

# Touchstone

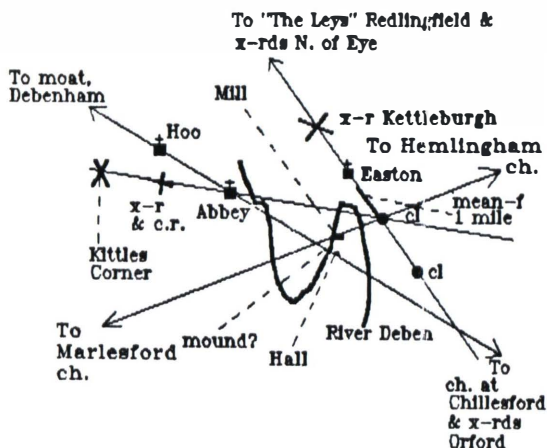
Surrey  
Earth  
Mysteries



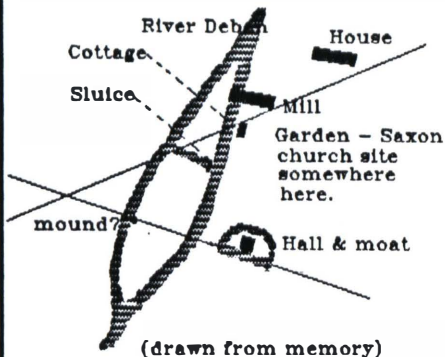
No. 23

October 1989

## LEATHERINGHAM LEYS



## LEATHERINGHAM MILL



Our two holidays this year produced some interesting ley information. The first was at Letheringham, near Framlingham in Suffolk. It was at a cottage adjoining Letheringham Mill. This mill, dating to about the eighteenth century, is the latest of a succession of mills on the site dating at least to Domesday, probably much further back. In the garden was once a small Saxon church and remains from the graveyard have been dug up all over the area. It was a very pleasant riverside spot, but we both had a feeling of brooding sadness

about it - we did not discover the existence of the graveyard till quite late in the holiday.

However, as the map shows, there were a number of interesting leys. One runs along the straight stretch of the D-shaped moat surrounding Letheringham Hall (where Wolsey once entertained Mary Rose, Henry VIII's sister). It goes across the island formed by the mill's waterworks, to the Abbey and Hoo church. (The Abbey is Letheringham's parish church, once the nave of an Augustinian abbey). There seemed to be a definite rise in the ground at the point marked "mound?" Another interesting line was of two clumps and a coincident track lining up with Easton church, thirteenth century but with a Saxon church mentioned in Domesday almost certainly on the same site. Its octagonal tower is in a commanding position, visible from the road at Hoo.

The second week was at Burgh-le-marsh, near Skegness in Lincolnshire. We were in a mill cottage here too - but this time a windmill! A huge mound almost next door to the house promised more ley discoveries, but in fact I did not find as much during this week, though the atmosphere of the house was much more pleasant. This information about the mound was given in the local walk leaflet:

"The mound...is an ancient tumulus called Cock Hill. This was excavated in 1933 and was found to contain a Saxon pagan burial of about 600 A.D. It is thought the mound was subsequently heightened, leaving a shallow depression in the top, which was probably used as a cockpit, as some pieces of clay pipes and slate pencil were found".

One line, which I followed with Philip Heselton, who visited us, looked better on the map than on the ground. It goes through the tumulus, then across the Lincolnshire Wolds to a large cross-roads, a long barrow, a high road-track junction, a cross-roads, another mound, and the church and vanished village of Biscathorpe. The second mound turned out to be modern, in connection with some kind of transmitting station. I wondered if the builders of the site knew about the ley and sited it purposely - many such stations are found on leys.

Another line, not very spectacular, but going through some cross-roads and coincident tracks, goes through the tumulus and church at Burgh-le-Marsh, and on to a strange square earthwork of unknown origin near Bolingbroke castle. The castle guide says:

"South of the castle proper is a field...with a bank on three sides. It contains a curious rectangular pond with a moat round it, the date of origin of which is uncertain. The whole of this field is known as the 'rout yard'. In Lincolnshire dialect "rout green" is a place where unclaimed cattle from the pound were put".

