

Touchstone

Surrey
Earth
Mysteries



No. 5

SQUADRON-LEADER DENIS SHIPWRIGHT

Nov. '84

On Tuesday, September 19th I had the sad duty of attending the funeral of our friend Denis Shipwright, who had died of lung and liver cancer. Denis, who was 86, had lived a remarkably full life, having flown as a pilot in both world wars, as well as driving racing cars, being a Member of Parliament and a member of the Knights of St. John. More important than all these, he was a good friend who will, I am sure, be missed by all our group.

I met him in 1967 when, during the "Surrey Flap" he was witness to what seems to have been a UFO near-landing. He was walking with his wife Margaret along the track leading from Newlands Corner, overlooking Albury (near Guildford), when he saw an oval, white object moving rapidly backwards and forwards in a field. After a few minutes it started moving slowly at right angles to its original course, and when it met a belt of trees it slowly rose over them. They did not see it disappear as they then left the scene to have their lunch.

Denis then saw in the local paper the next day that others had seen UFOs in the area, so he contacted the police about his sighting, and they gave him my address as I was running a UFO group at the time. A few days later he, my father and I went to the field where the UFO had been and found a line of sandstone pieces in its original path (but nowhere else). One was much larger than the rest and had strange markings on it which an independent observer said looked like a saucer hovering over a hill with the sun rising behind, and a ray going from saucer to hill. Denis kept a smaller piece and kept it exposed to the weather and noticed its changes, implying the pieces could not have been there long. He recently gave this piece to me, and I am glad to have it as a keepsake of him.

We kept in touch for some years but seemed to lose contact when our group folded up and I did not hear of him again until my wife heard his voice on the radio and called me to hear. I then contacted him to tell him of my present group, of which he became an enthusiastic member, attending several meetings until he became ill.

His funeral was most moving, the vicar saying that as well as sadness we should also feel thankfulness for a long life lived well and to the full. He said that if he lived as long as Denis and managed to pack half of what Denis did into his life, he would consider his life a great success. He will be sadly missed by all, and I wish him all the success in his next phase of existence that he has had here. As a believer in reincarnation myself, I hope he will

one day return to this earth to enrich it again.

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STRANGE SURREY

More reports of Curious and Unusual Phenomena in the County of Surrey

by Bob Skinner

FALLS OF ICE

It is an undisputed fact that large chunks of ice, weighing several pounds, have fallen from the sky over Surrey and elsewhere, often damaging buildings or vehicles and alarming those who happen to be near at the time. What is often not clear is the nature and origin of these "ice bombs".

On 16th August 1970 thirty pieces of ice were found among trees in a garden at "The Warren", Ashted, some of them 5" long and 1" thick (1). On the same day at Isleworth in Middlesex a huge lump of ice smashed through a conservatory roof of a house in Twickenham Road (2). On 23rd January 1972, a block of ice crashed to the ground in a garden in Lime Tree Close, Shirley, narrowly missing the house and making a four-foot square crater, two feet deep (3). A few days previous to the 28th September 1972, some lumps of green ice were found in a garden at Addlestone (Touchstone editor's home town), and it was assumed that they must have fallen from an aircraft, the suggested source being a toilet discharge (4). On 27th June 1977 a 3 to 4 lb. block of ice crashed through a garage roof in Albert Road, Epsom, damaging the car inside (5). On 28th May 1984 a block of ice, estimated as having been nine inches in diameter, coloured green and smelling of cleaning fluid, crashed to the ground at Woking, narrowly missing a man. Samples taken to the Police were later said to have been identified - as anti-freeze from an aircraft! (6)

The usual explanation for these ice falls (suggested in the original reports of all the above cases) is that the ice originates from aircraft flying overhead, either falling from the wings, or forming from some liquid discharge. Interestingly, official bodies such as the Civil Aviation Authority, the Board of Trade and the Air Registration Board support this view, despite the statement of the ARB to the effect that because of modern de-icing equipment, the problem of wing ice should be insignificant, and that the discharge of waste tanks over populated areas is prohibited (7). A CAA spokesman is quoted as having revealed that there were two cases recorded of ice falling from aircraft near Gatwick Airport, in the winter of 1973/4, fortunately without causing injury or damage (8). An authoritative article on the subject of Ice Falls, by J.E. McDonald of the Institute of Atmospheric Physics at Arizona University, concluded that on the basis of the data studied, no significant correlation could be made between ice falls, air traffic movements and meteorological

information. Mc.Donald could only plead for more research into the subject (9). Looking at the data from our own county, the fact that there are two major airports in or near our area makes it very possible, even probable, that in most of the cases above the ice did originate from an aircraft. However, there are reasons that should make us hesitate in always accepting this explanation.

