

Touchstone

Surrey
Earth
Mysteries



No. 11

October 1986

AVEBURY REVISITED

On July 15th, 1962, the Ley Hunter's Club and the Pendragon Society made a visit to the stone circle village of Avebury in Wiltshire. Tony Wedd, Philip Heselton and I were there, and a memorable day was had, made more so by the fact that I had the opportunity of speaking about it on television shortly afterwards. Almost exactly twenty-four years later, my wife Doris and I visited the village, on August 11th, and we found a number of interesting things.

We began our visit by walking the circle, starting by the Marlborough road and walking anticlockwise round the high outer bank. The first thing we came to was a large beech clump, one of three clumps on the bank. It is unlikely that they were here originally, but I felt they could have been naturally or subconsciously sited to replace with their wind noise sounds deliberately made here in prehistoric times. There is also an intervisibility factor, for this clump is visible from the Sanctuary on Overton Hill, while the circle itself is hidden. The three Avebury clumps seem to form an isosceles triangle, the mid-point of the base of which is the centre of the monument.

The south-east quadrant where we started does not have many stones of the Great Circle left, though one it does have, the Devil's Chair, has a Devil legend attached to it. More prominent are the stones and markers of the Southern Inner Circle. Also, scanning the horizon, a profusion of clumps is visible - we are looking towards the Ridgeway with its barrows. There seemed to be more than those barrows

marked on the 1:50000 map.

At the end of this bank section we came to the second deciduous clump and the small road leading to the Downs. Crossing this, we find another fairly stoneless section of the Great Circle, but the remains of the Cove in the centre of the Northern Inner Circle are visible.

Reaching the Swindon road, the massive diamond-shaped Swindon Stone comes into view; one of the few stones neither fallen nor moved. Most of the stones in this and the following section were replaced by Alexander Keiller from their fourteenth-century burial places. We then come to a section where the bank was levelled to build the Great Barn, now a museum, and we have to go by road to the continuation beyond the High Street (once the site of the Beckhampton Avenue). In this final section Silbury Hill comes into view, although its top becomes eventually eclipsed by an intervening hill. The stones here include the infamous Barber Stone, which fell crushing the man attempting to bury it. Looking back towards the church, the third clump, one of pines, can be seen.

Returning to the village we visited the church; St. James's is a Saxon foundation but with many later additions. The nave is almost square and there is a fifteenth-century rood loft; at the west end is the twelfth-century font carved with the figure of Christ trampling on two winged serpents. I wondered if these could represent the serpentine Avebury avenues. The church is built so that the circles are just out of sight, for clearly nothing short of a cathedral could dominate the circles. Despite this, however, it seems to be subconsciously sited on an interesting ley passing through five churches, Avebury centre and some other points. There was also head-hum felt even in the porch (quite rare).

After lunch we went south to briefly visit Silbury Hill, then went to the Sanctuary site. Many clumps were visible as well as Silbury of course; perhaps the most spectacular was the visible alignment of the Sanctuary, East Kennett church and East Kennet Long Barrow with its clump. The Sanctuary was originally a stone and wood circle but was dismantled in Stukeley's time, except for one recumbent stone. The rest are marked with concrete markers. One would think such a site would be bleak, but in fact both this and the similar Woodhenge have welcoming atmospheres. We noted an alignment of barrows across the road with one near the Sanctuary and East Kennett. We finished our trip with a visit to the West Kennett barrow, now open to the public with glass roof panels to admit light. Despite brash Americans visiting, it awed me as it had twenty-four years

earlier when I was here with Tony Wedd - there was a feeling that it was more a place of worship than a mausoleum. A number of clumps are visible from its top, and the Stonehenge-Avebury ley grazes its west end.

SOME THOUGHTS ON MOOT 86
by Chris Hall

Ley hunting has come a long way since the days of Watkins. While there is still immense scope for enthusiasm to pore over old maps and trek the old ways across a forgotten landscape, the ley concept today embraces a spectrum of inter-related subjects. It is rather as if Watkins discovered a single letter in a new language, since when we have been adding other letters and are slowly learning how to use them to communicate again.