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## THE 12TH TLH MOOT

by Chris Hall

Dowsing, Welsh legend, terrestrial zodiacs and Avebury were among the themes of speakers at this year's national Moot, the 12th, held in

Gloucester in July. As has become traditional, the first speaker was Paul Devereux. He spoke of a Gloucestershire site, Lydney, which had both Iron Age occupation and a temple of the late Romano-British period. Lydney was thus important to two separate cultures five centuries apart. The place was associated with springs and was sacred to the pagan Celtic god Nodens.

It was a good but all too brief opening to the Moot. Several people echoed my disappointment that Paul spoke only for 20 minutes, especially as one or two of the later speakers were not really up to a full hour's presentation. Paul is one of the finest speakers in our field, and, agree with his views or not, he is always lively, stimulating and informative. He should have been given the time to develop his theme further, instead of leaving his audience craving for more.

Terrestrial zodiacs were served up to satisfy us. Local researcher Glen Bishop gave a rather rambling talk about zodiacs he believes exist in Gloucestershire, and claims to have found several, including ones at Cirencester and Bisley. Each tribal group had its own zodiac, he suggested, but all were based on a common set of rules and patterns. For instance, certain landscape features and place names were always associated with each sign; Aries, fords; Cancer, oak groves; Capricorn, long barrows, for example. There is a Pisces at Fishcombe, Aquarius at Seven Springs, (one of the candidates for the source of the River Thames). This was a good talk, inasmuch as it attempted to approach a well-worn subject from some novel angles, but many of Glenn Bishop's statements do not stand up well to scrutiny. Most of his landscape features are commonplace, and thus easy to find in the "right" place. His comment that "There always seem to be hazels in Virgo" is rather like discovering that every English parish has a farmhouse: hazel is one of the most widespread and common trees in Britain. He may be on to something, but the research needs to be far more watertight to remove the ambiguities of the presentation.

The most topical talk came next, about the mystery of the rings of flattened corn which have appeared mainly in Wiltshire and Hampshire. Ralph Noyes gave a good general introduction to these enigmatic features, while resisting siding with any particular explanation. The subject has provided the first mysteries book to make the hardback best-seller lists in years.

If the morning was generally unremarkable, the afternoon opened with a highlight in the form of a question and answer session with dowser Bill Lewis. He is a quiet, unassuming man of 80 who seemed a little overawed by all the interest taken in his skills. He has dowsed since the age of 15, and regards it as a completely normal ability. His quiet manner, not talking down to his audience nor telling us what to think, won him much admiration, and I have a warm memory of the type of gentleman to sit with by the fire, listening to a lifetime of experiences.

Unfortunately, not all dowsers are like this, and there followed an assault by another dowser, a self-taught, self-acclaimed crusader who I found unbearably arrogant, who claimed to have "discovered" all his knowledge in 18 months. As I cannot think of a single good thing to write, let us move quickly on to something wondrous.

She began in song, for all the Celtic legends were sung, learned by rote until remembered. In Australia are the songlines, dreamtime paths which tell the history of the land and the people. "Where ever men have wandered they have left a trail of song". In Peru it is said, "Songs are like paths". Caitlin Matthews spoke of the Celtic sacred scriptures, particularly the Welsh Mabinogion, and suggested our own land may be crossed by songlines. She related various of these sacred stories, discussed their meanings, the characters, lore and legend, gave us her message: "We each of us must find within our land our own traditions, the stories, the songlines, the names of the land", and concluded, as she began, in song. This scholarly, haunting, inspiring talk was one of the best ever, at any Moot.

Continuing in the folklore theme, Peter Kennedy spoke about folk dance and song traditions in Britain. His material was unadventurous and mostly familiar to those who have read the earth mysteries literature. An archive film, made in 1955, was shown of the Padstow 'Obby 'Oss May Day preparations, dances and song.

