

# Touchstone

Surrey  
Earth  
Mysteries



No. 32

January 1992

## DISTURBING TRENDS

There seems to be a growing element of aggressive, doctrinaire, almost fundamentalist Paganism in earth mysteries at the moment. This was made particularly visible at the Northern Earth Mysteries Moot, when one of the speakers at this otherwise excellent gathering subjected us to a tirade which would have done justice to a hell-fire preacher. At one of our group meetings, a very eloquent radio interview with the Archdruid in which he affirmed the validity of both Pagan and Christian worship was condemned by one member present, and in many magazines Paganism appears to be digging in its heels against all comers.

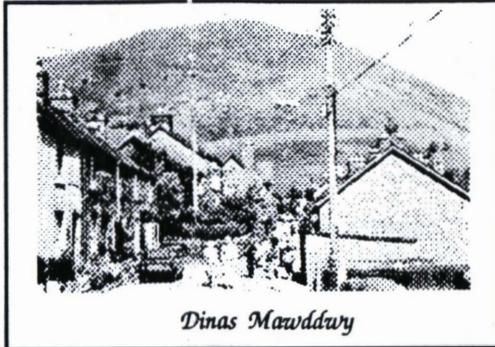
This is not the message the ley system seems to be giving us. As described in my recent booklet *The Hidden Unity*, religious buildings of all religions, old and new, seem to be subconsciously sited on leys. All Saints', Margaret Street, London (a bastion of Anglo-Catholicism) is linked by a ley to Regents' Park Mosque, and Chris Street's London axis ley joins the Central Synagogue with churches of several denominations. Woking Mosque is linked to Anglican churches and a Friends' Meeting House by several leys leading into it. What all this seems to be telling us is that **the worship of all religions is equally valid, and that no religion has any status over any other.** Paganism, as the religion perhaps most closely connected with earth mysteries, should realise this more than any other.

In the Surrey Earth Mysteries Group, we have Pagans and Christians who talk amicably together about the subject. If only this were a microcosm of the world!

## THE LEY HUNTER MOOT 1991

The Moot was held this year in the village hall at Dinas Mawddwy, a strikingly beautiful part of Wales not far from Aberystwyth. The village is in a valley between most imposing mountains, and the first talk was a quick tour round the area by Laurence Main, local organiser of the Moot.

It is a historic and very independent part of Gwynnedd - it even had its own Lord Mayor until the 1890s, and self-appointed borough status. King Arthur's last battle (Camlan), where he received his "grievous wound", was said to be here at Maes Camlan. The River Dyfi (Dovey) is the border between North and South Wales, and



the Roman road crossed it at Dinas Mawddwy. Saints of the Celtic Church, said to be the natural successors to the Druids, have lived here, including one who was a nephew of Arthur. The mountain was said to be the female counterpart of Cader Idris, and the highest peak south of Snowdon. Two leys cross at the Pass of the Cross - a holy hill with stones and a deep well, and formerly a hanging tree. These were often on ley points - to disperse the negative effects?

Peter Harper, of the nearby Centre for Alternative Technology at Machynlleth, next spoke on the Gaia hypothesis of James Lovelock. Lovelock had been engaged by NASA to study the atmospheres of Mars and Venus, and found them to be very similar in percentage composition - they seemed to have reached a chemical equilibrium. The Earth's percentages were strikingly different, however, and this seemed to him to be because conditions were controlled by life. We were told of the vast number of conditions which have to be exactly right for life to prevail. The idea of Gaia was that the Earth and its living things form a vast regulation system by which conditions are kept constant over thousands of years.

There are several degrees of the hypothesis. The "self evident" one holds that living organisms are an important influence on the abiotic environment. "Cautiously respectable" says that life organised control of ecosystems, while "boldly assertive" says that life runs the planet for the net benefit. "Outrageously speculative" considers the biosphere to be a single living organism, and finally "beyond the pale" sees Gaia as a sentient, purposive being.

The talk was an interesting outline of the theory, but did not really put forward anything new about it. Also, in spite of the origin of the theory, it seems inconceivable to me that this super-complex system should come into being on just one planet, while all others have to languish in their chemical equilibriums. If the Gaia system exists, it must be following a natural law, which surely ought to operate elsewhere, modifying conditions no matter what the distance from the sun, etc.

