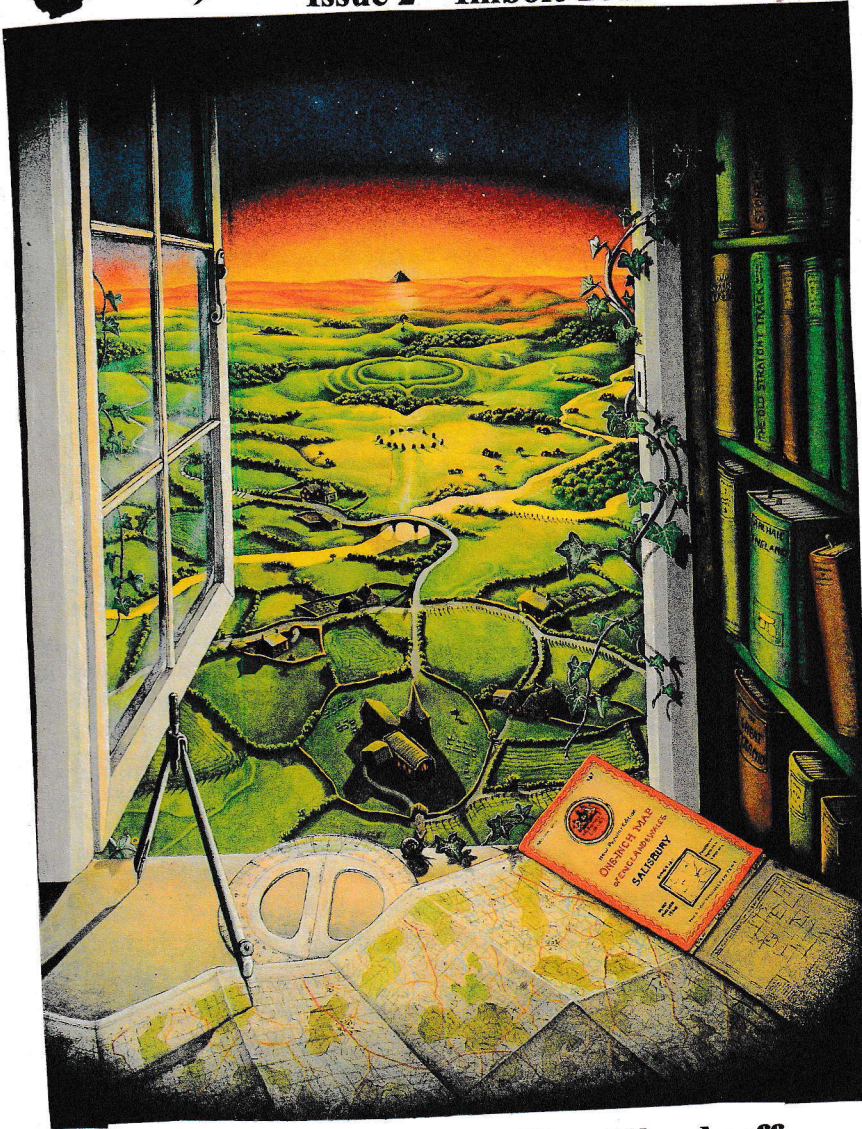


The Newsletter of the Network of **Loyal Hunters**

Issue 2 – Imbolc 2012



“The Old Library” by Una Woodruff
See article on page 6



WHAT ARE LEYS?

Send us your definition for publication in a future issue. Here's mine now...

Leys are alignments of sacred sites, often converging on a holy hill, and linked to the sun or moon, e.g. aligned with sunrise at the summer solstice. Our prehistoric ancestors recognized these lines of sight and marked them with our most ancient monuments, including standing stones and burial chambers. Also known as spirit paths, leys can be dowsed and must be of divine or mystical significance, leading to the conclusion that the earth is a living landscape connected to heavenly bodies. Does Father Sky fertilize Mother Earth at certain places and at special times, and do the leys spread this fertility throughout the land?