The last presentation of the day was archaeological. Caroline Malone gave a strong talk about the Avebury landscape, including lost features such as ploughed out barrows on Weydon Hill. There was much more to Avebury than can be seen today. She included illustrations of how the landscape is believed to have changed during 5000 years. It was valuable to be shown, for instance, the changing degree of woodland cover. In the late Neolithic there were only patches of woodland, thorns and bracken. Sheep and pigs were farmed. Her talk emphasised just how incomplete the archaeological investigation of the Avebury landscape has been. East Kennett long barrow has never been excavated; West Kennett may contain more chambers; the reconstruction of the Sanctuary may be incorrect; nothing is known about the ditches and causewayed enclosure seen on aerial photographs near West Kennett village. There is also a Neolithic "mini-Silbury" at Marlborough, in the college grounds. I have since visited this; it is covered by trees, but an impressive size.

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## NOTES AND NEWS

### Gravity lines?

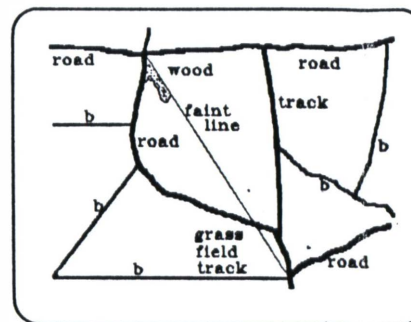
On September 13th I gave a talk on earth mysteries to the Open University Graduates Research on Anomalous Phenomena (of which I am a member) at Addlestone, and was interested when a young lady student in the audience mentioned that her tutors knew of lines of electromagnetic energy and gravity anomaly, and that these are marked on geological maps. She promised to send photocopied examples and further information, so I could try and correlate them with ancient sites, but has not so far done so.

### Pardons

Daniele Hart mentioned at a recent group meeting that in her native area of Brittany there are many decorated stones at cross-roads (most of them probably relatively modern, but no doubt continuing an older tradition) known as "Pardons". From time to time there are

processions round these from the local churches.

Up, up and away... and a visible ley!



On October 1st, I had a very interesting trip in a hot air balloon over Gloucestershire (a Christmas present from Doris!) We took off from Chalford, near Stroud, and drifted roughly southward, eventually crossing the Fosse Way and landing somewhere in the vicinity of Tetbury. The Fosse Way was very spectacular, and it was also interesting to pass over Mark Philips' farm at Gatcombe. But perhaps the most fascinating thing to come out of the trip was what seemed to be a visible ley running across fields - and captured on three photographs. It seemed to run from a cross-roads (but aligned with a clump a little further away) across a stubble field as a line of discolouration, then across a grass field as a track to another junction. Another more shadowy line could be seen meeting it there.

Photocopying the pictures revealed that they would unfortunately not reproduce here, but paradoxically some of the copies revealed another line crossing the one mentioned, not clearly visible on the originals. It was not a defect, as it appeared on all three photographs. Another unexpected result was that when I simulated going to a lower altitude by looking at the picture through a binocular microscope, the line virtually disappeared, though all other features on the picture could be seen (including vehicle tracks in the field). How many more of these Nazca-type lines exist in our countryside?

Drawn as a ley on the map, the line goes through the cross-roads (ST893969) and the junction in a south-easterly direction to pass through a large deciduous clump near Wootton Bassett, that village's church, skirts Bincknoll Castle, and goes through Uffcott Down earthworks, Ogbourne St. Andrew church (north of Marlborough) and a cross-roads in Savernake Forest. Unfortunately it misses Avebury - I couldn't be that lucky!

At one point we rose above the overcast cloud into the brilliant sunshine above - a breathtaking experience! Later, on looking at one of the photographs, there was a tiny circle of white against the cloud (a slightly shadowed part) resembling the UFO I saw the morning after the 1987 hurricane. It could be a defect of course - but no others occur on any other pictures in the set, and "Kodacolor Gold fillum" is not prone to them. The binocular microscope did not reveal any further detail.

Danny Sullivan of the Gloucestershire Earth Mysteries Group will be visiting the area sometime in the near future, and anything he finds will be published in Touchstone as soon as we have it.

## London Earth Mysteries Circle

The circle now has its own magazine. Following the favourable response to the pilot issue, it has now been decided that, in the future, it will appear on an occasional basis, as material allows. Further copies of the first issue are available. Please contact Rob Stephenson, Flat 24, 5, The Parade, Kilburn High Road, London, NW6. 5UN.