There is no better way to appreciate what a multi-discipline ley research has become than to attend the annual Moot, held this year at the University of London. So it should be, for are not all things connected? Paul Devereux set the dod walking with an extended address about the Dragon Project, and the work of the new Centre for Earth Mysteries Studies. The Dragon Project has been in a quiet period of assessment. Its last major effort was the Gaia Project of radiation monitoring at stone circles. The results are due to be published soon. The departure of two team members, lack of funds and access to equipment prevented a continued high research effort, but the problems are now overcome. For instance, the Project now owns two magnetometers, and unrestricted access to this expensive equipment means new research will be under way soon. It is also intended to resume monitoring of ultrasonics at sites, a line of enquiry which was the first to produce unexpected anomalies, especially at dawn. It is also planned to study gravity anomalies and use Kirlian photography on stones. Researches at Carnac, Brittany has found gravitational anomalies in the vicinity of stone rows. Kirlian photography indicates energy patterns; the problem has been how to apply the technique to something as large as a stone. Early experiments have produced images with a blue glow round the stone, and it is clearly a promising approach.

The Moot then switched to perhaps the oldest science of all, as embodied in the doctrine of paganism. Richard Dufton gave an interesting and entertaining talk entitled "Stick Law", about the staff, its uses and symbolism. We are beginning to appreciate the significance of trees as ley markers, but the folklore of trees is still a neglected area. The wood of certain trees was favoured for staffs,

elder being the best. There has recently been an informative little book published on trees in Scotland, with an emphasis on folklore and superstition. There is surely scope for similar material to be gathered together on English tree lore (and indeed for Wales and Ireland). For instance, a custom apparently peculiar to Surrey was singing to apple trees. Young boys of the village would sing to the trees at Christmas or New Year's Eve, to ensure a good crop.

Surrey is England's most wooded county and must offer many secrets of treelore. Its place names often refer to trees, and Elstead near Farnham is "the place of the elder trees". There is still a wood named Druid's Grove near Dorking. The county may not have had temples of stone, but why not temples of trees? There is an old belief worldwide that the gods speak to those who can hear in the rustling of leaves in a breeze.

An area of growing interest has been holy wells, perhaps helped by "Sacred Waters" by Janet and Colin Bord. It was common practice to dig a well until quite recently; my grandfather dug one in the 1920s which was still producing good water forty years later. Victorian houses often had wells. Some are associated with unusual phenomena. When a bricked up well was opened in Farnborough, Hampshire all the dogs in the vicinity started barking furiously. That night, the night of the full moon, a spectral hound was seen howling beside the well.

The next talk investigated links between holy wells, ghost lights and UFOs, by Alan Cleaver and Granville Olroyd.

It was inconclusive, but some interesting snippets emerged. One example cited was of mystery lights over Keston Ponds, near Bromley. The hill nearby has a prehistoric earthwork, a reminder of fairy lights seen round hillforts elsewhere. In 1967 lights hovered over the ponds, and later a ghost was seen hovering over them. I have always found Keston a rather enchanting, almost alluring place, but had not heard of the phenomena.

So many old wells are forgotten, surviving only as place names. It is good that there is a resurgence of interest, making possible for instance the excellent detective work of the Ladywell Village Society of South East London. It was hard in an urban environment to relocate the former village mineral spring, noted for its health-giving water, and the holy well which gave the village its name. The Society are pressing Lewisham Council to mark the site. Surrey has many wells, one of the most famous being that in Mother Ludlam's Cave near Waverley Abbey.

One of the most interesting sessions of the Moot was the panel, comprising Paul Devereux, Bob Forrest (ley

statistician), Aubrey Burl (archaeologist and ley critic), Michael de Styrcea, John Michell and Nigel Pennick. A good deal of ground was covered, beginning with a question about how Chernobyl may have affected the Earth spirit/energy. The panel saw the positive message in the accident - this was a warning; we were lucky this time. There was also talk of how uranium mining was desecrating the sacred hills of the Red Indians. There was much said of a practical nature.

Aubrey Burl's presence shows that archaeologists sense ley hunting is not a flash in the pan. He stated that he believes the onus is on us to show we have something valid. Paul Devereux pleaded for objective, repeatable Watkinsian-type research. The discussion considered how earth mysteries and archaeologists might come together more, to help each other.