After a very pleasant lunch at the nearby Old Station Coffee Shop, we heard a talk by Ann Ross on the Celts, on which she is an authority. She put the questions: who are or were the Celts? Are the Celts of 200 BC or the medieval Celts the same as those of today? The linking factor seems to be the attitude to the landscape, a feeling for the terrain. Tribal gods moved with the tribes, but the goddesses were rooted in the land. Celtic kings had to simulate marriage with the Earth Goddess. On death a person's body had to be returned to the terrain to which his people belonged.

She then described a place in central Perthshire - an uninhabited glen with a ritual house. There is a legend of a couple who came over the mountains - a big man with a wife twice as big, and pregnant. They were homeless and lost, and the locals built them a house and thatched it. They had a daughter and lived for ever, and blessed the glen as long as the correct ritual is carried out - which a local shepherd does to this day. The god and goddess are represented by two stones, which are ritually washed.

At Deal in Kent there was a recent discovery, when a housing estate was being built, of a Bronze Age barrow. The original name "White Barrow" pointed to this. A man had been buried with bronze weapons inlaid with coral. A shield from the Thames and objects found near Stonehenge showed similarities - the speaker said that archaeology was essential in conjunction with Celtic studies.

One and a half miles south of Armagh is a ditch and bank enclosure of 18 acres - with the bank outside the ditch, showing it to be a ritual, not a fortified site. It dates to 3000 BC and the skull of a Barbary ape and a statue of Epona were found there. There was a legend attached to this of a mysterious woman who entered the house of a widowed farmer and married him, won a Halloween horse race and immediately gave birth to twins who cursed Ulster. The meaning of this did not seem clear.

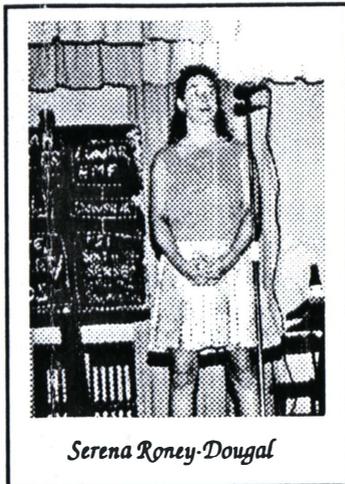
Nigel Pennick spoke next, on lost lands. He said he had had two conflicting messages at school - history presented him with a map with the same outline as today, whereas geography said the coastline was constantly changing. He found an extensive mythology of lost lands. Land's End was not the end of the land in Arthurian times - the land of Lyonesse off Cornwall had evidence to support it. In Wales there are many

chambered cairns close to the sea - except in Cardigan Bay, where there are none. In Brittany there are two on the shore that the tide now covers. On the Scillies there are walls extending between the islands, and megalithic sites submerged at high tide. Late megalithic sea level was 60-70 feet below that of today.

The Goodwin Sands were once farmland - there is a legend of a town of wealth and decadence, with the man in charge of the floodgates drunkenly letting the water through. In the lost towns of East Anglia spectral bells are said to be heard - although all the actual bells from sea-ruined churches were taken. At Selsey a cathedral was lost, and the present Brighton is a mile inland from the original. Many roads end at the coast, leading to villages now vanished. In the estuary of the Humber a sandbank appeared; people traded from it and it became a town, then it was washed away.

Traditionally the shore is a place between worlds - a place where rebels are buried. There are popular stories like that of Canute, and King John losing his treasure in the Wash.

At this point Paul Devereux appealed for help for the Dragon Project in buying the Rollright Stones, which are to be sold soon.



*Serena Roney-Dougal*

After tea Nigel Pennick spoke again, on a ley discovered in Germany. From a tree clump at Teck, south-west of Stuttgart, it runs to a hill covered with woodland and a castle. The focal point is the lookout tower. From the hill, we could see the castle and the classic Watkinsian pine clump. New pines have been planted, but sadly they are dying. The contrast between the pines and the lower trees could be seen. The clump has been maintained for hundreds of years.