Leys are obviously associated with death but also with the needs of the living, who use them to travel. The term ley (never ley line!) was used by Alfred Watkins in his seminal book The Old Straight Track (1925). Stones marked the way and were, perhaps, dedicated to Mercury and assisted merchants to reach their markets. Mercury could be equated with Hermes, Thoth, and Toutates.

Whilst leys are straight, dowsers such as Hamish Miller and Paul Broadhurst (The Sun and the Serpent, 1989) found male and female earth currents coiling around them. Other patterns in the landscape are terrestrial zodiacs, such as The Glastonbury Zodiac, described by Mary Caine in her book of that title in 1978. Other notable authors to research leys include Paul Devereux, Robin Heath, John Michell, and Michael Dames.

Modern archaeoastronomers recognize alignments which are leys but fail to acknowledge this fact, thus following in the footsteps of the editor of Antiquity, who notoriously refused a paid advertisement for Alfred Watkins's book in the 1920s. Perhaps they are afraid of the spiritual side of leys.

Laurence Main



LETTERS

Thanks for the dozens of letters welcoming our first issue.

Ray Cox of Halesowen wrote: "I was interested in a comment in Jon Lord's Pembrokeshire Ley description (p.6) about hearing children's voices. This is exactly what I and a dowsing friend, Michael Newark, heard several years ago in an arable field in Shropshire while we were examining a crop circle. The phenomenon Jon Lord mentions seems not to be very common, and I am not at all subject to paranormal experiences, so it was all the more interesting. Good luck with the newsletter."

John Sharkey wrote: "Judith Adams' Pilgrimage to Benbecula reminded me of the copies of "The Road Through the Isles" that are still available. Long out of print and published by Wildwood House in the late 60s, it is an account of a journey that the artist Keith Payne and myself made when we explored the outer Hebrides, from Bara Head to the Butt of Lewis, the main islands of Barra, S. Uist, Benbecula, N. Uist, Harris, Lewis, and many of the smaller ones. We were interested in the folklore, old tales, legends, and meeting as many of the traditional storytellers as possible. As well as the alignments like the Callanish Stones, the Sleeping Beauty, Carloway Broch and other well known sites, Keith's evocative pencil drawings bring to life many of the old chapels, ruined castles, stone circles, and chambered cairns.

An old description of Benbecula may indicate what is in store for your pilgrimage: The sea here is all islands, and the land is all lakes. That which is not rock is sand; that which is not mud is bog; that which is not bog is lake; that which is not lake is sea; and the whole is a labyrinth of island peninsulas, promontories, bays and channels.

The Road Through the Isles is available at £10, including P&P, from John Sharkey, Nant y Coi, Mynachlogddu, Clunderwen, Pembrokeshire SA66 7SA."

THE COVER STORY

"The Old Library", a watercolour by Una Woodruff was used as cover art for "The New View Over Atlantis" by John Michell published by Thames and Hudson in 1983.

When my friend John Michell came to my house in Warminster early in 1983 asking me to design a cover for his re-working of 'The View Over Atlantis', I realised that, since the book was practically at the printers, we had very little time to come up with a concept. To make matters more problematic, John had a list of items he wanted in the picture, including an alignment stretching as far as the Great Pyramid, and a shelf containing certain books. However, my 'muse' was on form that day, and as I glanced out of an upstairs window towards Cley Hill, I had a sudden flash that everything would come together if I drew the view from an old library at the top of a tower – an incredibly, impossibly tall tower.

Sadly, John passed away a couple of years ago, but I sometimes fancy that he now inhabits just such a library.

Una Woodruff has copyright of the image and has given her permission for it to be reproduced as cover art by the 'Network of Ley hunters'