The number of reports of the phenomenon from the pre-aircraft age surely indicate that in some instances today the ever-present-but-always-impossible-to-trace culprit aircraft may not be the source of the ice. In some of these early cases the ice blocks were of extraordinary size. In the late 18th century at Seringapatam, India, a block of ice "the size of an elephant" fell, taking three days to melt (10). In August 1849 an irregular mass of ice 20 feet in circumference fell from the sky at Ord, Scotland, after an "extraordinary peal of thunder" (11). These massive ice-blocks are exceptional, of course, others being of sizes comparable to those reported these days. What other explanations are there for this phenomenon? Can meteorology, or even astronomy, provide the answer?

Ice falls naturally from the sky in the form of hail, and on occasions the hailstones can be of a massive size. However, the "ice bombs" of which we are talking often fall from a clear sky, or are of a size, shape and structure that demonstrates that they cannot be accounted for in this way. It is possible, however, that there is some unknown mechanism that leads to the sudden aggregation of many hailstones into a large body, or that large pieces of ice could be formed in certain conditions after a lightning discharge.

Whilst on the subject of hail, it is worth noting here a number of reports of unusual hail in Surrey: the formation of some of the strange-shaped hail is still not fully understood. In August, 1906, there was a spectacular storm in the Guildford area, with some hailstones "the size of marbles" (12). Again at Guildford, on 25th June 1888, there was a storm of hail of spherical shape, but having raised rims, making it look like the planet Saturn (13). On 16th July 1918, somewhere in Surrey, large pieces of hail having knobbly protruberances up to an inch long were seen, some of the hailstones having three main knobs equidistant about an equator and around 15 other shorter knobs (14). On 8th May 1910, there was a fall of conically-shaped hail at Epsom (15).

An explanation for some instances of ice falls that is apparently being seriously proposed by some meteorologists is that the ice may have an extraterrestrial origin. The suggestion that the two extraordinary ice blocks mentioned earlier could have been such ice meteors may seem attractive, and it would certainly make the reports more believable. However it still needs to be explained how a block of ice, of whatever size, could survive its plummeting course through the Earth's atmosphere without melting.

In at least one case, the origin of the fallen ice seems to have been very much more mundane. In January 1984, Mr. and Mrs. Bitten heard a tremendous crash outside their house at Coulsdon, Surrey and discovered some chunks of ice on the ground outside. They contacted the authorities, and arrangements were made for an official

of the Safety Data Unit of the CAA to come and collect some of the preserved fragments. Mrs. Bitten was astonished on the next day when after hearing another crash she discovered more ice fragments on the roof of her conservatory and around it. Overhead, she noticed an aircraft, confirming the official view that the ice had fallen from a plane. The coincidence of two such events on subsequent days led Mrs. Bitten to investigate further. The discovery of fragments of leaves enclosed in the ice, and of the fact that some children had been playing in a neighbour's garden at the time, soon led to the confession from the culprits. The neighbour's child, Richard (aged 10) had been playing with his friends with the ice from a garden pond, and had been throwing it over the fence into the Bitten's garden! (16)

As with all strange phenomena, there is a great danger in attempting to explain all instances by one hypothesis. The origin of ice falls cannot all be explained by blaming aircraft, even though other origins are difficult to imagine and confirm at present. Future research may well identify some presently unknown natural mechanism leading to the production of these alarming "ice bombs".

REFERENCES

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THE OLD STRAIGHT TRACK IN SURREY

by Jimmy Goddard

The Hurt Wood Track, described in the last Touchstone, was the last of the long tracks in the county so far discovered. However, I am continuing the series with some leys containing shorter stretches, as I believe it is important to keep a "grass-roots" ley-hunting series going in the magazine. Any longer ones found in the future will of course go into the series, and if any member or subscriber should find one, he or she will be very welcome to write an article for it.

4) The Wisley Church Path

The church path at Wisley is very short, but it is nevertheless very interesting for the ley hunter, for it is part of a very good ley which our group has visited on several occasions. Its authenticity is emphasised by the fact that here is also one of the best visual alignments in Surrey.