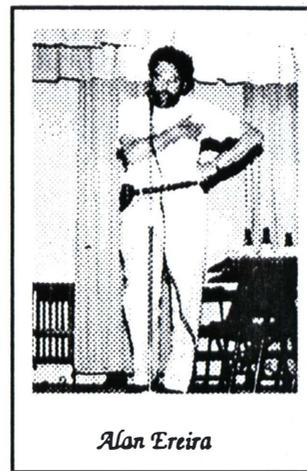
Beneath the Castle of Teck is the Cave of the Sibyl, who was said to ride in a cart pulled by cats in a straight line to Stuttgart, and caused the country to become fertile. Then the robber barons of the castle ravaged the country - the Sibyl left in a chariot along the line and disappeared. The land became barren. Many ley elements are seen here - a stone, a visible line, a clump, a castle and a legend of declining fertility.

Serena Roney-Dougal, a biochemist, then spoke on research she had done on the role of the pineal gland in psychic sensitivity. Apparently this gland, which had long been thought to have little function, acts as a kind of on-off switch with the pituitary gland,

controlled by the positions of the sun and moon. She went into this in very great detail, but the main crux of the discovery seemed to be that there are two types of psychic sensitivity - the active, concerned with such things as poltergeists, and the passive, to do with telepathy and clairvoyance. The active type seems to be more prevalent at night, when many cultures hold that "the veil is thinnest", and the other in daytime, but there seem to be many other things affecting this, such as proximity to fault lines, the Earth's magnetic field, sunspots etc. She also feels that stone circles may be concerned with active psi, and that barrows, with their layered structure like a Faraday chamber, may be concerned with passive psi.

The next talk was by Alan Ereira on the Kogi Indians of Colombia, on whom he has recently presented a television documentary. The Kogi were the first civilisation the Spanish encountered in mainland America - they had cities and paved streets and an advanced metaphysical philosophy. The amazing thing is that their direct descendants still live in the highest Colombian mountains - they were able to keep a distance from the invaders and have kept their traditions.

They will not normally talk to outsiders and do not want intrusion, but when Alan Ereira contacted them through an intermediary they said "We are waiting to work with you - come". An anthropologist warned that he must not be shocked by their appearance - when he arrived there, however, he found they looked healthy and visually spectacular. They wore white and had superb horses. The priests, who were also in charge of the community,



*Alan Ereira*

were called Mamas, a word which means the sun. They also call themselves Elder Brothers or enlightened ones.

"When Semka created the earth, our mother, the Elder Brothers were made to protect it. All Colombia was sacred. Then a younger brother passed from another land, and caused much destruction, but we managed to keep our tradition of respect for Mother Earth".

But their four centuries of isolation are, they say, no longer a satisfactory solution - we are doing too much damage to the world. We must change our behaviour, and they said they would teach us enough to understand.

The mountains are steep, rugged and high - the foot of them is in the tropics, while the peaks are at polar temperatures. Between are every combination of temperature and rainfall. It is the most diverse biological area on earth, and is also on a separate tectonic

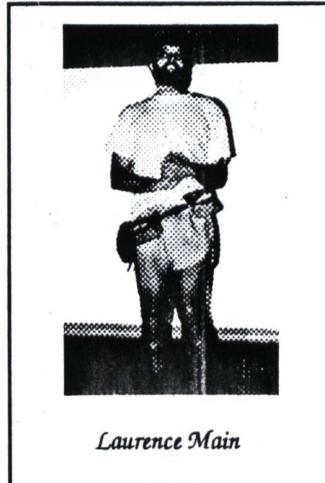
plate from the rest of South America.

The entire mountain is terraced - the cities were only inhabited on ritual occasions. They had no currency, no writing and no wheels - and before the Spanish came, no horses. But they did have paved roads and staircases, and a trading system without barter or economy base. They had a system of exchange and it was a function of the priests to control this. Our agriculture could not maintain a third of theirs in the area.

The training of the Mamas involved keeping a new-born baby in the dark for nine years, teaching him the law of the Great Mother. When he emerges he sees the world in a different way from others. Everything has a spiritual counterpart, and the spiritual and physical are not always in exactly the same place. They have spirit and material paths, and the spirit ones are straight. There is a stone called the map-stone which is seven feet high with a pattern of lines, which do not correspond to the physical paths but may represent the spirit ones - which seem to be similar to our leys.