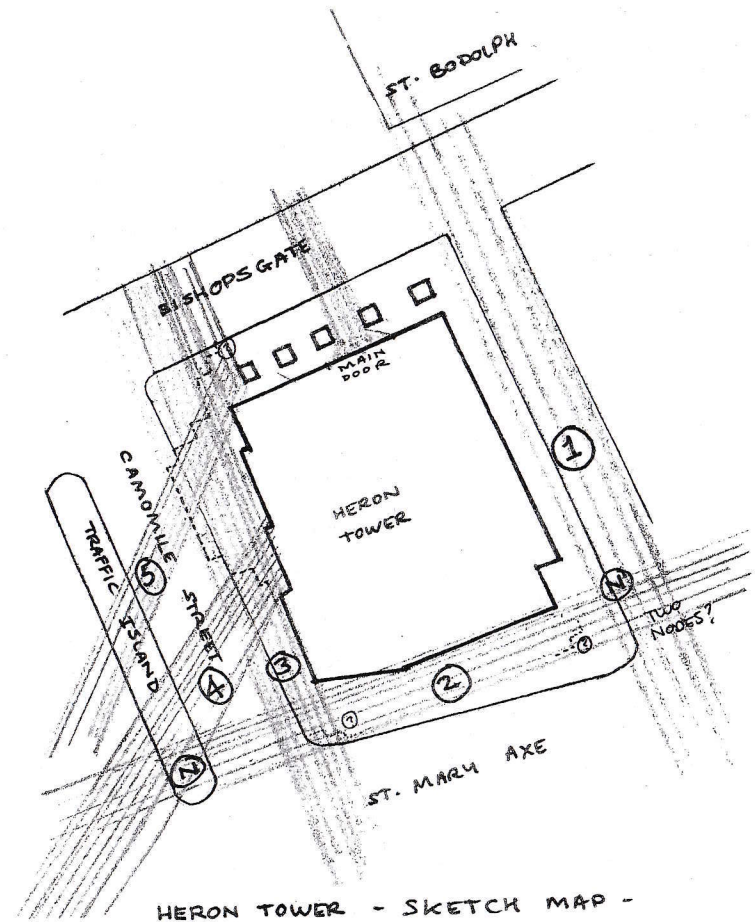
UWoodruff
23 Nov 2011

THE HERON TOWER by Sue Pine

London's iconic skyline is on course to become more dramatic than ever. Recent years have seen several remarkable towers soaring into existence over the ancient alleyways – The Natwest Tower in 1983; One Canada Square (the obelisk shaped one) and 30 St Mary Axe (aka the 'Gherkin'). Two more immense structures, the Pinnacle and the Shard, are currently under construction. What effect are these glittering monsters having on earth energies of the capital? I looked at one such building in depth – the Heron Tower.

At 230 metres, the Heron Tower is currently the second tallest building in London. To find it, leave Liverpool Street Station by the main entrance onto Bishopsgate, turn right and look up. The Heron Tower stands on its own small island very close to the site of the original Bishopsgate, one of the major entrances to the City. Across the road lies the church of St Bodolph without Bishopsgate, which features in one of Watkins' original leys (p 124 *The Old Straight Track*).

My interest in the tower began very early one morning, when I was following an energy line on foot south west from Christchurch Spitalfields and found it aiming for the Heron Tower. Dowsing around the tower, an astonishing picture began to emerge. Dowzers have known for a long time that towers tend to attract energy lines; but here was something special. The Heron Tower appeared to be drawing in powerful energy lines on all sides.



Some of these lines are impacting on the tower quite high up in the air, suggesting that the tower is acting in part as an ariel. Here is a summary of the lines shown on the map:

LINE 1 Runs alongside the tower from Houndsditch to St Bodolphs. It begins about 4 ft up in the air, with active bands at 10 ft, 18 ft and possibly higher. The Von Pohl number is usually 6.

LINE 2 Runs from Christchurch and skirts the western side of the tower. Von Pohl number 6. Begins at 3 ft, extends up to 9 ft.

An "early" collection of early bronze items and artefacts including a stitched bag or basket, hand's ring, and a metal pin. The find is a peat mound, a logical site for most important items. Experts hope it will be about 4,000 years old. The burial cist, a small chamber, is thought to be of the same age and date. It is thought to be a crematorium. The cist on W Dartmoor, was excavated in 1960. Inside was cremated human bone and burnt textile pieces. This was possibly leather and textile. It was placed on a mat. Also inside the cist were a woven bag or basket, beads, some of them made of stone, and other items. About 200 cists have been found in Dartmoor, sunk into the ground. The Whitehorse cist, which is the most famous, has many of its contents have been removed and the fact that it is so far from other sites. Jane Marchand, senior archaeologist at Dartmoor National Park, said: "This is an extraordinary find that shouldn't be in a more remote area of Dartmoor." Marchand said the spot, 600m above sea level, is close to the two rivers, which was probably the area chosen as the burial site.

PLEASE SEND US ANY RELEVANT PRESS CUTTINGS!



LINE 3 Running along the southerly (Bevis Marks) side of the tower. Begins about 3 ft up and extends at least 21 ft up. Von Pohl 4.

LINE 4 From the direction of the Gherkin. Von Pohl 9. Begins 4 ft up extends 24 ft up at least.

LINE 5 Von Pohl 11 – possibly from the Natwest tower.

The front of the heron Tower was extremely difficult to dowse because of the intensity of the energies, which made me unwell on several occasions. The map shows clearly what is happening.

I found two node points, with characteristic dowsable stars. There may be others. In addition to the nodes, another curious dowsable pattern began to emerge of distinctive stepped shapes, most prominent in the western corner. What on earth was this about? My first thought was that I had hit upon the foundations of the Bishops Gate but, having seen a drawing of its round towers, I ruled that out. Next, I looked at the OS map for 1873, which showed absolutely nothing of the remotest interest happening at that spot. What about an underground cellar? Well, it seems like a unwieldy design and, apart from anything, the pattern is detectable right out into the busy road at one point (take care, guys!). My speculations took a different turn. Is it possible that this huge structure, which is obviously acting to collect, control and direct a cocktail of powerful energies across the financial district, is generating its own node-like pattern? If so, we are left with a host of further questions:

- What is happening to these energies when they get inside the building?
- What is the effect on the people who work there?
- Will the pattern change when the Pinnacle and the Shard are completed?

I hope some of you will be intrigued enough to go down to Bishopsgate and dowse the site for yourselves. I'm sure there is much more to discover.



The Deal Line in Cornwall and Devon



This ley, whose passage through West Sussex was referred to in Issue 1, runs from Gunwalloe in Cornwall to Deal in Kent. This article looks at its journey through Cornwall and Devon but as we travel along its route I must stress that the information below only relates to what I have found on OS Landranger 1:50,000 maps. I have not surveyed or dowsed at all in this area as it is a long way from my home, but I hope that any readers who live in or near Cornwall and Devon might be able to provide some more information.

The ley crosses Mounts Bay to land at SW645235 north of Gunwalloe, through Bumuick Farm SW669241 and through Mawgan SW710251 where St. Maignus' church sits on the ley. It runs along the southern bank of the Helford River through earthworks by Bishop's Quay SW730257 and across the river to Mawnan SW788272 where 13c Mawnan Church sits on the ley.

It then crosses Falmouth Bay to enter Devon at Beacon Point SX615460 going through St Ann's Chapel SX664473 where it runs through the chapel and Holy Well. It runs on through Loddiswell SX720486 where St. Michael's church is sited on the ley and further on through another St. Michael's church at Blackawton SX805510. The ley crosses the River Dart passing through Dartmouth Marina SX886530 and across the peak by Hillhead SX895533 to enter Lyme Bay at Sharkham Point SX938545.

After crossing Lyme Bay the ley enters Dorset at Weymouth, but that's a trip for another time!

On its journey across southern Britain the Deal Line (so called 'cos I don't know it's real name!) follows a course of 76degE (grid) and, where it has been dowsed in Hampshire and Sussex, varies in width from 6 to 8 paces. It should not be confused with the 'E Line' which runs from Cape Cornwall/St. Just to Leysdown-on-Sea in Kent, many miles north of it. (thanks to Jimmy Goddard for this info.)

Happy hunting!
Dave Swann

BOOK REVIEWS

Gordon Strong: Stanton Drew and its Ancient Stone Circles, Wooden Books, 2008. ISBN 978-1-904263-73-9, 60pp, b&w ills, pb £4.99
Take this charming little book with you when visiting our third major Neolithic temple complex. Leys are featured (although the author calls them ley-lines!). Highly recommended.

