

# Touchstone

Surrey  
Earth  
Mysteries



No. 16

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## NORTHERN MOOT 1987

This year the Northern Moot was held at the Lindisfarne Centre, a new age centre in Newcastle-on-Tyne. It is quite a powerful spot, and is on a ley going to the east end of Durham Cathedral. It is also on the line of Hadrian's Wall and remains of a previously undiscovered milecastle were found here. The centre is beautifully laid out with a large meeting room where the moot was held, healing rooms and a sanctuary on the upper floor which was similar in design and feeling to the Upper Room at Chalice Well, Glastonbury. The courtyard originally held a chapel and is known as Newchapel Churchyard.

After Philip Heselton had introduced the Moot, Anthony Thorburn, a psychiatrist by profession and representing the Northumbria Seekers, spoke on the founding of the centre.

Philip then gave his introduction to Terrestrial Zodiacs, the theme of the Moot. He said that to archaeologists the subject was "the lunatic fringe of the lunatic fringe", but the idea goes back a long way, for Ptolemy divided the world into twelve zodiacal segments. But the idea had not been developed till the 1920s when Katherine Maltwood discovered the Glastonbury Zodiac. He then spoke briefly on her life and discoveries.

One approach to zodiac research is the logical one, he said, as with Mary Caine who drew up a series of zodiac rules. But most take the geomorphological approach, looking at the shapes of the land. There is similarity but also much diversity between them. If they exist, what is their function? If they are a natural phenomenon, they may not be "for" anything. What seems certain is that it is the intuition which takes priority, influenced by a particular "genius loci".

Nigel Pennick was the next speaker, and he began by giving an outline of the climate of opinion at the time of Mrs. Maltwood, who had suggested the landscape was planned into a planisphere (not a zodiac), and chartered aerial photographs. In the renaissance of earth mysteries in the sixties Mary Caine wrote articles on the Glastonbury Giants, altering some of the figures. In the seventies it

burgeoned into the Institute for Geomantic Research.

When Mrs. Maltwood died, she left £4,002 to the Royal Society of Arts for zodiac research, but phrased the bequest "for antiquarian research in Somerset". The RSA sat on the money until a committee headed by Glyn Daniel was formed, and by 1970 the cash was trickling out to conventional archaeology. Efforts to get some of it for zodiac research were unsuccessful.

In the Glastonbury Zodiac many of the key features are modern, as with the dam forming the trunk of the Sussex Elephant (where a mammoth's tusk was found!) A roundabout forming a nostril of the elephant was built after the figure was plotted. Mrs. Maltwood believed the shapes were artefacts of Phoenecian tin traders, but evidence like the above shows them to be likely to be in a constant state of formation. There is not much published on zodiacs now, however - their heyday was the late seventies. This day may well mark the rebirth of the subject.

After the coffee break there were four short talks. First David Thompson gave a progress report on research into a site on the Simonside Hills twenty-five miles north of Newcastle. He found one large stone standing on a foundation, with a small hole apparently drilled right through it - a 5' 6" long passage on the line of the midsummer sunset and midwinter sunrise. In one direction there was a stone made like a seat, seventy feet away and aligned to let the observer see through the hole. On the other side of the stone was another apparently made as a chin rest - also aligned exactly on the hole. A view from the hill above showed a rough circle of stones. There was also an equinoctial alignment with the edge of the stone.

Rob Wilson then spoke of the Head Stone, a very impressive rock in the shape of a head six miles from the centre of Sheffield. There is another feature lower down which could be a penis or a baby. Its original names were "Stump John" and "The Cock Crowing Stone", and it has a legend of turning when it hears the cock crow.

The next talk was by Jimmy Goddard on the World Zodiac, which he said was either the largest terrestrial zodiac or the disproof of them all. Its existence was first suspected by a Sagittarius-like formation of the coast of Siberia; further figures were found afterwards, but Libra and Cancer appear to be missing. The best figures are the Bull formed by the Canadian Rockies, with the Big Horn mountains forming the horn, and Scorpio, an immense figure made of India, Indo-China and the Himalayas, with a tail reaching to the spot on the Altai Mountains where Mongolia, China and Russia meet. After this he briefly mentioned the Salisbury Star Map - the long barrows on Salisbury Plain mapping the northern constellations - and the isosceles triangle of White Horse figures, both found by Doug Chaundy.