The path runs from a gate to the west end of the church, just touching the end of the porch as it goes. Its line passes through the mysterious, pitted brown stone in the porch of which no-one (according to the church guide) knows the origin. Standing over the stone and looking towards the gate (past the lone Scots pine there) one can see, on the horizon, the small spire of St. Mary's, Byfleet. The west end of Wisley church, the stone, the path and St. Mary's are all in perfect visual alignment.

The Wisley church guide mentions that there was a medieval track running from Byfleet through Wisley to St. Nicholas, Pyrford. It could have followed this ley as far as Wisley, but Pyrford church is a little off it. The church path may be all that is left of this track.

Byfleet church, the first point on the ley, is basically thirteenth century and has a strong feeling of ley energy - in fact I used it as a "lunchtime laboratory" when I worked near there, and obtained some interesting results. Wisley church, the next point, in addition to having the things mentioned, is interesting as being an almost completely Norman church. The line continues through Newark Priory, a cross-roads in Send and a possible pine clump a little further on. It crosses Stag Hill, Guildford west of the Cathedral, finally reaching the churches of Shackleford and Peper Harow.

 BOOK REVIEWS

ANTI-FEMINIST PAPERS NO.1 - SACRED GLASTONBURY: A DEFENCE OF MYTH DEFILED. Being a refutation of vicious calumnies and infamies inflicted upon the sanctity of holy Glastonbury's geomancy by divers mad matriarchs and deranged feminists. By Anthony Roberts. Zodiac House Publications, "Gondolin", Westhay, Somerset. 1984 PB 14pp

My first reaction to reading the introduction to this book was one of amusement. On reflection, however, this work can only be described as a scathing diatribe directed at the feminist movement and in particular the "Matriarchy Study Group" who attempted a "spiritual take-over" of Glastonbury. It is probable that the production of this booklet was inspired as a response to Cara Trimarco's article entitled "Female Glastonbury", which appeared in the August 1983 "The Ley Hunter". Although I share the views of Mr. Roberts I feel that a

little more tolerance towards these deluded and unbalanced individuals would be more in character for one who is devoted to working for those New Age ideals of love, peace and universal brotherhood. Mr. Roberts does stress that the Anti-Feminist Papers are not anti-woman but pro-people. I await the subsequent papers with interest.

Paul Baines.

GLASTONBURY PAPER NO.1 - Elliptical Navigations through the Multitudinous Aethyrs of Avalon. By Robert Coon. Preface by Anthony Roberts. Excalibur Press 1984 PB 71 pp 11 illustrations. £2.50

This formidable title amply reflects the contents of this interesting but complex work which assumes that the reader is well acquainted with Cabala. Definitely not for the casual reader of Earth Mystery books; this publication needs to be read and reread in order to gain some insight into the message it is intended to convey.

The central theme of Robert Coon's Navigations revolve around Glastonbury, the Heart Chakra of Planet Earth from which emanates "a global Omega Point". The spirit of the book may be summed up in Robert Coon's own words that "There is a Promethian Gift of spiritual fire waiting to be liberated from Glaston that shall free humanity from every limitation and bring peace to this suffering planet..." The Multitudinous Aethyrs through which the Elliptical Navigations take us include Magic; the Glastonbury Zodiac; Physical immortality; Earth chakras; Crowley; William Blake; Arthur and the Holy Grail. Mr. Coon has clearly made a vast study of the subjects upon which he writes and shows a rare mastery of the Cabala. A small, profound and probably unique work.

This first edition is limited to 666 copies and the first edition of each number of the Glastonbury Papers will be available only by subscription from:- EXCALIBUR PRESS (UK), Ostia, Overleigh, Street, Somerset. Prices: Single issue £2.50. 4 issues £9.00.

Paul Baines.

THE BOY FROM THE HILLS by Cara Louise. Illustrated by Andree Wilson. Published by Earth Mysteries Enterprises, 1983.

This is a short but moving children's story which is intended to be the first of a series to be published by Earth Mysteries Enterprises. A combination of a thunderstorm and the energy at a standing stone cause a time-warp in which a boy from prehistoric times is projected into our own century in the amazed presence of Jamie, a doctor's son. A firm friendship develops between the two as the boy - Kai - struggles to make a life in an unfamiliar world that has rejected most of his culture's ideals. The pace of the book develops through a number of incidents, including the discovery by archaeologists of a grave which is obviously that of Kai's father, to a final grand climax. The characters, particularly the dreadful Mrs. Wiggins, the child welfare officer, are painted with a liberal brush,

and it will be easy for a child to get absorbed in the story.

