

Touchstone

Surrey
Earth
Mysteries



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NOSTALGIC JOURNEY

Over the weekend of May 27th-28th I had an enjoyable time visiting a number of interesting places, mainly tree clumps, with Philip Heselton and his family. Saturday May 27th had to be a visit to Chiddingstone, Kent, for it was on the same day in 1960 that the first STAR Fellowship Rally was held. This was not only the birth of the Fellowship but of the earth mysteries movement too, as the booklet "Skyways and Landmarks", which triggered off a renewed interest in leys (in connection with flying saucers), was first displayed at this rally.

We travelled first to the village, with its lovely Tudor buildings owned by the National Trust, and then walked to the cave in the hillside mentioned in Skyways and Landmarks, passing Tye Cross, Tony Wedd's former home. Unlike last time, we had a torch with us and could clearly see the effort undergone to make the cave into a well-formed cruciform chamber with the roof rising to a point in the centre.

After a pleasant meal at the Castle Inn, we travelled to the Lyewood Common clump. We were very sad to see that it had been quite extensively damaged in the hurricane of October 1987. Some pines remained, however, and we hope the clump will renew itself. From here we went on to Gills Lap, the very striking clump that was the inspiration for "Galleon's Lap" in "The House at Pooh Corner". This too had been damaged a little, though not as much, and we were pleased to see young pines growing there.

On the way home we visited Pitch Hill near Shere, where there was a great number of Scots pines crowning the hill - too many to be

really called a clump, but still very spectacular. There was a UFO sighting there last year, near the Hurt Wood Track described in an earlier Touchstone, so I am reprinting that article in this issue.

The following day we visited some of the clumps in my home area of Addlestone, and the map shows that they are linked in an interesting pattern, even though some of the alignments are not very convincing as leys mapwise. But there are other things to seek too of course in validating lines; for instance, the line from St. Anne's Hill to Woburn Hill is a powerful one even though I doubt if Watkins would have accepted it. The Catholic church is a fairly modern building and the only other point worthy of note seems a coincident (but also modern) stretch of road within the factory where I used to work. Yet standing on this road facing the tree-crowned Woburn Hill, I could always feel the power of the alignment, and I went there as often as I could.

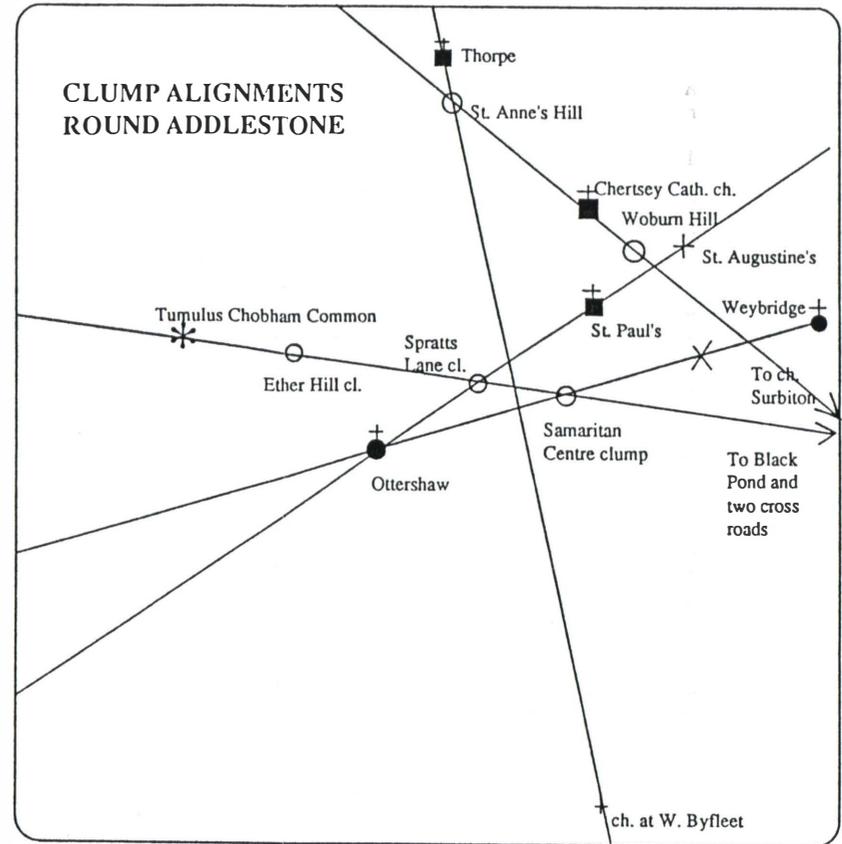
The first clump we visited was the Samaritan Centre clump, which is a group of several pines at the bottom of someone's garden, visible from the new Samaritan Centre in Ledger Drive. This is on an alignment joining Ottershaw and Addlestone parish churches (both Victorian, but both with Scots pines and Ottershaw in a particularly commanding position). A better line mapwise, however, is the one linking the other two clumps and a tumulus on Chobham Common (see the map).