Their philosophy is that the world is the mother, and in the beginning the mother was sea, absolute nothing. Memory and possibility shape the world. It is the role of the Mamas to enter the world of Aluna and work there, gardening in the world mind. Gold is the menstruation of the Mother, and is the mark of fertility. They use divination, going into a heightened state of awareness. Everything must be in harmony with the universe, even a cooking pot. There are nine worlds - one is fertile and the other eight are not. The Elder Brother created and sustained harmony in the Heart of the World (as they called their land), and thought they could look after the world, but the younger brother is wrecking the planet and they feel their work is no longer any good. They said "Don't think that we are responsible".

On the coach trip the following day, we visited several interesting sites, led by Laurence Main, who has done a lot of work looking after the footpaths in the area. We went on a fairly long and steep but beautiful trek in perfect weather across the mountains to a group of two stone circles at Cerrig Caerau. The second was traditionally the width of an ox-hide, with an ox and cow legend, and also "the yellow ox-hide - the place of visions". The visionary Samuel Roberts was minister at the chapel here, and had a dream of King Arthur as an old man becoming young as he crossed the river to Camlan. He originally started the penny post. He was



involved with land reforms and schools and was at the forefront of new ideas. Paul then mentioned, in connection with the oxhide, the north shamanistic tradition of sleeping on an animal skin for dream divination.

We also visited a very different stone circle - one built in 1936 for the Eisteddfod. I still detected leys going into it by dowsing and feel it was subconsciously sited - indeed, from my findings in *The Hidden Unity* I think it could hardly fail to be.

From here we proceeded to the Centre for Alternative Technology where we had lunch. This is an extremely interesting display of very many ways of recycling, conserving energy and using renewable resources, and is highly recommended to anyone. My wife will be taking a group of children from her school later in the year.

Laurence told us of many other interesting places as we passed them on the coach, and we finally visited the Owen Glyndwr Museum in Machynlleth. It was an enjoyable, stimulating and very varied weekend in a particularly beautiful part of Britain.

#### NORTHERN MOOT 1991

The Northern Earth Mysteries Moot was held this year on October 26th, at the Sherwood Community Centre, Nottingham - a joint moot with Mercian Mysteries. The building had, appropriately, gnarled wooden tree-trunks for pillars supporting the roof!

After Rob Wilson had introduced the moot, Bob Trubshaw spoke on the Quest for the Omphalos, the subject of a booklet he has recently published on his researches. Beginning with the original omphalos stone at Delphi, the site of the famous oracle, he showed how peoples all over the world had believed the world spirit to be centralised at a fixed point. These included the black stone in Mecca for the Moslems, and Jerusalem for the medieval Christians. Maps showing this were often used as altar pieces, illustrating their sacred nature rather than the utilitarian purpose of maps today.

In England, omphalos places were usually at a meeting-point of boundaries or cross-roads - "placeless places" that were often "ex-parochial" - not belonging to any parish. Names such as "No Man's Heath" illustrated this - they were often heath areas and the word "heathen" may originate from this. Much tradition of this kind has surrounded cross-roads - they have been burial places of suicides, sites of gallows or stocks, and also the location of courts or meetings of the people.

Bob then showed a map of the Roman roads over Britain and spoke on each crossing-point in detail, showing how each one was considered very special. Several were claimed to

be the centre of England, although geographically only one could reasonably do so - High Cross in Leicestershire. These were such places as Royston with its stone and strange, mysterious cave which has been associated with the Knights Templar.

Many cities have a public square called a "Carfax" at the junction of its approaching roads. Oxford is one example; this was a ceremonial centre in the Bronze Age. An aerial view of Christ Church College is very omphalos-like, with a cross in a circle and a statue of Mercury at its centre.

Omphalos symbols shown include maypoles, water mills and Tibetan mandalas, and such things as the wheel of St. Catherine. It is a recurring theme of the still point around which everything turns, and this was finally illustrated by a crucifix with the words "Stat Cruxdum Volvitor Orbis" underneath it. ("The Cross stands while the Earth revolves").

Bob Dickinson spoke next, on sacred sound. He said that if we visit sacred sites unencumbered by dowsing rods or other things, and concentrate on being and hearing, we become aware of the significance of sound through creative observation. The sounds of fire, water and wind all have a very similar frequency, as mentioned in *Skyways and Landmarks Revisted*, and these all have ley associations. The ancient peoples probably located the various natural sounds and with their rituals created a synthesis - a new composite sound.