Derrick Wilbie-Chalk then told us of the latest ideas on Rothbury and Simonside. Well Close, Rothbury, where he lives, seems to be a special site enclosed by a semicircular fault. Landscape work seems to relate local hills to the chakra system, each one representing a body chakra. The chain of hills, which he called the Rothbury Dragon, could represent an earth energy source.

After the meal Anthony Thorburn spoke on the Cheviot Zodiac. Cheviot seems to form an Earth Mother figure, with Hedgehope Hill forming the head, Cheviot the rump, and Combe Fell the shoulder. The hill was seen to represent Virgo in the form of a corn dolly.

Libra is a dove as at Glastonbury, but the scorpion is more like a serpent and seems to be biting the archer's testicles. Taurus is a complete bull and the dog has a lake for a tongue. The Gemini figure seems to be a pair of copulating lovers, with an earthwork binding the woman to the man. He then briefly went into the "Gypsy Switch" gypsy route and showed some important places on it were also zodiac sites.

On the following day some of us met at Well Close, Rothbury, home of the Seminarium into the Psyche, Architecture, and Rural Knowledge. We were then taken to Beacon Hill where we saw the holed stone mentioned in the talk, and the chin-rest and chair stones. There was much excitement when a further holed stone was found, this time with the hole not completely through, as if the work was abandoned.

Higher up the hill was an observation point with head-hum which I could detect above the wind noise and conversation - I had the impression this was a kind of central control for the system. On the summit of the hill was a large cairn. On the way down we tried the circuit lifting procedure with a fairly large stone and it certainly seemed less effort to lift it - could this have been how large stones were moved?

After our picnic lunch back at Well Close, Anthea Wilbie-Chalk took us to Callaly Hill, on a ley to Beacon Hill but a very different site. This was an entirely natural place - indeed, there was a legend of a proposed castle building thwarted by supernatural agencies. It was the trees here that were so remarkable. There did not seem to be one with a single trunk (and they did not appear to be coppiced) - but they were not just doubles; one had three trunks, one dividing further up, another had three normal trunks and two "lovers" (trunks spiralling round each other), and the largest had six trunks. One had a fallen trunk which had seemingly rooted from where it fell, forming two complete trees joined by a common branch. The life force here must be so amazingly high that trees do not die even when they fall. Above it all was the same "middle-c" sound of the wind in the trees noticed elsewhere.

The weekend was a stimulating and exciting one, combining theory with experience and giving everyone many insights into the mysteries of the landscape.

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From "Earth Magic"  
by Francis Hitching.  
Credit: Rob Stephenson.

Some people are sure that a degree of levitation, the defeat of gravity, was obtainable, and that this was how at least some of the great stones were manoeuvred so exactly into position. This is not so unlikely as it at first sight seems. There is a well documented ceremony that still takes place in the village of Shivapur near Poona in central India where eleven men link arms and dance round a heavy, sacred boulder of stone, chanting the words *quama ali dervish*. After a few minutes of this, they merely touch the stone with their finger-tips and it rises, apparently unaided, to shoulder level. Whatever the cause of this, it does not exclusively have to be the villagers who achieve the effect.



Universities falling on the lines. Bath appears to be in an important position, which is all very exciting!

from Fred Hadley, Surbiton:

In following up your note on "Caustic Leys", my conclusion is that the word was originally "lees", as in lees of wine, but with gradual alteration to rhyme with alkalis. Hence the modern spelling "lyes", derived from Anglo-Saxon "leag" (German "lauge"). Boiled with animal fat it made soap, which LATHERED. My surname ends in LEY which means open pasture or "lea". The accepted pronunciation for the tracks we are hunting nowadays suggests a route laid out across the country, whether pasture or highways or farm tracks.

from Norman Darwen, Sidcup:

In "Ancient Mysteries of Britain", Janet and Colin Bord state that "(Today) except for Ireland and some of the remote areas of Scotland, they (Holy Wells) are rarely visited by pilgrims..." It was therefore a surprise to learn of a very recent pilgrimage involving a Surrey holy well. In a Roman Catholic church in Camden Town, London, I came across a poster for a pilgrimage to take place on 17th October, 1987. The itinerary included Mass at Westminster Abbey in honour of Saint Edward (better known perhaps as King Edward the Confessor) followed by a "coach pilgrimage" to Saint Edward's Well in Sutton Park, near Guildford. The trip was organised by the Catholic society "The Guild of Our Lady of Ransom" in honour of the saint's feast day on 13th October, a Tuesday. Westminster Abbey is of course the burial place of the royal saint and one of the very few medieval shrines still extant in this country.

## NOTES AND NEWS

### Recognition of dowsing

An article in the March 19 edition of "New Scientist" entitled "A Sense of Direction for Dowsters", seems to recognise, at least partially, the dowsing faculty. Scientists, it said, were sceptical because of a number of controlled experiments that did not show greater than chance results. However, this altered when a project at Utah University investigated the possibility of the effect being due to sensitivity to changes in the Earth's magnetic field. Startlingly positive results were obtained.

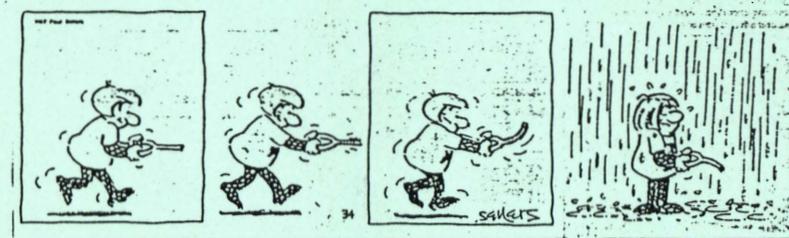
The article goes on to mention research which shows creatures such as bees, birds and whales can navigate magnetically when other methods of direction finding, such as the stars, are not available. A fascinating project involving schoolchildren was mentioned, in which they could sense the direction of their school when blindfolded, but not otherwise. When magnets were fitted to their heads, there was a consistent 90 degree discrepancy. Magnetic material has been found in the human sinus complex.

There is difference of opinion as to whether the reaction is directly on the muscles or via the brain, but I would suspect the latter, as I feel there is a strong possibility that my inability to dowse may be due to my atrophied right cerebral hemisphere (I have experimental evidence for the latter). I also have no "innate sense of direction"; though this could be also connected with impaired spatial perception, another right hemisphere function.



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SUNDAY EXPRESS 14th NOV. 8.

### London meetings

The following meetings of London Earth Mysteries Circle will be held at Maria Assumpta Centre, 23, Kensington Square, London, W.8., 7.00 p.m.:

Jan. 12 - Egyptian Amulets, by Manfred Cassira. Jan. 26 - The Practice of Quabalah, by Simon Low. February 9 - The Mystery of Great Zimbabwe, by Lionel Beer. February 23 - Hypnotherapy, by Allan Tapley. March 8 - Social evening, video on Glastonbury, short talks. March 27 - Prehistoric Archaeology, by Dr. Simon Dein. April 12 - Confessions of a UFO Investigator, by Mike Wootten.

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TOUCHSTONE. Newsletter of the Surrey Earth Mysteries Group. Quarterly, £2 for four issues.

AMSKAYA. Newsletter of the STAR Fellowship, concerned with extraterrestrial communication. Quarterly, £2 for four issues.

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CAERDROIA, 53, Thundersley Grove, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex.

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COMMON GROUND, 14, Northfold Road, Knighton, Leicester.

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NORTHERN EARTH MYSTERIES, 103, Derbyshire Lane, Norton Lees, Sheffield, S8. 9EN.

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MAGONIA, John Dee Cottage, 5, James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London, S.W.14. 8HB.

EARTH FORCE, 12, Lynmouth Drive, Gilmarton, Lutterworth, Leicestershire.

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

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