Meetings of LEMC: November 14, "Goddesses of London" by Jocelyn Chaplin; November 28, "Introduction to Greek Mythology", by Michael Bingas; December 12th, "Earth Mysteries Slides and Research", by John Glover; January 9th - to be arranged. Meetings held at Maria Assumpta Centre, 23, Kensington Square, London W.8. - St. Andrew's Seminar Room.

## Site on Maltese coin



Norman Darwen of Sidcup writes:

"Your article on the ancient site depicted on a Jersey coin, featured several issues back in Touchstone, reminded me of the Maltese five cents piece which also depicts an antiquity - a decorated altar from the Temple of Hagar Qim. The original is now to be found in the National Museum in Valletta, and is 73 centimetres high. It has a plant-like carving in the centre, and pitting all over the stone.

"I have been pleased to see growing Earth Mysteries interest in the enigmatic temples of Malta. I visited several of them in 1985 - they are impressive monuments, but much of the skyline around Hagar Qim has

been altered by quarrying. At the time I was reading Alastair Service's and Jean Bradberg's "A Guide to the Megaliths of Europe", which details the megalithic temples but is very dismissive of the island's dolmens - as a result I only saw one, on my last day there, from a speeding bus! A much better, though more difficult to find guide, is "Malta: an Archaeological Guide" by D.H. Trump, published by Faber and Faber in 1972."

## Next issue

In the next issue will be the first part of an article by Chris

Hall about the writings of 17th century antiquarian John Aubrey about a number of sites in Surrey, a report by Daniele Hart on the day seminar on earth mysteries and ecology at Kingston on October 21st, and an account of the recent Northern Earth Mysteries Moot at Scarborough. The current Amskaya contains an account of the recent conference of the Open University Graduates' Research into Anomalous Phenomena.

The pictures below were sent to me by Rob Stephenson.



On his Kentish tour of 1727 Stukeley made several drawings of the monument called Kit's Coty House, near Aylesford (above), which, like the nearby ruined Lower Coty House or Countess Stones (below), was identified variously in local legend as a memorial to a British or Saxon king killed in a battle between the two in AD 455 or as a relic of ancient sorcery. The low earth-work labelled The Grave in the upper picture is supposed by some authorities, against the opinions of others, to be the remains of a mound which once covered the stone monument. Scarcely a trace is now to be seen of the great stone rows which were recorded up in the nineteenth century in the vicinity of the Coty House.



Above: A fine nineteenth-century steel engraving of Kit's Coty House in Kent, by E. Penstone.

## VIDEOS AVAILABLE

As I now have a video camera, I have made several short video films that may be of interest to earth mysteries enthusiasts. If anyone is interested in having them, please send me a blank three hour video tape (VHS) and the appropriate postage. All the films will fit on to one tape, but there may be a delay in returning it depending on demand and pressure of work, as I have to do the copying at my place of employment.

The films are: Clump Alignments round Addlestone, Skyways and Landmarks (featuring part of a talk given by Tony Wedd, illustrated with some of his slides), Coldrum Field Trip (the recent field trip with our group and London Earth Mysteries Circle) and Flight over Gloucestershire (about the balloon trip described earlier in this issue).

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## EXCHANGE LIST

QUICKSILVER MESSENGER, c/o ELTI, Hotel Wisata International, P.O. Box 2457 Jkt., Jakarta, Indonesia.

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

FORTEAN TIMES, 96, Mansfield Road, London NW3. 2HX.

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

THE PIPES OF PAN, Blaenberem, Mynyddcerrig, Llanelli, Dyfed, Cymru, SA15. 5BL.

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.

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

GLOUCESTERSHIRE EARTH MYSTERIES, 49, Moorend Road, Leckhampton, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL53. 0ET.

MEYN MAMVRO, 51, Carn Bosavern, St. Just, Penzance, Cornwall, TR19. 7QX.

TERRESTRIAL ZODIACS JOURNAL, 170, Victoria Avenue, Hull, HU5. 3DY.

LONDON EARTH MYSTERIES, Flat 24, 5, The Parade, Kilburn High Road, London, NW6. 5UN.

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: