufology; U.K. and several overseas cases. Sun for 1984 £5 for 6 issues. From Jenny Randles, 9 Crosfield Road, Somerville, Wallasey, Wirral, L44 9EH.