Irene Earis: Sky and Landscape – A Field Guide to Archaeoastronomy, Fastprint Publishing, 2011. ISBN 978-178035-059-2. 90pp, b&w ills, pb. A useful little introductory guide to leys, except that the ley word isn't used. Why not? It is short. Alexander Thom and Robin Heath are acknowledged. No price is given, but I highly recommend this book

L. Main



Clare Higson tells us of working with the energies of a ley and triangle relevant to this year's London Olympics

Loving Up the River Lee

Marko Pogacnik spent four days helping us to focus on the energetic resonances concerned with the Olympics and the elementals therein. We worked a triangulation corner stoning around Westminster Abbey, with All Saints Church at Blackheath and Bow Church forming the other points. Marko's technique of "turning one's back on the situation and mentally walking up three steps to the Alta major and somersaulting" so as to better tune in with the spirit of the place I found really helpful - gently but immediately taking me to a shamanic visioning in a same place / different time type thing. The kindly space for the Share of everyone's experiences at each place was really helpful.

One aspect which came up for me was ensoulment and machines - silicon based computers as much as those looming large in this landscape such as the massive earth moving heavy plant and enormous cranes not forgetting the metallic "sculptures" placed along the Thames in and out of the water and at the Olympic site itself. I spent ages on the Clipper - up and down the River and found a fairly full on set of metallic structures both actually in the river and at the O2 jetty, where opposite the timeless magic of the Trinity Buoy Lighthouse 's sound installation adjacent to the Lee's mouth sounds unceasingly since 2000 for a thousand years. Its peaceful intention at odds with the vast red metal "viewing tower" designed by Kapoor at the Olympic site which towers above the stadium creating the impression of humanity as ants.

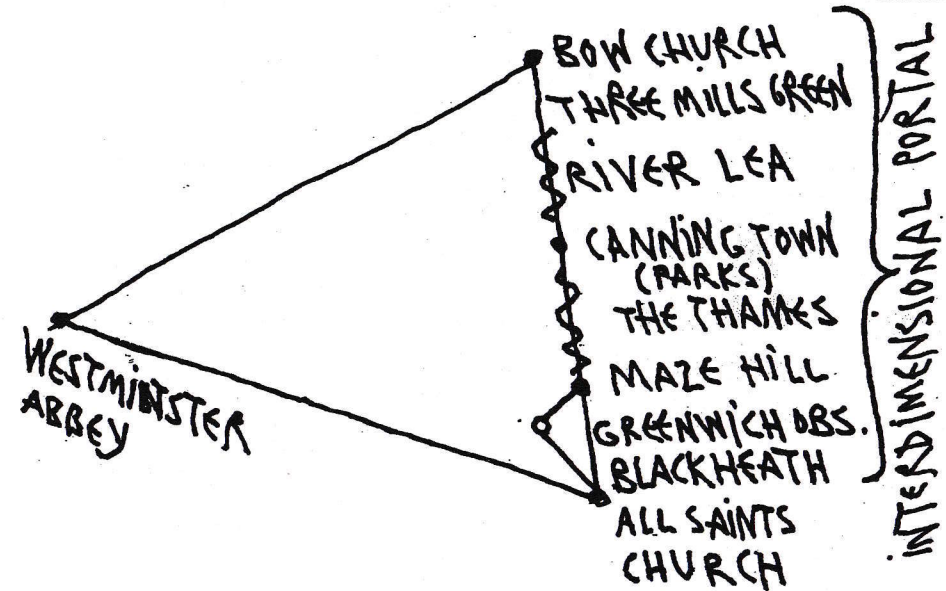
Marko and I chatted about the difference between the Neolithic and Now; how films such as Transformers and a general western modern cultural (advertising) tendency to anthropomorphise our material goods & machinery which could mislead folk into what I call an overcompensating Christ consciousness. Marko was clear that these objects do not suffer in the human sense. Marko explained this with reference to Steiner and I find this text from Steiner's Spiritual Science compiled and with a commentary by Ernst Hagemann illustrates what he means:

"For what are we doing when we take things from nature and put them together in the machines and apparatus which we use in everyday life? We are not just putting pieces of matter together. Every time we put pieces of matter together we are giving a demonic ahrimanic servant an opportunity to unite with the machine." World Ether, Elemental Beings, Kingdoms of Nature.