Other questions raised the issue of archaeological restoration, especially the use of concrete. Some members of the audience felt sites were being desecrated. The Hurlers in Cornwall seem almost more concrete than stone. Early restorationists tended to make the site "look nice" - there are examples on Dartmoor where missing stones were replaced with convenient boulders from the moor. Some restoration is purely for the profit motive - a site open to the public, to make the owner money, has to be safe, and modern man has lost the art of building without concrete.

Perhaps the most important statement made at any Moot came from Rupert Sheldrake. In 15 minutes he attempted to link earth mysteries with the ecology movement and spirituality. He spoke of nuclear weapons, Chernobyl and the Prayer for Peace movement. He suggested an alternative approach, combining prayer with geomancy. What is the geomancy of nuclear sites? Are they subconsciously sited, or built with the sensitivity of a rapist? His idea is to identify sacred sites nearby, and to pray there to balance the negativity. It is a marvellously positive concept of a subject which normally leads people to give up.

Notes:

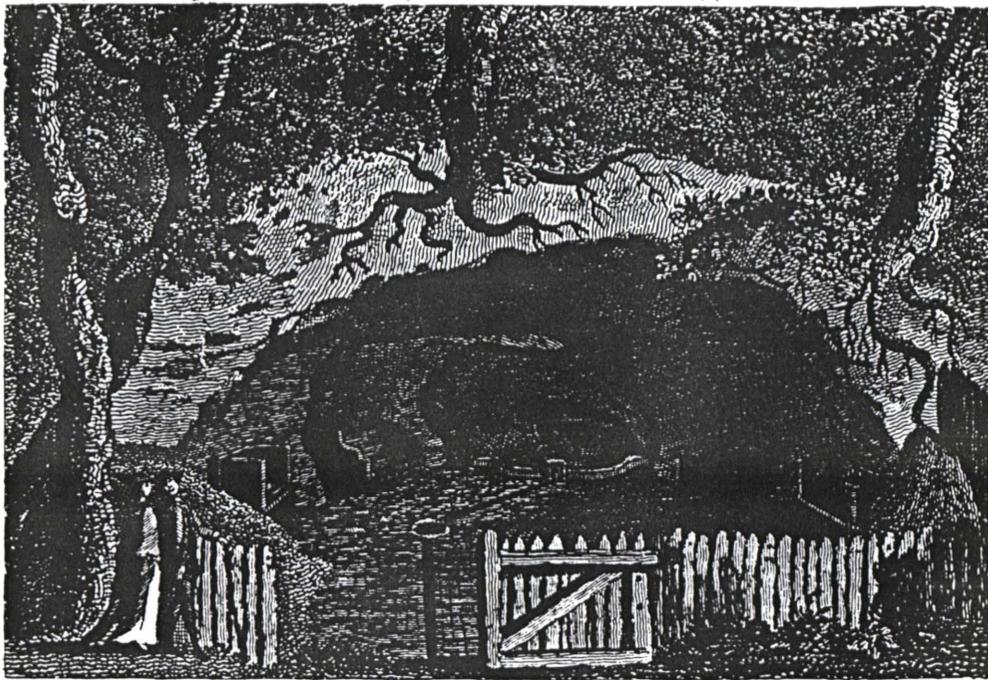
"The Lore of Highland Trees", by Hugh Fife (Famedram Publishers, 1985).

"Old English Customs", Surrey Advertiser, 28/12/63.

"Sacred Waters" by Janet and Colin Bord (Granada 1985).

"Spook Lights - a British Survey" by David Clarke and Granville Olroyd (1985).

Ladywell Village Society, 67, Chudleigh Road, Ladywell Village, London, S.E.4. 1JX.



20 April 1773

Sparrow Sc.

MOTHER LUDLAM'S HOLE, NEAR FARNHAM, SURRY.

THIS Grotto, although not strictly within the plan of this book, being neither a piece of antiquity, nor even entirely a work of art, is here inserted in compliance to the request of several of its admirers. Indeed, it is not only in itself a natural curiosity worthy notice, but also respectable, as having served for the retirement of the great Sir William Temple, to whom the Park and adjoining seat formerly belonged; and who so much esteemed this spot, that, in obedience to his last will, his heart enclosed in a silver box was buried under a sun-dial in the garden.