Sound was personal to the work of landscape artist Richard Long - although he did not acknowledge Earth Mysteries as an influence, some of his creations are very evocative - such as "Six stone circles, 1981" and "Soundline, 1990". There is a tradition that the sound of wind in reeds is the dirge for a loved one, and the mysterious "hummadruz", which has never been satisfactorily explained, has been reported since the nineteenth century. When the source of this was sought at Selborne, a spot was found with no insects (though the sound was like a swarm of bees), just a few spires of dead grass. The sound seemed to be issuing from the earth. Chris Castle in 1974 reported humming coming from a Bronze Age site. In 1606 the Brampton Ash, Lincoln, was said to have shaken and emitted sighs and groans which were heard more plainly in the branches. The humming or trilling heard recently at corn circles was mentioned.

We then heard how, in many cultures, sound represented dialogue with hidden forces. This is especially so in the case of the Australian Aborigines, and two aborigine instruments were demonstrated - the didgeridoo, a wind instrument, and the bullroarer, a piece of shaped wood swung round on a length of rope, which emitted a strange buzzing sound.

In Lapland, the shaman's drum had pieces of wood which jumped about as the drum was used, and formed patterns used in divination. A Swiss scientist noted that sand and other things exposed to sound formed patterns that grew like cells or crystals. English traditional rituals such as the Burning of Bartle or Castleton Garland Day involve chanting. Going right back in time, the caves of Ariège in the Pyrenees resonate in certain places, and these correspond with cave paintings.

The sounds made by the present world faiths are also very similar to each other and may represent a hidden unity between them that none of them realise. Bob mentioned my booklet *The Hidden Unity* here, which shows leys linking places of worship of different faiths.

The old stones of Nottinghamshire were the subject of the next talk, by Frank Earp. There are not many megaliths in the county even though there was a thriving community at the time, and he believes forestation may have been the cause. The alternative was the veneration of natural stones, and one of these is the Hemlock Stone, mentioned by Stukeley as "Druid remains". It is a 67' high pillar of sandstone, which was by tradition thrown at Lenton Priory (three and a quarter miles away) by the Devil. Bonfires were once lit annually there at Beltane. Below is a prehistoric track leading towards Derbyshire.

Speaking of the Cat Stone, he said there were once two. One was reputedly in the shape of a cat; the other is in a manmade depression and is in the shape of a pulpit or lectern. It seems designed so that someone would have to stand on it to get the view. We saw how the various revered natural stones fit with the churches of the area in a geometrical arrangement. The Druid Stone in north Nottinghamshire is a glacial erratic but has a man made aperture and window. The Rev. Whitworth said the view from this was towards midsummer sunrise, but this found not to be so.

The only standing stone previously known in Nottinghamshire was on the north side of Selsdon Church. It was of hard shiny material, traditionally a meteorite, and was removed by the informant's father. However, a second has recently been found in the grounds of the university. Frank concluded with a modern memorial to a murdered woman - Elizabeth Sheppard - on the site of a former boundary stone. There is a tradition that if it is moved, her ghost will appear. Nineteen stones were mentioned, all with legends of equal depth and familiarity.

The talk by Liz Lipeatt entitled "The Lady and her Ever Green Way" turned out to be something of a sermon rather than dissemination of information, and was an exhortation to live as though custodians of the Earth. Probably most of those present try to do this

anyway and it is felt that being shouted at in this way was something of an insult to them.

After this, Paul Nix gave a very entertaining talk on the honeycomb of man-made caves under Nottingham - his continued exploration of them and the various uses to which they seem to have been put. One was an underground tannery, with receptacles for leaving the skins in lime to turn into leather. Another was where a solicitor bricked up his papers during the war, and there was also a slaughterhouse, several wine stores and a kiln. Once when exploring they heard music and inadvertently came up in a club!

Peter Dawkins spoke next, on England and Wales as a landscape temple. He believes that landscapes are holy places and every myth has its time of manifestation. Every place has a purpose and the key to harmonious living is to discover the purpose and try to enhance it. Europe gets its name from the myth of Europa and the Bull. Zeus was enamoured by the beautiful Europa but could only attract her by taking the form of a bull. They were coupled and brought forth the Golden Child - Hermes/Mercury, or Midas. The speaker believed that Europe's shape represents the bull and the form of Europa is shown by Britain. The Channel Tunnel may represent their physical joining. He showed also how he felt Wales represented a boar and indicated how he felt this related to Celtic myth. Myths, he said, relate to the energies and the working of the land.

