

Touchstone

Surrey
Earth
Mysteries



No. 40

July 1994

A TRIP TO THE GOLDEN BALL

One of my wife's colleagues is a private pilot who flies with the British Airways Flying Club at Wycombe Air Park, near High Wycombe. He has taken me up a couple of times, and I was interested to note a nearby church with a large golden ball on top of its tower, with some seemingly interesting structures nearby. The church is used as a landmark for pilots landing at the airfield.

On looking at the map I found that the church, St. Lawrence's, West Wycombe, is built within an Iron Age earthwork in a most commanding position, and has a long stretch of straight road aligned with it. It was found that there is a ley running along this, and several others converge on the church. It was connected with Sir Francis Dashwood, an eighteenth century Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the so-called "Hell Fire Club", though I was to find out that he was probably not as bad as he is sometimes portrayed.

On Saturday July 23rd I decided to cycle to the Golden Ball, visiting as many points on the converging leys as possible. As it was in the middle of a heatwave and my transport was slow, I started out at 5.30 a.m.

One of the leys goes through the large roundabout, once a junction of several roads, at the bottom of Woburn Hill, Addlestone, so I noted this as I passed. The next roundabout on the same ley was between Thorpe and Egham, and seems to have a group of Scots pines among other trees next to it. One of the roads leading off it is aligned with the ley. A third roundabout on the ley, near the Eclipse pub in Egham, has a mini-clump of deciduous trees planted on it. About a quarter of a mile along the road from this is a milestone showing

SURREY EARTH MYSTERIES GROUP MEETS ON THE SECOND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH (EXCEPT AUGUST AND DECEMBER) AT ADDLESTONE -

“19 miles to Hyde Park Corner”. Although not on the ley I was following, this was next to a huge double horse chestnut and had the feeling of a shrine or sanctuary, as had the place visited near Sunningdale church on the recent TEMS field trip.



Milestone and "shrine"

From here I continued towards Windsor, and soon the familiar shape of the Castle came into view. The next point on the ley was where it ran along a path running obliquely away from the road I was following, at Windsor Home Park. It ran through a pair of huge wrought iron gates, and in the other direction there seemed to be a clump of bushes in a field on the line. Shortly afterwards I crossed the famous Long Walk and rode into Windsor. I was interested to note that Peascod Street aligns on the Castle tower; the next point on a Golden Ball ley was a Baptist church in Windsor, near Crosses Corner.

I carried on into Slough and turned left along the Bath Road. Where the Golden Ball ley that goes to Cliveden crosses this there is a small road off called “Leigh Road”. It is not precisely aligned with the ley, in fact it is at a slight angle to it, but I was interested to see the name.

Shortly after this I turned off the main road towards Burnham. The church of St. Mary, Hitcham near there is on another Golden Ball ley, the one that goes through Cookham and, as I was later to find, the site of an ancient stone there. The church felt powerful and had a number of interesting features, though there was nothing of ley interest visible from it. Some of the windows in the chancel had angels standing on winged wheels, from the Ezekiel story, which interested me. There was also the remains of fourteenth century glass in the chancel window. Lords of the manor of Hitcham have included the Black Prince and Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State to Charles I and Charles II; there is also a Russian prince buried in the churchyard.

At Hitcham I was advised to take the road through Wooburn to High Wycombe, as this followed the river valley and was thus more level. This I did, after visiting another major point on one of the lines - Cliveden House, near Cookham. Once the home of Lady Astor, the first woman MP, the house is now owned by the National Trust, who take in paying guests there as well as opening it to the public. This was not a day the house was open, however, but the grounds were and I was able to investigate the ley that passed through it, which I had not noticed until after the line was drawn.

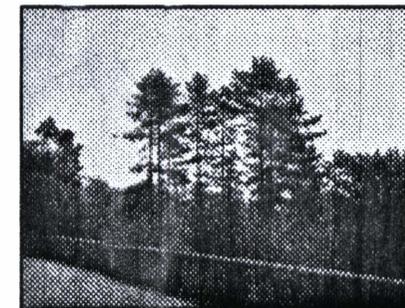


The Stud Stone

Before reaching it, however, I was surprised to see what appeared to be a large standing stone by the side of the road. I found it to be a huge block of granite with its pieces of quartz glinting in the sunshine, announcing “Cliveden Farm and Stud”. Obviously modern, but I was surprised to find it exactly on the Cliveden ley! I dubbed it “The Stud Stone”, and regard it as a rather spectacular piece of subconscious siting.

Continuing on to Cliveden itself, I found the grounds to be very beautiful and immaculately kept. The house is approached, as with most stately homes, by a long aligned drive, which in this case passed a fountain representing love, with a statue of several figures riding in a scallop shell. The ley does not follow this, however; rather it goes obliquely across the house and through the adjoining Clock Tower. The view from the terrace the other side of the house was stunning; also I was interested to note that there is a clump of pines there that the line passes through; there is another the other side of the clock tower.

From Cliveden I followed the river valley through Wooburn as advised, passing Wooburn Hill which is on one of the lines. I did not pass another of the points until, in High Wycombe, I came to the long stretch of road aligning on the Golden Ball. Over six hundred feet above sea level, the church is visible all along the road. West Wycombe, which is separated from High Wycombe by quite a distance, is an attractive ancient village, with its houses owned by the National Trust. Above it looms its hill, with the “Hell Fire Caves” at its base and the church with the Golden Ball on its summit.



Cliveden Terrace Clump

I first visited the caves, which are open to the public and have a number of tableaux and taped commentaries. The first, on entering, was by the present Sir Francis Dashwood (the family still own the house) who informed us of his building of the road between High Wycombe and West Wycombe, at a time of unemployment for the villagers, as he was “determined that they would have employment”. Did he also have some knowledge of the leys? Certainly from the top of the church tower it can be seen that the road not only aligns with the tower but with the six-sided Mausoleum below it as well. And we knew before that the site is very ancient.

The great golden ball is a landmark for miles around. And what of the "Hell Fire Club"? It was never called that by its members - presumably it was a title given it by its enemies. It was in fact the Order of St. Francis of Wycombe, whose members dressed as monks and met at West Wycombe and Medmenham. There is no evidence of anything unpleasant or evil - possibly it was fear of the unusual that led to these rumours. And - horror of horrors - they actually admitted women to the society! (Well, there could only be one reason for that, couldn't there??)



The Golden Ball on St. Lawrence's Church

The women dressed as nuns and wore a badge which said "Love and Friendship". Dashwood was a great friend of Benjamin Franklin who visited West Wycombe several times; he was also a Fellow of the Royal Society, a member of the Society of Arts and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. The caves are entered through a most ornate entrance.

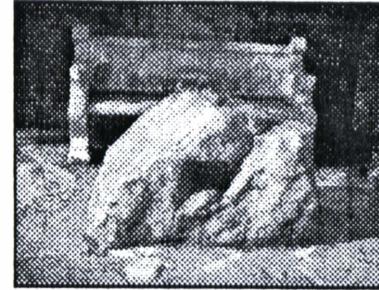


Dashwood and friends

After looking round the caves for a while I made the journey up the hill with my bicycle, passing the hexagonal Mausoleum before reaching the church. It is a most unusual building; the nave was copied from the ruined Temple of the Sun at Palmyra and is exotically painted; the font has a serpent climbing up it, apparently chasing a dove, and other doves are feeding on the top. The trip up the tower was a rewarding experience, for the church is in a very high position and the alignment of the tower, mausoleum and road were very impressive. The ball

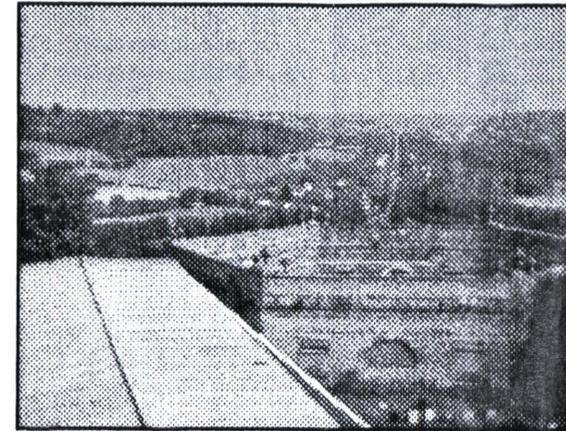
itself is not open to the public because of vandalism, but several people would have fitted into it and there is a door in its underside.

By the time I had visited the church I was too tired to see some of the points I had wanted



The Tarry Stone, Cookham

to visit afterwards, such as Desborough Castle and another church in High Wycombe aligned with one of the leys. These will have to wait for a later occasion. But there was still one more surprise for me on the return trip. Going through Cookham, I saw a large stone by the roadside, near a wall. The plaque on it said it was called the Tarry Stone, at which sports were held before A.D. 1507. It was said to be originally 50 yards NNE of its present position, which would have placed it on the Hitcham Church ley. It was replaced in 1909 by order of the parish council.



Dashwood's Road and the Mausoleum from the top of the church tower

TEMS FIELD TRIP

A group of TEMS and SEMG members went on a field trip on July 2nd to look at the western arm of Lionel Beer's Kingston-Merton ley and another ley, originally found by Alfred Watkins in the Roman city at Silchester.

It is one that he mentions in *The Old Straight Track*, but strangely never seemed to extend it westwards. It goes through the parish church, the site of the early Christian church and a Roman temple in the city of Calleva Atrebatum. Watkins mentions that the axes of all



TEMS

If you have an enquiring mind and your horizons extend beyond discs and winebars to an interest in strange phenomena and areas of study locally labelled 'earth mysteries', then TEMS could be for you!

The information for the above is drawn from the book 'The Ancient Mysteries of Britain' by J. G. Bennett, published by the author in 1978.

TEMS is a social and study group for people living in South-west London, Surrey and Middlesex. A programme of speakers, social events and trips has been arranged covering such things as ancient sites, crop circles, dowsing, haunted houses, healing, ley lines, old churches, sacred wells, unexplained animals, UFOs and much more. The programme has been designed to complement the meetings of national and neighbouring groups such as BUFORA, CCCS, SEMG and SIGAP.

TEMS (Travel & Earth Mysteries Society) was founded in January 1992, and incorporates the Surrey and Middlesex Branch of AEMAP* (a national registered charity) and is affiliated to the Surrey Earth Mysteries Group. TEMS is non-political and non-sectarian.

For a copy of the programme and further information, please contact:

Lionel Beer
Tel: 081 - 979 3148
Barbara
Tel: 081 - 942 3447
Ann
Tel: 081 - 542 3110

TEMS is a non-profit, non-political and non-sectarian, social and study group, run by its members. 1996 sub. is £4.00

three buildings follow it. But extended it is a very impressive ley indeed. It also goes through Sunbury Cross and Hampton just north of Lionel Beer's house. I picked it up by dowsing there when attending a TEMS meeting.

Coincident track and possibly church at Pamber Heath; the early church, temple and parish church in the old city; Fair Cross cross-roads; 2¹/₂ miles of coincident road with three cross-roads and church - part of 'Nine Mile Ride'; 3 miles parallel road - the other part of above; through the north end of Caesar's Camp, Bracknell; 1² mile of coincident road; Tower Hill, Bracknell; cross-roads Sunninghill; Sunningdale Church; crosses Kingston ley at Virginia Water; Sunbury Cross; cross-roads and coincident road Teddington; Isabella Plantation, Richmond Park; monument and clump, Wimbledon Common; Earlsfield Church; Balham Church.

We first visited an earthwork skirted by the Kingston ley, on the Laleham Burway, a golf course crossed by a public footpath. Members of the club complained when we left the path for a short distance to approach the earthwork, but we seemed to pick up the line there.

Next we visited Sunningdale church, only built in 1840 on an old gravel pit site, but nevertheless it was on the line and seemed powerful. Nearby, just across the road, was a grove of trees which was also on the line and seemed to have the atmosphere of a sanctuary. It was thought that this might have been the original point and that the church may have been subconsciously sited nearby on the same line. The Kingston ley runs nearby and we walked to it and seemed to pick it up, though not exactly where the map said it should be.

From here we went on to Silchester, the home village of my family, and first visited the Roman amphitheatre, which despite the picture of gladiators at the entrance did not seem to have a bad atmosphere. We then went to the parish church, just within the Roman wall which is all that is visibly left of the old city. It is also the only one of the three aligning sites in the city that still exists. My parents and many of my family are buried in a corner

of the churchyard which was originally the corner of yet another Roman temple. We also saw the rood screen which my great-grandfather completed - it had been hidden in Cromwell's time and most of it recovered in the last century, except for one section which he made to match the rest, and can be seen to be slightly different. Despite the fact that wedding photographs were being taken and our presence seemed to be causing slight irritation, it was as always a peaceful place with an atmosphere of great antiquity. Finally, we walked in the fields that are now the site of the city, and tried to work out the position of the early Christian church. The city was polygonal in shape, and Watkins noted that the church was at the crossing-point of lines drawn from its corners.

TEMS meetings

10th September - SEMG/TEMS Pagan Project field trip to Kent - ring 0932-849505.
25th September - Video Afternoon - ring 081-646-3740. 30th October - Royston Cave and the Knights Templar, by Sylvia Beamon - ring 081-979-3148. 27th November - Geneset Target Earth, by David Wood and Ian Campbell - ring 081-979-3148. December 10th - Christmas Party - ring 081-979-3148.

NOTES AND NEWS

London meetings

(London Earth Mysteries Circle meets at 7.00 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays in each month, at Maria Assumpta Centre, 23, Kensington Square, London, W.8.)
September 13th, CONTEMPORARY PROCESSIONAL GIANTS, by Audrey Bailey and Mike Patterson. September 27th, FAIRY PATHS AND NORTH DEVON FOLK MAGIC, by Paul Ratcliffe. October 11th, ALIEN ENERGY, UFOS AND LIVING ENTITIES, by Andy Collins. November 8th, THE ANCIENT LORE OF HIGH PLACES, by Phillip Shallcraft. November 22nd, THE LONG CONTINUITY OF SHRINES, by Nigel Pennick. December 13th, GENERAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND SOCIAL EVENING.

LEMC had an enjoyable field trip to Stanton Drew but were unable to penetrate very far into Stoney Littleton barrow because it was blocked off for safety reasons. They also visited the plateau fort at Cholesbury, Buckinghamshire and the Hell Fire Caves at West Wycombe.

Rob Stephenson will be organising a one day seminar on **Mystical and Legendary London** at the City Literary Institute, Stukeley Street, London WC2B. 5LJ, on Saturday, November 12th. It will be devoted to an alternative view of London and obscure and rarely-covered material concerning its sacred and esoteric nature will be sought out. Subjects covered will include early legends, ghosts, divination of holy places and leys as an energy matrix for the city. 10.30 to 16.30, £19 (£10 unwaged)

Moots!

The Ley Hunter Moot this year will be on Saturday and Sunday September 17th/18th at The Lincoln Suite, The Lawn, Union Street, Lincoln. Subjects of talks will be: "Local Sites and Myths", "Ancient Pathways", "Folk Customs and the Historians", "Allergies and Aliens", and "Feng Shui or Chinese Geomancy: The Terrestrial Counterpart to Astrology".

On Sunday there will be a guided walk through Lincoln in the morning and a coach trip to the surrounding countryside in the afternoon. In the evening there will be a concert of folk-related music.

Ticket price for the lectures is £12.50 (£10 concessions), and for the coach trip £3, from TLH, P.O. Box 92, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18. 2XL. Cheques should be made to "Empress".

The Northern Earth Moot will be on Saturday, October 22nd at Richmond Building, Bradford University on Saturday October 22nd. Subjects will be "The Mystery Rock Carvings of Northern Britain", "Cups-and-Rings in a Mythic Landscape", "The Rolling Sun: Solar Alignments at Irish Prehistoric Sites", "The Art of the Megalith Builders" and "Severed Heads among the Celts and Yeomen". There will also be the opportunity for people to present their own short papers, but please contact the organisers beforehand if you wish to do this.

Admission £5 (£4.50 in advance), £2.50 concessions at the door. Northern Earth, 10, Jubilee Street, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX7. 5NP.

Local Sites

The book *Prehistoric London* by Nick Merriman indicates that this area was quite rich in prominent sites in Neolithic times. There are a number of interesting crop-mark aerial photographs which show some quite striking sites, though it is difficult to pinpoint their exact location from the book. I think I have fairly certainly placed the double-ditched enclosure south of the present Heathrow Airport, but the cursus at Stanwell and the causewayed enclosure at Staines have eluded me, probably because the area has become much more built up since the picture was taken. But it shows that the area was certainly occupied and used in ancient times, and was certainly richer in sites than we usually think.

Yet another circle!

When travelling to Salisbury with my son on July 31st I once again saw a corn circle from the train, somewhere between Basingstoke and Andover looking in an approximately southern direction. We both saw it, this time just a simple small circle, but it is difficult

to pinpoint exactly where it was because of lack of landmarks and the fact that the next station was passed through so quickly we could not read the name!

A Ley Man's Guide

In an article from *ES Magazine* sent to me by Rob Stephenson, there is a full page article about Chris Street and his work on the leys round London, and how it started when he realised his most intense experiences formed an equilateral triangle, the southern tip of which was on a ley running from Whitby Abbey to a stone circle on the South Coast. After describing his discoveries as published in *Earthstars*, the article goes on to say that earlier societies built their civilisations on sacred geometry. State augurs or geomancers would dowse for sites on which to build, creating a network of enchantment over the land to win favour with the gods. Pre-Christian London, says the article, was focussed on the Temple of Apollo on Ludgate Hill. The science of augury was kept alive by the Benedictines until the Reformation. Chris is quoted as saying "I think of the pattern as a sort of plug into the cosmic mains through which ancient earth energies can be channelled into London. This could change our thinking and create a more healthy perception of our place on the planet."

SCAMP

In the course of my work I have come across a very interesting CD-ROM called SCAMP (Schools Census Analysis and Mapping Package). It is basically a census mapping program based on data from the 1991 Census, but also has some features which could be very useful to ley hunters. One very powerful feature is the ability to import Ordnance Survey cartographic data for any area of England and Wales - and there is a very comprehensive dialogue box allowing the user to choose which types of cartographic data should be displayed, so that there is a great deal of choice in the appearance of the finished map. But even more important for the ley hunter is that one can switch on a feature which gives a running O.S. grid reference linked to the position of the mouse arrow. Any chosen grid reference can thus be marked and labelled with text.

The program will also draw straight lines on the map, so a series of grid references on a ley, for instance, can be linked to see if they are in actual fact in alignment, with no fear of pencil wander. Erasing a line does not seem to be possible, however, so one would have to be sure each line was correct and save each time. (In the case of error one would return to the previously saved version). Completed maps can be saved as picture files and printed either from SCAMP itself or from any appropriate software - such as PageMaker on which *Touchstone* is produced.

Of course, the same limitations with regard to the curve of the Earth etc. apply as with any other map, but it is interesting that someone has produced a ley drawing package

apparently without realising it! I will be doing further work on this and will report in later issues.

Earth Mysteries Weekends

Laurence Main, who organised the Ley Hunter Moot in Wales two years ago, is organising a series of earth mysteries weekends in the area. They will consist of a Friday evening reception with illustrated introduction to the area by Laurence Main at 9 p.m. There will be a full day's walk on the Saturday, starting at 9.30 a.m., followed by dinner and an expert speaker in the evening. The talks will start at 7.30 p.m with a refreshment break at 8.30 and a question and answer session from 9 p.m. Sunday's walk will start at 10 a.m. and finish in time for guests to depart by the afternoon train from Machynlleth.

Speakers: **November 5th** - Dr. Anne Ross on the Celtic festival of Samhain. **December 3rd** - Paul Devereux on Spirit Paths. **January 7th** - Dr. Serena Roney-Dougal, author of *Where Science and Magic Meet*. **February 4th** - Chris Barber, author of *Journey to Avalon*, speaking at the site of King Arthur's last battle. **March 4th** - Mary Caine on Celtic Saints and the Zodiac.

Scilly Zodiac

On my recent holiday in the Isles of Scilly I bought a map of the islands which seemed strangely familiar...then I suddenly realised what it was. The islands are strangely reminiscent of the Glastonbury Zodiac! Several of the figures only become apparent on maps showing the under-sea contours, particularly Scorpio, formed by the treacherous Western Rocks. My favourite is Libra, a beautiful dove formed by St. Agnes with its adjoining (at low tide) island of Gugh, which is its fan tail. Its eye is the Troy Town maze and one wing is...Wingletang Down! Cancer is a ship, as at Glastonbury - the island of Bryher, with a figurehead called Shipman Head and an inlet to the south called Stoneship Porth! Full details next issue.

BOOK REVIEW

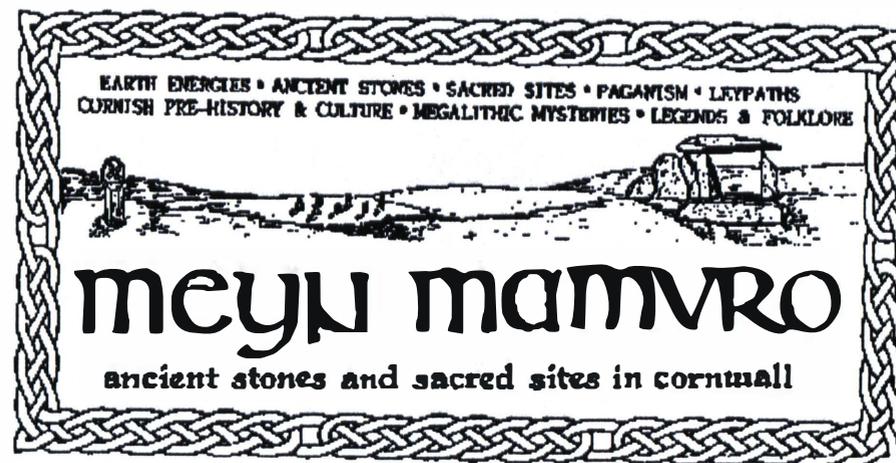
Alien Encounters, by Gordon Millington, published by The Leonine Press, 8, Burnfield Drive, Rugeley, Staffordshire. £9.95 plus £1.50 p & p.

This book is a collection of articles on the subject of UFOs and encounters with their operators which Gordon Millington has written over the past few years. There are a number of interesting cases, including the Schirmer case in which a policeman was taken aboard a craft. Through it all Gordon is searching for patterns in the very

complex mass of reported information to try to work out what it all means. A mysterious force referred to as "The Phenomenon" is implied to be in charge of producing unusual events of various kinds for some as yet undisclosed purpose, but all tailored to our perceptions of things in some way. The contact claims of the 1950s are seen to be a part of this programme, and present-day "abductions" are seen to have come on the scene because the "high moral tone (of the contact accounts) was bound to cloy..."

At the end of the book is an account of the writings of Zechariah Sitchin, an "ancient astronauts" writer who Gordon considers much more scholarly than others, although the picture painted is an extremely unusual one involving a planet in a very eccentric orbit that one would imagine would be far too cold for most of its time to support life (unless of course George Adamski's cosmology is correct and distance from a sun makes no difference to a planet's life-bearing capability. But this of course would mean, as Adamski held, that all the planets are inhabited and so would pose complications for the Sitchin scenario).

Gordon restarted the Surrey Investigation Group on Aerial Phenomena some time ago, and has also been involved in investigation into the very wide and powerful ley crossing Southern Britain known as the "E-Line".



Sample copy £1.90 (inc p&p). Annual sub - £5.50 (inc p&p).
from 51 Carn Bosavern, St. Just, Penzance, Cornwall TR197QX

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, Box 2409, London NW5.4NP. NORTHERN EARTH MYSTERIES, 10, Jubilee Street, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX7. 5NP. FOLKLORE FRONTIERS, 5, Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland, TS25. 2AT. THE LEY HUNTER, P.O. Box 92, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18. 2XL. MAGONIA, John Dee Cottage, 5, James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London, S.W.14. 8HB. GLOUCESTERSHIRE EARTH MYSTERIES, P.O. Box 258, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL53. 1HR. MEYN MAMVRO, 51, Carn Bosavern, St. Just, Penzance, Cornwall, TR19. 7QX. LONDON EARTH MYSTERIES, P.O. Box 1035, London W2. 6ZX. MARKSTONE, Glebe Farm House, Fen Road, Owmy-by-Spital, Lincoln, LN2. 3DR. CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY, 15, Holne Court, Exwick, Exeter, Devon, EX4. 2NA. TRAVEL AND EARTH MYSTERIES SOCIETY, 115, Hollybush Road, Hampton, Middlesex, TW12. 2QY. Our thanks to all exchange publications, especially those who have mentioned us.

TOUCHSTONE is published by Surrey Earth Mysteries Group, 25, Albert Road, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15. 2PX. 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: X