MOTHER Ludlam's Hole lies half way down the west side of a sandy hill, covered with wood, towards the southernmost end of Moor Park, and is near three miles south of Farnham, and about a quarter of a mile north-east of the ruins of Waverley Abbey, which were, when standing visible from it. Moor Park, thou small, affords several scenes most beautifully wild and romantic.

THIS cavern seems to have been originally the work of Nature, formed by a rill of water, which probably forced itself a kind of channel, afterwards enlarged by art. At the entrance it is about eight feet high, and fourteen or fifteen broad, but decreases in height and breadth till it becomes so low, as to be passable only by a person crawling on their hands and knees: farther on it is said to heighten. Its depth is undoubtedly considerable, but much exaggerated by the fabulous reports of the common people. It does not go straight forwards, but at some distance from the entrance turns towards the left hand, or north.

THE bottom is paved, and the widest part separated by a marble frame, with a passage for a small stream of clear water; which rising within, is conducted by a marble trough through the center of the pavement into a circular basin of the same materials, having an

MOTHER LUDLAM'S HOLE, NEAR FARNHAM, SURRY.

iron ladle chained to it, for the convenience of drinking. From hence it is carried out by other troughs to the declivity of the hill, where, falling down seven steps, it is collected in a small reservoir. Four stone benches, placed two on each side, seem to invite the visitor to that meditation for which this place is so admirably calculated. The gloomy and uncertain depth of the receding Grotto, the gentle murmurs of the Rill, and the beauty of the Prospect, seen through the dark arched entrance, shagged with weevils and the roots of trees, all conspire to excite solemn contemplation, and to fill the soul with a rapturous admiration of the works of the Great Creator.

THIS place derives its name from a popular story, which makes it formerly the residence of a white witch, called Mother Ludlam, or Ludlow; not one of those malevolent Beings mentioned in the *Dæmonologie*, a repetition of whose pranks, as chronicled by Glanvil, Baxter, and Cotton Mather, erects the hair, and closes the circle of the listening rustics round the village fire. This old lady neither killed hogs, rode on broom-staves, nor made children vomit nails and crooked pins; crimes for which many an old woman has been sentenced to death by judges, who, however they may be vilified in this sceptical age, thereby certainly cleared themselves from the imputation of being either wizards or conjurors,

ON the contrary, Mother Ludlam, instead of injuring, when properly invoked, kindly assisted her poor neighbours in their necessities, by lending them such culinary utensils and household furniture as they wanted for particular occasions.

THE business was thus transacted: The petitioner went to the cave at midnight, turned three times round, and thrice repeated aloud, "Pray, good Mother Ludlam, lend me such a thing (naming the utensil), and I will return it within two days." He, or she, then retired, and coming again early the next morning, found at the entrance the requested moveable. This intercourse continued a long time, till once, a person not returning a large cauldron according to the stipulated time, Madam Ludlam was so irritated at this want of punctuality, that she refused to take it back when afterwards left in the cavern; and from that time to this has not accommodated any one with the most trifling loan. The story adds, that the cauldron was carried to Waverley Abbey, and after the dissolution of that monastery deposited in Frensham church.

IN fact, a monstrous cauldron was kept in the vestry of that church, according to Salmon, who seems to hint, that some such ridiculous story was told concerning it as that above related. "The great cauldron, says he, which lay in the vestry beyond the memory of man, was no more brought thither from Waverley than, as report goes, by the Fairies. It need not raise any man's wonder for what use it was, there having been many in England, till very lately, to be seen, as well as very large spits, which were given for entertainment of the parish at the wedding of poor maids; so was in some places a sum of money charged upon lands for them, and a house for them to dwell in for a year after marriage. If these utensils of hospitality, which drew the neighbourhood to contribute upon so laudable an occasion, had committed treason, as the property of a convent, they had not been too heavy to be carried off."

This drawing was made Anno 1761,

CREDIT: ROB STEPHENSON, LONDON EARTH MYSTERIES CIRCLE.