Perhaps the only criticism that can be made of the book is that it presents the prehistoric world as being somewhat too perfect. It does, however, illustrate Earth Mysteries concepts in a way children can understand, and I certainly hope it is successful.

Jimmy Goddard.

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LETTERS
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From Squadron-Leader Denis Shipwright, Woking (this letter received not long before he went into hospital).

I would very much like to hear more about leys, dowsing and earth zodiacs. I'm sure that the secrets of the Earth can offer us an alternative spirituality which could defuse a dangerous future. To think that ours is the first era in human history in which man is capable of ending human history! What a thought! An absurdity of technological progress!

From Richard Colborne, 257, Silchester Drive, Harpurhey, Manchester.

The Hurt Wood Track is very interesting. I can tell you that there are a very great number of Roman roads in this area (many of which are not recognised as such by conventional archaeologists) and I could point out many, such as the street plans of Leatherhead and Ashted, and a number of less obvious ones crossing the line of the Hurt Wood Track. However, this does not mean that the Hurt Wood Track is Roman.

May I suggest a slightly different line for it? Starting from the obvious section in Winterfold Forest, going west: White House (N.E. of Grafton), just S. of Lea Farm (N.W. of Grafton), "House in the Wood" at Hyde style.

Going east, the boundary (which is coincident with the road in Winterfold Forest) takes up the line again very briefly, just after it crosses Stane Street, but it has already passed over a very high point (742 ft.) near where a trig point has recently been placed. It passes over another high point (225 ft.) again having had a trig point placed near it. It passes to the north of Leigh church. It is almost coincident with the track leading to Hartswood Manor. It then passes through South Nutfield and on towards Filburstow Hill (574 ft.) after passing a little to the south of Coldharbour House.

This suggestion is not very different from your own, but it takes in those rather prominent peaks and a few local names. If it is

a Roman road it is not likely to go over those peaks (except as a track). I think you'll find that it takes a different line after crossing Stane Street and Horsham Road, to pass the peak west of Leigh along Bunce Common (Road), past Leigh Place (aligned side of moat) and along an aligned piece of track. I can only speculate that it joins its proper line at Hartswood Manor.

I must admit that I'm working from the old 1" map No. 170 which has stretched with a fair bit of use, but whichever line it takes I'm quite impressed with this one.

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STOP PRESS
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Since typing in Bob's "Strange Surrey" article an unusual case has come to my attention. It concerns an unusual storm at Cires-les-Mello in northern France, in July of this year. It was of about twenty minutes duration, and hailstones "as big as oranges" fell from the sky, seriously damaging most of the roofs in the village and smashing windows. Some hailstones entered through one window and went out through another. Strangely, this unusual storm was confined to the area of the village - the damage did not extend much beyond it. Mme. Catteau, who described the storm to my mother, said she spent the duration of the storm on her knees in prayer, thinking that the end of the world had come.

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EXCHANGE LIST

QUICKSILVER MESSENGER, Garden Flat, 46, Vere Road, Brighton, Sussex.
CAERDROIA, 53, Thundersley Grove, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex.
EARTHQUEST NEWS, 19, St. David's Way, Benfleet, Essex, SS1.8EX.
COMMON GROUND, 14, Northfold Road, Knighton, Leicester.
FORTEAN TIMES, BM-Fortean Times, London, WC1N. 3XX.
NORTHERN EARTH MYSTERIES, 170, Victoria Avenue, Hull, HU5. 3DY.
STONEHENGE VIEWPOINT, 2821, De La Vina Street, Santa Barbara, Calif. 93105, U.S.A.
TERRESTRIAL ZODIAC NEWS, 8, Eynsford Court, Hitchin, Hertfordshire.
THE PIPES OF PAN, 69, Cranbury Road, Reading, Berkshire.
THE SHAMAN, 5, Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland, TS25. 2AT.
EARTH GIANT, 35a, West Street, Abbotsbury, Nr. Weymouth, Dorset.
WORD SPIRIT, Basement Flat, 23, Upton Park, Slough, SL1. 2DA., Berkshire.
THE LEY HUNTER, P.O. Box 13, Welshpool, Powys, Wales.

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