

Touchstone

Surrey
Earth
Mysteries



No. 14

July 1987

THE MOTHER LUDLAM'S HOLE FIELD TRIP

In spite of a few minor setbacks, the field trip was quite successful. We met with the London Earth Mysteries Circle as planned, and a number of interesting things were found. The main ley of interest in the area is the one linking Sandy Cross cross-roads, Mother Ludlam's Hole, Waverley Abbey, a junction nearby, the Millbridge cross-roads and Frensham church.

At the junction outside Waverley Abbey there was a weir under the road, where there was the familiar middle-C sound of rushing water, and it is exactly on the ley. The age of the water channeling is not known.

The abbey being closed until 2.00, we made our way to Mother Ludlam's Hole along a very pleasant wooded track. The cave is very spectacular with its seventeenth century entrance arch, its trickling stream and mysterious cavernous depths. At the entrance and at right angles to it there are two natural-looking fissures which run very deeply into the rock. They are aligned with each other but are not on the line of the Frensham ley. The main cave is large, but narrows towards the back to a very narrow passage through which the stream flows.

After visiting the cave, a small group scaled the hill to reach the much smaller Father Fook's Cave, higher up and completely dry. It too had side alcoves, though these were smaller and looked man-made. The "Mithraic Temple" at Chiddingstone has similar alcoves at the entrance.

There is a group of three Scots pines above Father Fook's Cave, but Chris Hall told us they had been put there in the seventeenth century. During this and the following century many "ornamental" clumps were placed on hilltops. Chris regards these as red herrings, but I tend to feel there could have been a strong subconscious urge to build them, to re-mark the leys.

There are three possible origins of the Ludlam name, Chris informed us. One is from Lud the Saxon king of Ludgate fame. It could also come from a Saxon word for meeting place, or one meaning "loud". The sound of the stream at Waverley Abbey came to mind then. I tend to favour the "loud" possibility, for the original name was Ludwell, and the derivation of Ludwell in Wiltshire is "loud stream". It does not seem likely that the stream through the cave was ever loud, but it flows into the Wey near the very loud weir mentioned earlier.

I was asked by one of the LEMC members if I had the sandjar, and if I still used it. The answer is no, not because it has become less effective, but because of the rogue variable of health. My health has deteriorated somewhat, and the energy accumulated by the cork seems to flow back into me (going from higher to lower potential) instead of going into the quartz and activating it. This renders it ineffective to me, but it would not be so for a younger person in good health.

We proceeded from here to the Millbridge cross-roads near Frensham, where the ley passes through. We found a small stone near the fence of a house (a little way down the road), and one of the LEMC members asked the occupier if he knew anything about it. He turned out to be the local historical society chairman, and he told us that the stone, broken by gas workers, was not old, but an older one had existed by the cross-roads - exactly where the ley passed through! (It had been removed by the council to make room for some rather ugly bollards).

After a pleasant lunch on Frensham Green, we went to Frensham church, which, like the well, is dedicated to St. Mary. No visual alignment was in evidence, but the bend in the river the ley passes through confirmed the line of it, and two double trees were adjacent though not quite on it. There is a group of four Scots pines in line with the west end of the church, and some interesting external window grotesques, including a pig, a skull and a demon! A window of St. George and St. Michael by the altar was evidence of the church's ley importance. The church was founded in the thirteenth century.

The cauldron we had all come to see was a huge metal bowl about three feet in diameter on a separate three-legged trivet. The writer of the church history, though recounting the legend, says the real purpose of the vessel was to contain ale drunk at "church ales" in the middle ages. There was said to be a mineral spring nearby, but there is no evidence of this today.

We then went back to Waverley Abbey and looked around the site - beautiful on a sunny afternoon, with blue damsel flies skimming over the river and forget-me-nots by the water's edge. At this point our group had to leave as some of us were feeling the effects of the heat. We called in on our member Brenda Spinney in Grayshott on the way back, and had a pleasant chat to round off the day.

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THE EVENING PART OF THE MOTHER LUDLAM'S FIELD TRIP

by Robert Stephenson

After our joint exploration of Waverley Abbey ruins was completed it was time to take a peaceful rest in the sunshine. This is a tranquil spot, with the River Wey curving placidly round the abbey meadows. Most of us were drawn to the water's edge and on this day many damsel flies were darting across its surface. It was now getting on for late afternoon, and the Surrey Earth Mysteries contingent had to take their leave. So we said farewell, and on a final look round the position of the church high altar was found. Close by a magnificent yew tree was growing from the ruined east end; this, like the other large trees growing from the walls, testified to the length of time since the abbey's dissolution.

Chris Hall, who has researched the area, stayed on to guide us through the evening. A lashing of string was quickly improvised to secure his bicycle to the mini-bus roof rack. The next stop for us was, however, at a garden centre refreshment house for a leisurely round of tea and cakes. But it was not too long before we were parked on Frensham Common and climbing the sandy slope to see the tumuli. Standing on the highest gave marvellous views over miles of common, with the vast Frensham Great Pond unmistakable in the valley below.