Unfortunately I was unable to stay for John Barnatt's talk on earth mysteries in Japan, as I had to catch a rather early last train to London from Nottingham.

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## *NOTES AND NEWS*

### **London Meetings**

The following meetings have been arranged by the London Earth Mysteries Circle, to be held at the Maria Assumpta Centre, Kensington on Tuesdays at 7.00 p.m.:

**January 14th** - A PERSONAL VIEW OF EARTH MYSTERIES, by Philip Heselton. **January 28th** - WILLIAM BLAKE'S NEW JERUSALEM - GEOMETRY FOR REGENT'S PARK, by John Gordon. **February 11th** - SOCIAL EVENING. **February 25th** - OLD WIVES' WISDOM, by Eric Maple. **March 10th**, MERLIN AWAKES, by Peter Quiller. **March 24th** - CELTIC HEADS, by Andy Roberts. **April 14th** - HOW ENGLISH HISTORY FITS THE ZODIAC, by Mary Caine.

There will also be a mini-bus trip to Dorset on **Saturday April 25th**, to include Cerne Abbas, Maiden Castle and other sites. Contact Rob Stephenson on 081-459-0652.

### **Videos**

I have two new videos available to anyone who sends me a tape and postage. **Whirls of Energy** is about the recent Old Sarum and Winchester field trip. Why is it called that? Get it and see! **The Pitch Hill Project** is a chronicle of the project to date - mainly using stills as video was not taken on most of the field trips. More videos are planned.

### **Talk to Guildford Metaphysical Society**

I will be speaking to this group on *Surrey Earth Mysteries* this year, but the date has not yet been decided.

### **Amskaya**

As there are two articles in the current Amskaya which are of earth mysteries interest, I will be sending the magazine to all Touchstone subscribers this quarter. To make it fair on those who subscribe to Amskaya, they will not be charged for this issue.

# **THE HIDDEN UNITY**

## **and**

# **BEGINNINGS**

These two booklets have recently been brought out by the Surrey Earth Mysteries Group.

*The Hidden Unity* looks at the strange phenomenon of subconscious siting of ley points, and notes that places of worship, of all religions and all ages, tend to predominate on leys. The environmental and philosophical implications of this are discussed, and the apparent necessity of worship but irrelevance of doctrine. Two ley centres are given as examples, and investigated in depth - the Shah Jehan Mosque in Woking and the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple, Scunthorpe. There is an appendix by Eileen Grimshaw on the significance of the Pagan religion to this study. Illustrated with photographs, maps and line drawings.

*Beginnings* is about a series of potentially useful discoveries, mainly made by Jimmy Goddard over a period of about twenty years, but having some overlap with discoveries made by others. For various reasons, the investigations are all in their early stages, and some have not been continued. They include earth energy detection, natural antigravity, subconscious siting, ley width, and the solar transition effect. There is also a chapter on cognitive dissonance - a psychological factor which seems to have been at the root of all bigotry - scientific, religious and other - down the ages. The booklet is concluded with an account of the discovery of leys by Alfred Watkins.

Each booklet is £1 plus 30p p&p from the Touchstone address.

### **EXCHANGE LIST**

FORTEAN TIMES, 96, Mansfield Road, London NW3. 2HX. NORTHERN EARTH MYSTERIES, 40b, Welby Place, Meersbrook Park, Sheffield, S8. 9DB. FOLKLORE FRONTIERS, 5, Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland, TS25. 2AT. 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. MEYNMAMVRO, 51, Cam Bosavern, St. Just, Penzance, Cornwall, TR19. 7QX. TERRESTRIAL ZODIACS JOURNAL, 170, Victoria Avenue, Hull, HU5. 3DY. LONDON EARTH MYSTERIES, 18, Christchurch Avenue, Brondesbury, London, NW6. 7QN. MARKSTONE, The Chimes, 17, St. Andrews Street, Kirton-in-Lindsey, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. Our thanks to all exchange publications, especially those who have mentioned us.

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