The Spratts Lane clump, which we visited next, is a mixed pine and deciduous one, with a huge depression in the centre. Stan Eaves, Addlestone's historian, tells me the depression was due to use as a clay pit for brick or drainpipe making, but this went out of use in the middle of the nineteenth century and some large pines now grow from the bottom of the pit, showing the continuation of clumps clearly.

Ether Hill, Ottershaw is, however, by far the most impressive of the clumps. It is visible in line with St. Peter's Way, a new motorway link road (can this be subconsciously sited?), and is a huge group of pines surrounded by a wood of other trees. It is adjoining Ottershaw Memorial Fields public park and is a very pleasant spot. On the summit there seem to be definite traces of an oval-shaped earthwork, as at Gills Lap.

Our final destination was St. Anne's Hill, Chertsey, a completely tree-covered summit visible from Woburn Hill and for many miles around. It does have a group of conifers on its summit, but these are for the most part hidden by the other trees. It is, however, a very pleasant place with a very relaxing and powerful atmosphere - it is the site of a hillfort and the earthworks are still clearly visible. It is a public open space; I am very glad it did not suffer the fate of the other local hillfort, St. George's Hill, which has become an exclusive housing estate for the rich.

The pattern of clump alignments round Addlestone, then, show a very interesting arrangement despite being fairly heavily dependent on subconscious siting and having almost certainly been seriously damaged by the hand of time. We will clearly be missing a lot if we ignore such situations.



THE HURT WOOD TRACK

(Touchstone, July 1984)

The Hurt Wood track, straight and over two miles long, sticks out like a sore thumb to any ley hunter looking at the Dorking O.S. map. Philip Heselton found it and walked it before me, and a member of the Surrey Earth Mysteries Group found it quite independently. It is the best example found to date of an aligned track in Surrey.

It begins miles from anywhere in Winterfold Forest, and runs dead straight to an equally inaccessible cross-tracks not far from Holmbury St. Mary. About halfway along its length it is broken by a farm, around which walkers must skirt. Thus there are four indications that this might be an ancient ley track; firstly, it is not a modern track from A to B; secondly, the continuation of the track in the same alignment past the farm suggests that it is older than the farm;

thirdly, the nature of the track varies considerably along its length (unlikely if it was of recent origin); and fourthly, it runs straight up some quite steep hills and becomes quite difficult to travel along in these places. In addition to this, the track seems to be a good ley. As well as at least one Scots pine clump on the track itself and numerous cross-tracks, the alignment passes through a junction/crosstracks in Holmbury St. Mary, Leylands Farm near Abinger Bottom, Leigh church (15th century and very interesting), a church south of South Nutfield, a fort south of Westerham and several minor points. On contacting the Hurt Wood Control Committee, I was told that the track was "Roman, as far as we know". On enquiring as to the course of this Roman road, however, they did not know. There is a Roman road skirting Hurt Wood from another direction, but it is thought likely that the track is just assumed to be Roman because it is ancient and straight. It is however interesting evidence that the track is thought to be ancient.

I met the track at the point where it crosses Houndhouse Road. To the west it climbed steeply to a hilltop where there was a clump of Scots pine. Here the path was stony and difficult to walk. Eastwards, however, the character of the path changed completely. It became wide, straight and well-made. This continued for some distance, crossing another track and eventually coming to Lawbrook Lane. Here it abruptly changed once more, and plunged steeply downwards as a very narrow track until it met another. This latter track ran along the bottom of the valley. The track being followed was now almost lost in encroaching vegetation. At this point there was an extremely striking view of a beautiful Scots pine clump directly through which the track runs. Here that special feeling of walking a ley was felt.

Crossing another forest track, it changed again becoming wide and straight and running across heathland. After crossing yet another track it became narrow, descending steeply until it met the barbed wire fence of Gasson Farm. I had to leave the straight track here and take a north-easterly one to the Ewhurst-Peaslake road. I rejoined the last stretch of the track from Radnor Road and from here to its end in a junction of tracks near Holmbury St. Mary it ran straight and wide all the way through woods and flowering heather.

There is an interesting anecdote regarding the track told to me recently by Philip Heselton. When walking the track in May, 1966, he met the Hurt Wood Ranger (there is only one). After a short conversation the ranger pointed to the ridge and exclaimed "What's that?" On the ridge was a rather strange object, round and standing on some kind of legs. The Ranger then drove off to investigate, and Philip, not particularly interested in UFOs at the time, simply carried on down the track and did not know the outcome of the incident. Although the same ranger is doing the job, he could not remember the incident when I contacted him, but he did mention that 1966 was the year when a puma had been sighted several times in Hurt Wood. On enquiring of Chris Hall, currently researching the puma, I was informed that 1966 was indeed the peak year for the puma, and Hurt Wood was the centre of activity. Only one account linked it to a UFO,

however, and that was very tentative. So the mystery of the object on the ridge must unfortunately remain a mystery.

Report of UFO sighting given to Gordon Millington May 1989.

On November 5th 1988, a 21-year-old girl and her boyfriend of 23 were sitting in a car park between Shere and Ewhurst saw a UFO to the west, judged to be half a mile away. It had a flattened top with a red light, was seen to fly in a circle, then flip over and fly away.

If the UFO had been two-thirds of a mile to the north-west (allowing for a slight amount of witness error in the direction) it would have been over the Hurt Wood track in the approximate location of the Scots pine clump first mentioned, to the east of Houndhouse Road. Even if the witness was accurate with the direction, the action of flying in a circle must have brought it very near this clump on this ley, one of the most striking alignments and coincident tracks in Surrey.

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NOTES AND NEWS

Donovan the Diviner

This very interesting series was televised recently, and covers the work of a professional dowser. The first was a chronicle of a search for water on a farmer's land, culminating in drilling and successful finding of it. (As well as dowsing he owns drilling equipment to find the water and extract it). Particularly interesting was the subsidiary equipment used - a colour wheel to tell certain information about the water, and a "gismo" which apparently blocks out "ley lines" and other non-water influences on the dowsing rod. The second programme, which I unfortunately missed, was about dowsing on the Isles of Scilly, and the third discussed animals' reactions to dowsing influences.

Fenland avenue

"The Independent" of June 24th carried an article about recent excavations at Fengate, Cambridgeshire (near Peterborough) revealing a 900 yard straight avenue of wooden timbers which would have required the felling of about two million trees. The avenue continued over a stretch of water linking the mainland to an island (the fens were open water then) and in between was an artificial island 150 yards wide on which were at least seven buildings. It is not thought however that the link was used as a bridge. Many apparent offerings of weapons (a number broken in half) and other objects were found nearby.

London Earth Mysteries Circle

The next meeting of this group will be on September 12th.

Addlestone meetings

Don't forget we still hold monthly meetings of this group in my home in Addlestone (25, Albert Road) to which any interested people are welcome. We have had rather reduced numbers recently so we will be very pleased to see you. If you have any personal research or other topic of interest to share with us, so much the better.

Two exhibitions

Chris Hall has sent me details of two exhibitions that may be of interest to Touchstone readers. One is called "The Goddess Reawakening", sponsored by the Matriarchy Research and Reclaim Network, and will be at the Assembly Rooms at Glastonbury from September 10th-21st. It will be open daily from 10.00 to 6.00, exhibiting work by Phillipa Bowers, Joanna Gorner, Chesca Potter, Monica Sjoor and Jill Smith. There will also be evening talks, discussions and performances beginning at 8.00 p.m.

The other is called "The Salmon Leaps", and is currently being shown at Tigh-a-Ghlinne, Gravire, South Lochs, Isle of Lewis, and the work relates to the ancient sites of Scotland's Western Isles. Please phone 0851-(Gravir)-206 if you are intending to visit this exhibition.

BOOK REVIEWS

LINES ON THE LANDSCAPE, by Paul Devereux and Nigel Pennick; Robert Hale, £15.95.

This is a very worthwhile book with a lot of new original research in it. Particularly interesting to me was the discovery of a French use of the word "laie" to indicate a track, and research into cursues (though a surprising omission was the one at Dorchester-on-Thames, which is almost a replica of Stonehenge, being linked in a similar way to a henge and having an aligned wood henge). Also there are interesting discoveries made abroad. But the tendency to play down the importance of the energy aspect of leys is somewhat disturbing, and ley centres, which have always been for some reason taboo with Devereux, are not mentioned.

There is a good history of leys, though the origin of the modern movement in the STAR Fellowship and in connections with UFOs are only given a fairly cursory mention. However, there are no deprecatory remarks about this as in previous publications. It seems that the part our space friends have played in educating us about the system must wait for some future author to make clear.

Despite this neglect of the subject's foundations, however, the book is well worth buying for the original information contained within it, and the authors are to be congratulated for the huge amount

of hard work they have obviously put into it.

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LETTERS

From: Chris Hall, Fleet, Hampshire.

You might like to consider the following, which I discovered last year at the Natural History Museum, as a late addition to the "Strange Surrey" series that Bob Skinner used to contribute.

On the evening of October 9th, 1889, a remarkably fine lunar rainbow was seen at Reigate. The moon was full at 1.26 on the morning of the same day. At about 7.20 p.m. the eastern sky was mostly clear, and the moon, not far above the horizon, was shining brilliantly. In the west and south west were some clouds; some light ones, radiating upwards from the horizon in the south west indicated the direction of the wind. At the time I first noticed the south west end of the lunar rainbow, and for a few moments mistook it for another light cloud radiating from the same point. No rain was then falling. The rainbow very quickly increased in brightness and extent, until it formed a perfect arch from south west to north east. At about the same time rain began to fall. For about a quarter of an hour the rainbow was very brilliant, and formed a striking object; some of the prismatic colours could be well distinguished, especially the purple and red.

James B. Crosfield, Proceedings of Holmesdale Natural History Club, pp. 46-47, 1890.

I had heard of the possibility of the moon casting a rainbow before, but this is the first actual account I have ever read. Sunset at about this time is given in my diary as 6.20 p.m., but I assume Summer Time had not been invented a hundred years ago. Hence it would have been quite dark at the time the phenomenon was observed.

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CAMPUS LINES. Results of a nine year project investigating leys around six university campuses. £1.18

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

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