B O O K S

"Tales of Old Surrey", by Matthew Alexander, 94 pages, pub. Countryside Books, Newbury, £2.95

Clues to earth mysteries are often enshrined in folklore. Though it has been said that Surrey has few folk tales to offer, this merely reflects a lack of study or of people to collate an anthology. Matthew Alexander, the curator of Guildford Museum, has changed all of that since he moved to Surrey ten years ago. Since then he has been collecting tales of old Surrey, which he has now put together in a book.

It is a mixed bag, in which hauntings are a surprising omission, but this may be because there are so many Surrey ghosts. Farnham, for instance, has been claimed as Britain's most haunted town. Some of the county's best known tales are also omitted, and some sections are not folklore at all but genuine history. Nonetheless, there is enough to keep the genuine earth mysteries enthusiast reading. Matthew Alexander is both an academic and a sceptic, and his obsession with historical accuracy is the book's greatest fault. His insistence on putting the historical record straight ruins the charm of so many of the tales he relates and feels contrary to the very spirit of folklore.

Thus, be prepared for a few swipes at herbalism, alchemy, the Surrey Puma and even the Pilgrim's Way, which he claims never existed. He does do us a useful service by giving examples of fiction becoming folklore "when the name of the author is forgotten". The legend of the Silent Pool, for instance, is said to originate in "A Romance of the Silent Pool", published in 1858. This may be so, but novelists often gain ideas from local lore (witness Andrew Sinclair's "The Surrey Cat", a rather sensational yarn in which a panther terrorises the Guildford area). The existence of an obvious work of fiction does not rule out an earlier folk tale, though clearly the folklore can embrace the fiction and be modified by it.

It is interesting in this context that, during my researches into the Surrey Puma, a journalist who helped with information recalled Andrew Sinclair doing a lot of research and publishing a book about the Puma in the 1960s. Fiction had become fact, in his mind. It is doubly interesting to catch Matthew Alexander creating a myth of his own. In 1964 a long line of pawprints were found on a running track at racing stables at Munstead, near Godalming.

These were attributed to the puma. Cats retract their

claws when walking, dogs do not, and the absence of claw marks on the Munstead prints helped to link them with puma sightings in the area.

Two years later the naturalist Maurice Barton showed that pawprints found at Peaslake could have been made by a bloodhound, which, under certain conditions, can leave pawprints without clawmarks. Matthew Alexander states that Dr. Burton then checked the Munstead prints and found "claw marks were indeed visible on some". This not only implies that the pawprints were somehow preserved for two years in a busy racing stable, but goes against all contemporary accounts which I have traced.

Criticisms aside, the book is nonetheless a useful source of material to investigate, for Fortean as well as ley hunters. There is the legend of the bleeding stone of Buckland, a village near Reigate. A large stone stood where the road forded a stream. Once a farmer's beautiful daughter was courted here by the son of the squire. The young man made a most improper suggestion, at which the girl was so shocked she fell dead at his feet. Her suitor was so overcome with remorse that he could have had such wicked thoughts that he drew his dagger and thrust it through his heart. Next morning their bodies were found, and the stone was steadily trickling blood. No wiping would stem the flow, and it continued to bleed as a grim reminder of the tragedy. (The road is the modern A25, but the stone has long since been removed).

Tunnel legends have often been linked with leys. Any researcher wishing to pursue this connection will have a feast here, with no less than 12 Surrey tunnel legends to investigate. Other tales related include a huge shaggy ape which terrorised travellers at midnight, a Surrey alchemist, May Day customs, a woman who gave birth to rabbits and a Surrey witch. The book is still available from good bookshops in the county.

Chris Hall.

+++++

N O T E S A N D N E W S

The Auld Stanes

The name of the town of Staines is said to be of Saxon origin, after nine stones supposedly placed by Druids at Egham Hythe, opposite Staines Bridge. They are mentioned in a 12th century charter defining the boundaries of the monastic lands of Chertsey Abbey. ("The Leader", Thursday

August 28th, 1986).

Credit: my parents.

Southampton mystery

When visiting Paulton's Park, near Ower, Southampton recently Bob Swift noticed the remains of a Celtic cross across the river, with the top part of the circle broken away. It seemed to be standing in a circle of stones. Are these ancient? There is no mention of the cross or stones on the Ordnance Survey map.

London Earth Mysteries

A new and vigorous earth mysteries group has been formed in London recently, the London Earth Mysteries Circle. It meets twice a month at the Maria Assumpta Centre, 23, Kensington Square, London, W.8., and has had an impressive list of speakers and subjects. The latter have included Dion Fortune, UFOs and spooks, and the moving statue of Ballinspittle. On November 11th B. Barcim will speak on Bach flower remedies, on the 25th it is David Christie-Murray on reincarnation. A surprise guest is billed for December 9th, speaking on the Winter Solstice. Membership of the Circle is £10 per year, and meetings are £1.50 to non-members, 50p to members. Contact Rob Stephenson, 223, Underhill Road, London, SE22. OPB. The Circle plans to instigate a long-term research project on London geomancy, folklore and history.

More London Earth Mysteries.

"London Walkabout" by Andrew Collins has recently been reprinted by Earthquest Books. This book is a must for anyone interested in earth mysteries in the London area. It is researched in depth, and goes in detail into the history and legends associated with ten mystical sites in London, including five on the St. Paul's Cathedral ley. £1.10 from Earthquest Books, 19, St. David's Way, Wickford, Essex, SS11. 8EX.

Group meetings

Meetings of the group are continuing at my home on the second Thursday of each month, EXCEPT DECEMBER. However, we have had very low attendances lately, and we may have to discontinue meetings next year if there is not sufficient interest. Circulating the group postally between each meeting has proved too expensive.

Mother Ludlam trip

The London Earth Mysteries Circle have expressed an interest in a joint field trip to see Mother Ludlam's Hole and other places in the area, sometime next spring. Would anyone interested in coming on such a trip please let me know.

EXCHANGE LIST

QUICKSILVER MESSENGER, c/o ELTI, Hotel Wisata International, P.O. Box 2457 Jkt., Jakarta, Indonesia.
CAERDROIA, 53, Thundersley Grove, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex.
EARTHQUEST NEWS, 19, St. David's Way, Benfleet, Essex.
COMMON GROUND, 14, Northfold Road, Knighton, Leicester.
FORTEAN TIMES, 96, Mansfield Road, London NW3. 2HX.
NORTHERN EARTH MYSTERIES, 170, Victoria Avenue, Hull, HU5. 3DY.
STONEHENGE VIEWPOINT, 2821, De La Vina Street, Santa Barbara, Calif, 93105, U.S.A.
THE PIPES OF PAN, 69, Cranbury Road, Reading, Berkshire.
FOLKLORE FRONTIERS, 5, Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland, TS25. 2AT.
WORD SPIRIT, Basement Flat, 23, Upton Park, Slough, Berkshire, SL1. 2DA.
THE LEY HUNTER, P.O. Box 5, Brecon, Powys, Wales.
CIRCLE, Box 219, Mt. Horeb, WI 53572, U.S.A.
MAGONIA, John Dee Cottage, 5, James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London, S.W.14. 8HB.
EARTH FORCE, 12, Lynmouth Drive, Gilmarton, Lutterworth, Leicestershire.
BEYOND SCIENCE, Neptunian Publishing Co. Ltd., First Floor, 7, Chapel Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11. 1EG.

Our thanks to all exchange publications, especially those who have mentioned us.

TOUCHSTONE is published by Surrey Earth Mysteries Group, 25, Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey. Sub TWO POUNDS for four issues, please make cheques payable to J. Goddard. All articles are welcome and all are welcome at our monthly meetings in Addlestone. IF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS DUE AN "X" WILL FOLLOW THIS SENTENCE:

CAMPUS LINES

Leys and Modern Universities



Jimmy Goddard

Published by
SURREY EARTH MYSTERIES GROUP
25 Albert Road
Addlestone
WEYBRIDGE
Surrey
KT15 2PX

This is an account of Jimmy Goddard's nine year project investigating modern university campuses and their surrounding leys. The strange phenomenon of subconscious siting comes over strongly amongst a number of good ancient leys - the system is revealed as a living one with many answers still to be found.

copies can be obtained from the
above address at the cost of £1 plus postage. Please make
cheques payable to "J. Goddard".