

Touchstone

Surrey
Earth
Mysteries



No. 44

January 1996

HOLY WELLS FIELD TRIP

by Lionel Beer

Initial field work had already been carried out by Mick, Lorraine and Eileen in August. Fourteen of us met at Eileen's house in Guildford on the 9th. First stop was Sutton Place, via Jacobs Well village. Eileen had been unable to trace the well at Jacobs. The Victorian-built Roman Catholic Church of St. Edward's contained display cases of ancient sacred bones, documents and interesting religious artefacts, not commonly found these days. The church was aligned to the east of St. Edward's (the Confessor) Well which is now in the churchyard. Possibly St. Mary's at Worplesdon (with the best perpendicular tower in Surrey) lies on the same alignment? A purposeful length of flag-stones led from the church to the well. It had been enhanced between two evergreens, one of which screened off a lone (sacred?) thorn-tree, and had a dais bearing waist-high stone-work. To the west from this corner of the churchyard was a pleasant view and immediately adjacent was a field containing bits of old roof tiles. The well sits on what was Manor Field, the site of the Confessor's hunting lodge (he was venerated after his death in 1066 and canonised in 1161 for his healing powers.)

Lunch was taken on picnic tables half way up St. Catherine's Hill, south of Guildford. One car had not arrived so I blew a long blast on an old motor-horn

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

in case it had stopped nearby. It was reported to me later that walkers on the hill rapidly disappeared at that point! Did they expect more of us to appear from the bushes brandishing sandwich-boxes? After eating we all made our way down the hill to the River Wey. At this point there was an ancient ford which had been part of the Pilgrims' Way Track on which lies St. Martha's Hill with its church, due east. The trackway is now part of the official North Downs Way, and TEMS members walked to St. Martha's last year.

Cascading down St. Catherine's Hill, close to the recent wooden bridge, is the brightest orange sand. So Guild-ford may have been named after the 'gilt-ford'. At the foot of the lane running up from the ford lies St. Catherine's Spring. It was enhanced with an arch and fairy bridge by the Victorians, but the arch has collapsed in front of the spring and needs removing. A holly bush also needs cutting back. Some of the stones from this 'grotto' have been dropped in the river. However it has revealed the original yellow sandstone rock behind, and the goodly flow of water may still be potable. Certainly it would have been welcomed by early pilgrims!

We went back up the hill to view the ruined chapel of ease (absent from the O.S. Landranger 186 map) and Eileen mentioned its ghosts, the discontinued St. Michael's Day fair, and alignments to be seen across the hills. (An earlier account says it was held on St. Matthew's Day, 21st September, a week earlier, and lasted three days).

We next proceeded to Dunsfold, stopping briefly at the formidable Rowcliffe drinking fountain under a giant oak, and now almost hidden by dying yews, from a junction on the B2130 at Lower Barrihurst Farm. Its plumbing was vandalised long ago. At Dunsfold we walked about 100 yards down a treelined track of willow, hazel, hawthorn and holly etc, from the lychgate of the medieval church of St. Mary's and All Saints to a tributary of the River Arun. Here the well sits about 8 feet from the river and in its flood plain. It was associated with visions of the Virgin Mary and miraculous healing, especially of eye problems. Curiously below the 1933 brick-work are to be found small twin wells (one for each eye perhaps?) The water therein contains chlorides (?) which have been likened to the water at Lourdes. The water was about 5 feet above the level of the river

water, when we visited, and it used to be protected by lids. In 1933 the Dunsfold Amateur Dramatic Society erected the above-ground oblong brick and oak structure with shingled roof, which includes a small BVM and child carved by Nathaneal Hitch. It was dedicated by the Bishop of Guildford. The well is surrounded by a low wooden fence and overhung by a hornbeam, with a row of mature oaks leading away across the old field boundary. A Roman road ran near the church, which has the earliest surviving benches in the country dated to 1280, at which time congregations usually stood! In the church-yard is a 23 feet girth yew tree, which at 1000 years is older than the 13th century church. During the Reformation the villagers buried the church plate, which allegedly remains to be discovered. Maybe this calls for a bit of serious dowsing!

Before returning, we looked at the extraordinarily decorated church at Hascombe, one of the best works of Henry Woodyer (1864) whose Victorian wall decoration is of St. Peter netting the fishes, and the border above includes some small gold swastikas, which gave Ruth a cue to outline the history of this curious symbol. Also at Hascombe (and on the 'E-line') we passed another Rowcliffe drinking fountain set into a wall, producing a good flow of water into a long trough; dedicated to the sponsor's brother.

We returned to Eileen's for tea and a review of the day's events. Mick and Lorraine were keen to cross-reference our intuitive impressions of the places we had visited. Jimmy Goddard, leader of the Surrey Earth Mysteries Group, videoed our progress, and it may be possible to show this at the Christmas Party. Four cars took part and nobody got lost! Thanks go to Eileen both for the tea and organisation.

EASTON CHURCH - LEY CENTRE

This modest little church in Somerset is untypical of the county's churches, which are usually quite large and solid-looking, often with pinnacled towers. Nevertheless, it does seem to be the centre of a number of very Watkinsian leys with quite a large number of prehistoric points.

The church, although built in Norman style (there is a particularly ornate doorway

on the south side) was in fact consecrated in February, 1844 and there is no record of a former church on the site. Prior to its building, the villagers attended St. Cuthbert's in Wells - it was built as a chapel of ease. It is, however, on a visible high point in the village - the road dips before climbing Easton Hill in one direction, and again before climbing to Westbury-sub-Mendip in the other. Behind the church, there is a valley before the ground rises steeply again to the heights of the Mendips. The church is also considerably higher than the road. There was also a record of "beating the bounds" in 1752 which mentioned two boundary stones, but the sites of these have not been ascertained as yet.



Easton Church along the Glastonbury Tor ley, with the Church Room in the foreground.

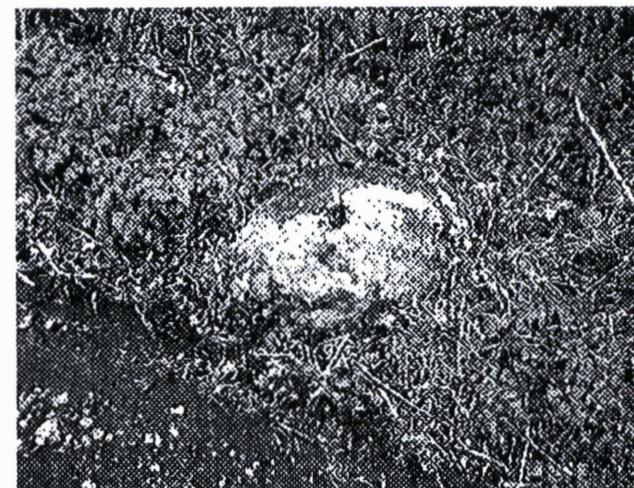
The first two leys found were what Watkins would have called cardinal-point alignments. One goes southwards to pass through Glastonbury Tor, and the other westwards to the impressive hilltop church at Wedmore. The former goes through three quite prominent track junctions to a tumulus north of Butcombe, very near Butcombe church (dowsing required here), the mean-following track to Holt Farm, up a narrow wooded valley on to the Mendips. It then goes through a prominent spot marked staggered crossroads, then Priddy Hill Farm, surrounded by a large clump of trees. A long barrow west of Priddy is the next point, then it descends from the hills to Easton Church, continuing south through a possible mound by the roadside, over the end of a ridge to a not very prominent mound in a farm field. This is marked on the map, but is quite low and not very noticeable, even though it does have one tree on it. Glastonbury Tor is visible from here, on the alignment.

The east-running ley goes through Wedmore, Easton and Wookey Hole churches, a long stretch of coincident road east of West Horrington, skirts

Maesbury Castle, and goes through a staggered crossroads and church at Oakhill, another crossroads, Chantry Church, Corsley Church, and finally to Cradle Hill, Warminster, made famous in the Warminster UFO flap of the 1960s.

Another comes northward at a slightly different angle, through Battlebury, Ben Knowle Hill and a clump of Scots pines in Wookey village, a multijunction there, Easton Church, a tumulus, a group of tumuli, a road/track/boundary multijunction south of Blagdon, and two crossroads at Blackwell.

Yet another connects Easton Church with a small wayside stone in Doctor's Lane, Wookey. This is a very small stone on a bend in the road by a farm; it has a hole in the top and the dowsing rod went wild over it. The ley comes north-westerly through a cross-roads on the Foss Way, a road-track multijunction south of West Pennard, and a cross-roads/tracks and mean-following track north of it, along a road in Wookey and through two cross-roads there to the stone and Easton church, a tumulus in Mendip Forest, a large clump near Congresbury and Claverham Church.



The Doctor's Lane Stone

There is a line joining a church in Croscombe, Tor Hill, Wells and Wells Cathedral to Easton church. This skirts the base of Nyland Hill and goes on to Biddisham Church. One slightly to the south of this goes through Dinder Church, a multijunction between Wells and Dulcote, two churches in Wells and Easton Church. It then goes through Nyland Hill, church and mean-following road at Weare, a staggered cross-roads at Bleadon and a tumulus at Weston-super-Mare.

OUR EARLIEST SIGNPOSTS

by Alan Gill

(This article appeared in the Surrey Comet for Saturday, September 6th, 1969)

One of the most astonishing mysteries of our time is being investigated by a 23-year-old Sunbury town planning student and a small group of friends.

The way the group has gone about about the work of discovery - or more accurately re-discovery - is almost as fascinating as the subject of its researches. It all dates back to a remarkable claim by a Herefordshire archaeologist in the early 1920s, whose name is best known for his invention of the Watkins exposure meter, which was in use for many years.

Journeying through the countryside, we've all seen, at one time or other, the sort of landmarks which Watkins' eye during the summer of 1921 - the clump of pine trees on the hilltop which can be seen for miles around, the village church on the highest point of the ridge with the houses nestling below it, and, of course, the remains of the earliest of man's activities - the stone circles like Stonehenge and Avebury, the solitary standing-stone along the wayside, and the mounds, sometimes for burial, in prominent positions throughout the countryside. Watkins suddenly began to see these landmarks, not just as isolated points, but as part of a whole. He gradually realised, first by observation on the ground and later by plotting the sites on a map, that these landmarks formed an amazing and, to his eyes, meaningful pattern - that the vast majority of them fell on straight lines running for many miles across the countryside.

Watkins put forward the idea that these mark points were first set up by ancient man as landmarks for a series of trackways (which he called "leys") running dead straight for miles across country. The clumps and stones were, he thought, some of our earliest signposts, showing that you were on the right track. Tree clumps, he thought, had been planted to guide the traveller and might well have survived through regeneration and tending right up to the present time. The presence of churches on these lines was explained by the fact that they were frequently built on more ancient sites, sacred to the earlier inhabitants.

Watkins wrote several books on the subject and founded the Straight Track Club whose members claimed to have found a system of leys covering the whole of Britain and even abroad. Some particularly important mark points even had half-a-dozen or more leys passing through them. Salisbury Plain was found to be covered with a system of equilateral triangles with sides several miles in length and the records of the Straight Track Club were full of details of ley systems all over the country. In the course of time Watkins died and membership of the Straight Track Club gradually fell off until the club finally disbanded in 1945.

There our story would have ended, but for the efforts of Philip Heselton, of Sunbury, who, while still a pupil at Sunbury Grammar School, heard about Watkins' theories. Philip, who is now taking a post-graduate course at Manchester University after a degree in geography at Hull, is not a person who is put off easily. He formed the Ley Hunters' Club and managed to trace Watkins' son - now aged 70 - who became president. He also managed to trace some of the members of the defunct Straight Track Club. The youngest is now 68, and oldest over 90. Philip freely admits that eminent archaeologists would still take a lot of convincing before accepting the theory of leys, but feels that a full scale statistical analysis could do the trick. He has already been offered a £1,500 study grant by the Department of Education and Science for research into leys, while a practical result of such acceptance - and here it is the town planner in him that emerges - would be the placing of preservation orders on ley sites for posterity.

I spent several hours with Philip, a huge Ordnance Survey map in hand, putting his beliefs to the test. I must admit it was strangely convincing. Two leys, although neither are among the better examples, are claimed to run through Kingston churchyard. One follows a route from New Malden, across the Thames, through Bushy Park, for about a mile. It then runs between Hampton and Hanworth (passing through Hanworth Church), cuts through a kink in the road at Bedfont, and then runs through Stanwell Church to Horton church. The second ley follows a route through Caesar's Camp, an Iron Age hill fort at Wimbledon, through Kingston Church, along an existing path in Hampton Court Park, then through East Molesey Church, Weybridge, and Weybridge Church.

A better example was recently discovered going across Longleat Park in Wiltshire, and Philip has challenged *Surrey Comet* readers to test this one for themselves. The old straight track west-north-west from a spot near Warminster. It starts at Sutton Veny Church and passes through the earthwork of Robin Hood's Bower, Crockerton Church, and then follows a track for nearly two miles to Dod Pool, a pond near the top of Park Hill overlooking Longleat Park and known to be ancient as it was used in the siting of the Roman road between Bath and Poole. Our line continues through the camp on Roddenbury Hill, through East Woodlands church, follows a marked kink in the road at Marston Bigot and then on through Downhead Church. There are kinks in the road at Midway and Oakhill and the ley here follows track and road for about three miles past Slab House before reaching the top of Pen Hill, a prominent point which can be seen for miles around. (To check it for yourself you can find it on the Ordnance Survey one inch map sheet 166 - Frome - and the end points of the ley are at grid references : 565488 and 903417.)

There are several other mysteries about leys; Flying Saucer enthusiasts, particularly James Goddard, secretary of North Surrey branch of Contact have remarked that UFOs are observed more frequently 'over ley mark points than anywhere else. This was particularly true in Warminster, the scene of a much-publicised saucer "flap" a few years ago. Here there is a mark point with at least 11 leys converging on it. Some enthusiasts believe occupants of the saucers may have come down in early times to help the ancient inhabitants of these islands in the siting of their tracks and "Sign posts."

Another mystery concerns a possible tie-up between leys and that other great mystery of early Britain, the Glastonbury Zodiac, a great circle many miles wide in the heart of Somerset showing the zodiacal creatures outlined on the ground.

NOTES AND NEWS

New discovery at Avebury

Daniele Hart recently sent me the following cutting from The Guardian, of January 30th:

LAST YEAR's scorching summer has uncovered evidence of a major structure at the world heritage site at Avebury in Wiltshire, within and possibly older than

the stone circle. Archaeologists believe the patch marks, revealed in an aerial photograph and invisible at ground level, could be evidence of a mid or late Neolithic burial mound, which would indicate that the site had ritual importance before the circle was built some 4,000 years ago. The photographs were taken in September, and have now been analysed by the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England. "We have been jumping up and down with excitement over this," Ros Cleal, archaeologist and joint curator of the museum at Avebury, said yesterday. "This is a completely new element in a site where we thought we knew most of the major facts."

The two concentric rings of yellow grass, about 22 metres in diameter, were caused when the soil was dug, altering the way water drains through it. They are usually only visible from the air. A geophysical survey, will now be done, which may give evidence of underground structures, but no excavation is planned. -- Maev Kennedy

TEMS meetings

Sunday 25 February 2.30-6.30pm PARANORMAL CASES THAT HAVE IMPRESSED: John Spencer, author and Chairman of BUFORA, actively investigates phenomena on site. He will relate personal experiences and draw upon The ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST MYSTERIES, co-authored with his wife.

Inc. Tea: £2.00 Venue: Hampton. Please ring Lionel: 0181 - 979 3148

Wednesday 13 March 8.00pm Joint Meeting with The SURREY EARTH MYSTERIES GROUP. Field trip video by Jimmy Goddard, plus illustrated talk by Lionel Beer on the island of Aphrodite.

Venue: Hampton. Ring Lionel: 0181 - 979 3148

Sunday 31 March 2.30-6.30pm A BREATH BEHIND TIME is the title of a book by Barry Hector, healer and visionary contactee from Finland. who has had five near-death experiences. Venue: possibly Farnham. Cost: TBA.

Sunday 14 April 2.30-6.30pm THE MYSTERY CHILD and OTHER LOCAL ENIGMAS: Clive Whichelow and Ruth Murphy discuss fascinating reports of hauntings and other strange phenomena featured in their second booklet 'More Mysterious Wimbledon.'

Inc. Tea: £2.00 Wimbledon. Please book early with Ann: 0181-542 3110.

Sunday 28 April 2.30-6.30pm. MU: RETURN OF THE SUNKEN EMPIRE: Lucien Morgan, film director and paranormal researcher, plans to dive in the Pacific, and bring back pictures. Lucien will explain the legends of this apparently imminent event.

Inc. Tea: £2.00 Venue: TBA

Sunday 12 May Possible Surrey Field Trip (Refer: Eileen)

Sunday 19 May Topic to be arranged. Venue: probably Wimbledon. (Mid-month to avoid Bank Holidays etc)

Sunday Afternoons Clive Whichelow and a colleague lead walks in Wimbledon on Sunday afternoons. We will advise a date for TEMS members to come along.

London Earth Mysteries Circle meetings

7.00 p.m Tuesdays, at The Meeting Room, Diarama Centre, 34, Osnaburgh Street, London, NW1.

February 27th - Mithraism and its London Temple, by Simon Emerson.

March 12th - The Mystery Religion of Wicca, by Rufus Harrington.

March 26th - Ghosts and Apparitions, by Andrew Mackenzie.

April 9th - Social and Contributions Evening.

April 5th-8th - Easter in Anglesey - Guiding by Gwidhw.

E-line in 1968?

The following appeared in SIGAP Newsletter No. 1 - July 1st 1968, and is about a line seemingly very close to the E-line. Dan Butcher discovered stag and dove terrestrial figures in the Virginia Water area.

S.I.G.A.P. Titbits

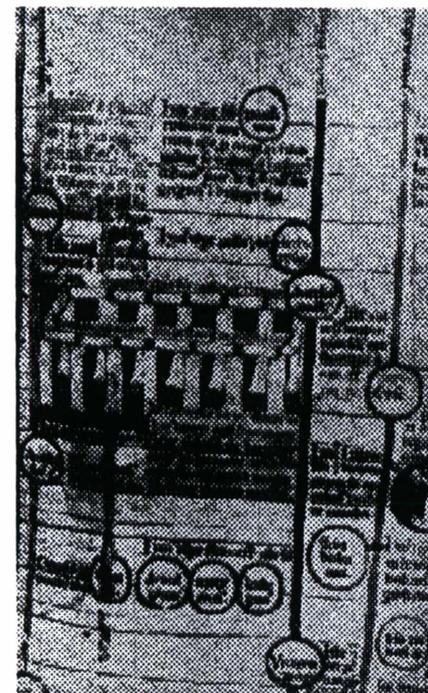
Since writing the article entitled: "The Spectre of Winterfold as a Ley Phenomenon", I have discovered that if the line Coneyhurst Hill-Palmers Cross is extended to the east, it will strike the southern flank of Holmbury Hill - and then, further on, the northern side of Anstiebury Camp. If the same line be extended to the west, it will strike first Hydon Ball, and then Beacon Hill Hindhead. All of those hills must have been important sighting points in ancient times and tracks must have radiated from them in all directions. That all five (including Coneyhurst Hill), lie on a straight line is remarkable. It makes one think that a ley must have linked them. Holmbury and Anstiebury were Iron Age forts. All this strengthens the

suspicion that the Winterfold Spectre may have been witnessed on the line of an ancient trackway.



Mark stone near the Prince Albert pub in Bletchingley. A ley runs through it and through churches at Westerham, Reigate and Godstone, and the axis of Bletchingley Castle

Dan Butcher.



The oldest known drawing of Stonehenge, from a 14th Century manuscript inscribed: "Stonehenge near Amesbury situated in England. This year (483) Merlin brought the Giants' Dance by art not by force from Ireland to Stonehenge".

From Stonehenge - the Ministry of Works Official Guide-book, 1955.

T.C. Lethbridge in one of his books said he had found by dowsing that the bluestones were indicated as not originating from Wales (the nearest source) but from another bluestone source in Ireland...

THE HIDDEN UNITY and BEGINNINGS

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.

EARTH PEOPLE, SPACE PEOPLE

In 1961, Tony Wedd produced a manuscript *Earth Men, Space Men*, detailing many claims of extraterrestrial contact. It was never published, and the MS is presumably lost. To try to make up for the loss in a much more modest size, this booklet has been prepared. As well as giving details of some of the more prominent contact claims, there are articles on the history of the STAR Fellowship and some of its personalities, evidence for life in the Solar System and investigation into extraterrestrial language.

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

TOUCHSTONE is the newsletter of the Surrey Earth Mysteries Group. £2 for four quarterly issues from J. Goddard, 25, Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey, KT15. 2PX. Please make cheques payable to J. Goddard. IF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS DUE AN "X" WILL FOLLOW THIS SENTENCE:

X