We drove south to our final destination - Stony Jump, one of the Devil's Jumps whose folklore significance has been given in previous Touchstones. Only after walking some distance was it possible to fully realise the ascent ahead of us. Standing at the bottom of this natural eminence one could look up and see a great staircase of log foot steps stretching up into the sky. A long but enjoyable climb brought us to the rocky outcrop on its summit - from this craggy eyrie a splendid panorama was spread before us. We looked for crevices in the rock to contact the fairies through and watched the sun sink closer to the horizon. I think it was about nine o'clock when we reluctantly started back down.

THE KINGSTON GREEN FAIR

by Rob Stephenson

This event, held on the last Bank Holiday in May, was the first of its kind to be staged in Kingston-upon-Thames. It ran from 12 noon to 9 p.m. in Canbury Park Gardens - a long, narrow park, pleasantly situated beside the river.

A collective of local people concerned about the environment and conservation had chosen eighty stalls from organisations with appropriate interests. Some of their concerns included: green politics, organic farming, animal protection, conservation work, human rights, whole foods, energy saving, arts and crafts, natural healing and astrology. The respect for our heritage which earth mysteries represents was recognised and three places were allocated outside the central cafe marquee. Mary Caine was there, spreading word of the Glastonbury Terrestrial Zodiac and very aptly her own

Kingston Zodiac. On the London Earth Mysteries Circle stall, I can report we had not expected such a good response - it was due no doubt to the sympathetic people attracted by an occasion such as this. Unfortunately the Surrey Earth Mysteries Group was not represented because of ill health. A very useful booklet was available giving the programme and listing all the contact addresses.

Although this was a period of frequent and heavy rain showers, Mother Earth had decided the sun should shine on her benefactors and it stayed fine all day - surely a good omen for alternative approaches. It also much increased the enjoyment of the entertainments taking place non-stop around the park. Apart from the music from a series of bands on the main stage, there were drama acts, story tellers, jugglers, African dancers, puppets, folk singers, face painting, healing workshops, inflatables and a play-bus for children. One of the notable performances came from Des Kay and his Bicycle-powered Recycling Machine, a large contraption manufactured entirely from scrap materials, that had the admirable capability of turning nuclear warheads into vege-burgers! Another moment in the day that typified the spirit of the event, was the inaugural ceremony of the Save the World Club. This is free to join, the only requirement being to say each morning "I am a member of the S.T.W.C. and today I will do all I can to save the world."

Everyone noted the harmonious ambiance of the fair and agreed it had been a success. Plans are afoot for its return next year.

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from Norman Darwen, Sidcup:

I have a little more information about the Stirling University campus. Although I have not been able to undertake any field work as yet, I did acquire the book "Bridge of Allan - the Rise of a Village", by Ella Maclean, which mentions a couple of curious facts about the campus. First, the site was chosen although it was known that it lies directly on the Ochil fault line. This is curious because earthquakes strong in relation to other British tremors have been experienced in the region. Secondly, there is in the campus grounds a standing stone which was restored to its original position by the University. This was no easy task as it had been broken and scattered for many years. There is a picture of this stone in the book, showing clearly that it was broken into at least two large pieces and one small one. This is not marked on the map.

Finally, not mentioned in the book is a strange arrangement of three stone slabs surrounding a bush in a field just to the north-east of a large single stone mentioned in Touchstone No. 13. The slabs have carvings on them but are much weathered. There may be a simple explanation for them, but I have not yet come across it.

That's all I've found out as yet! Below are two photos which are relevant. (1) is me by the large single stone east of the campus, which is visible in the left background. This picture is taken almost on the line I wrote about, although we did not realise it at the time (my wife took the picture). (2) is taken at the right of this stone, the top of which is just visible as a blob on the skyline to the left

of the tree and the gate. This is the three slabs with the bush.



(1)



(2)

LONDON EARTH MYSTERIES CIRCLE

I have recently attended two meetings of the London Earth Mysteries Circle at the Maria Assumpta Centre in Kensington. The first was on April 28th, when Clive Harper spoke on the Straight Track Club run by Alfred Watkins.

Watkins' book "Early British Trackways" was published in September, 1921, but a very similar theory to that of leys was put forward by William Henry Black in 1870. It did not get much enthusiasm but Watkins, who was sixteen at the time, may have heard of it.

"Early British Trackways" had limited distribution - it was "The Old Straight Track" which won wider public acclaim. In 1926 an association was formed in which folios were circulated to members, who were expected to add an article and send the folio to the next person on the list, with comments on the existing articles. That they expected a five-day turnaround for articles requiring map and field work (with photographs, drawings etc.) indicated that the members were mainly of the "leisured class".

The title of the club was "The Straight Track Postal Club" and its aim was to "study the development of our roads". Membership was limited to 30 and the annual subscription was 5/-, a considerable sum then. The first Hon. Sec. was Major Tyler, who wrote extensively on the subject. "Keen interest and ability" was required of members, who were not above writing "Balderdash!" about articles they disagreed with! The folios were intended to be "a record of topographical facts".

The heyday of the club was in the 1930s, and the scale of their field trips makes our present-day moots seem tame. But the numbers were always small. Very little is said about the members in the folios. It was thought that the last surviving member was Egerton Sykes, but mention was made from the floor of another member still alive.

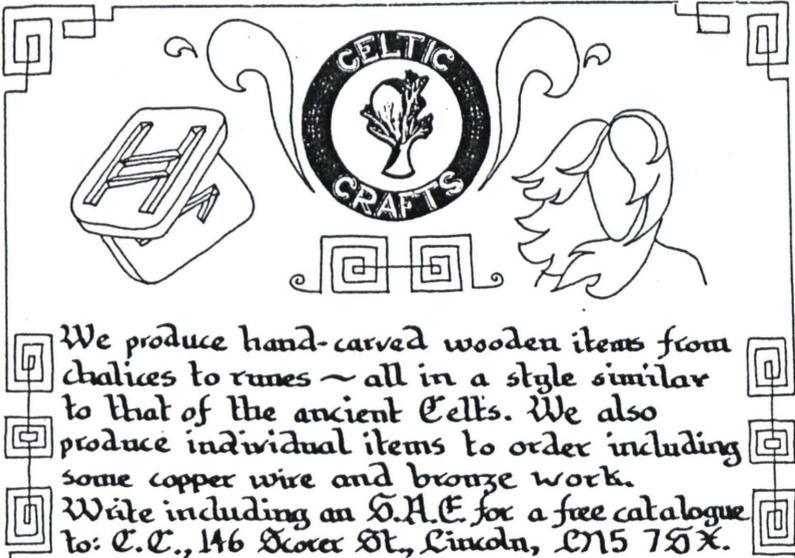
In 1929 a paper with a surprisingly modern-sounding title appeared in the folios: "The Straight Track and Ecology". There was also much folklore and material of local interest as well as straight track articles. But it was rather inward-looking and so lost momentum.

Just before his death (and too ill to comment) Watkins saw a letter from M.C. Carr-Gomm, secretary from May 1935. It asked what the aims of the club were, and if it had achieved them. It had, he said, been finding alignments ad infinitum. The theory was that they marked out tracks, but this was not necessarily true. He gave credit to Watkins for elevating our view of the mental calibre of early man, but said his theory was not the only possible one. The club should, he said, be investigating the abnormalities. He then listed a series of recurring phenomena which argued against the track theory: 1) alignments existing by the hundred, 2) parallel and close alignments, 3) alignments only approximately parallel, 4) tracks seldom ran the length of the alignments, 5) no definite beginnings or ends found, 6) mark points include a wide variety of descriptions, 7) rectilinear grids, 8) sites falling on concentric circles, 9) two radiating lines touching two sides of a large earthwork. These facts were all incompatible with the pure Watkins theory, he said, and we must clear our minds of preconceived ideas.

On May 12th I spoke on Skyways and Landmarks Revisited. First a tape of Tony Wedd, the researcher who linked leys with UFOs and started the modern earth mysteries movement, was played. He gave this talk in 1968 to the Northern Conference of BUFORA in Manchester. He outlined his skyways and landmarks theory, and a number of his original slides were shown.

After this I spoke on the re-appraisal of Tony's work carried out in Kent, the strengths and weaknesses discovered, and the forming of the new STAR Fellowship.

Future meetings: on July 14th Ken Rees will be discussing the Celtic fire festival of Lughnasad, and on July 28th David Geall will present his London Terrestrial Zodiac.



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COSMIC FRIENDS

Many members and other readers may have wondered why I so adamantly support the idea of space people in spite of its being "discredited" in recent years by many in the UFO and earth mysteries fields. I have done so even to the extent of re-starting Tony Wedd's organisation the STAR Fellowship and launching its new magazine "Amskaya", and continuing these in spite of minimal interest at the moment.

"Cosmic Friends", a booklet I have recently written and which is published by the STAR Fellowship, explains my attitude on the subject. Although I have not at present had the privilege of a personal face-to-face contact with space people, I have continued over the years to practice thought communication as encouraged by Tony Wedd. This has seemed to result in much help and guidance throughout my life, often at times when no help or guidance was available anywhere else. Through the story there are also a number of incidents, (including some with physical evidence, and one in which I may have seen space people even though I was not contacted) which seem connected. "Cosmic Friends" describes these incidents as well as giving information seemingly received through thought communication, some of which is relevant to the earth mysteries subject.

The booklet is available from me at 60p including postage.

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.

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