So now the nature of the waters - tidal and canalised. The heart of our work was centred on the waters flowing in and out and around Three Mills Island - this has been transformed with the planting of "400 trees, 1,400 shrubs and 16,000 metres squared of wildflower grassland" and the 18th C tidal mill itself is in the process of being revamped to make hydro

electricity rather than the gin it pumped out previously. The river and the canal run side by side by this point and the difference in energy quality at Bow Lock was very clear.

By the time we as a group reached this point we had already spent a day with the Kindly Luminous Beings of Blackheath - at the site of All Saints Church and prior to that Maze Hill within Greenwich Park. Soaked to the skin as we walked away along the ley from Wolfe's statue the photo of the showman shows the capstone of the Pelli building - a site that was to sore our eyes pretty much throughout the pilgrimage wherever we were - this didn't hamper us from etherically raising the rafters at All Saints, nor from relaxing into the gentle loving presence at Bow Church.



This is a diagrammatic representation of how Marko Pogacnik saw the ley linking All Saints at Blackheath South London, Maze Hill in Greenwich and Bow Church in London's East End.

Having covered all the ground so to speak our final journey was on water from the White Tower to Westminster. We disembarked at the enormous spokes of the London Eye and snaked through the Bank Holiday crowds on Westminster Bridge and into the calm courtyard of Westminster Abbey and under a watchful (tsk tsk hippies again) janitor performed a simple and emotionally moving living embodiment of the "triangle" (see diagram above) with some of us standing and representing the three main posts and some us representing the rivers and places we had encountered bringing the light in cupped hands to the posts. Job done we gave thanks and headed for a warming brew.

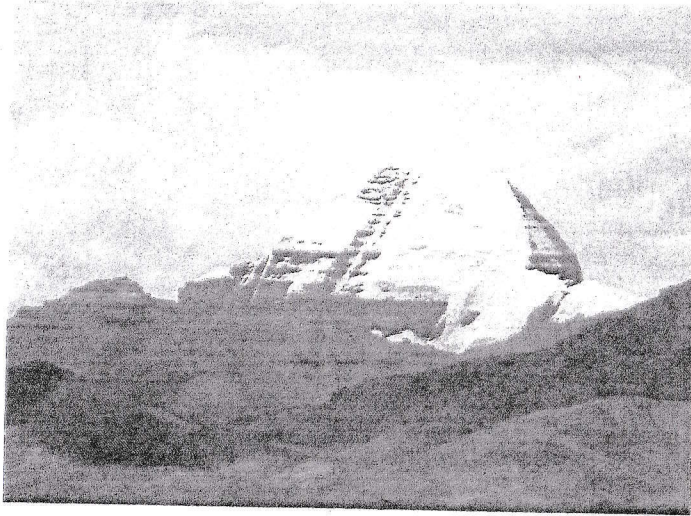
Patterns in the Landscape Part 1 The World's Most Sacred Mountain and Lakes

by Eileen Roche

Inspired by Lawrence's *Welcome* and Judith Adams' article on *Pilgrimage* in Issue One, I thought I would share with the network of leyhunters some reminiscences of powerful linear, circular & meandering patterns in the landscape.

Travelling thousands of miles by air to India, my companion & I survived some amazing & often hair-raising adventures, continuing through Nepal by bus for 145 kilometres & crossing the Friendship Bridge on foot into Tibet. There we took 4x4 vehicles & travelled hundreds of kilometres to a very sacred landscape. Our objective was to undertake the gruelling Parikramer or Holy Pilgrimage around the most sacred Mountain, Kailash, of legendary fame. For any pilgrim undertaking this challenging feat, the reward is immense: to be 'blessed & free of this life's sins'. Since before 2,000 BC, Mount Kailash has

been considered the Divine Holy Mountain. It has never been climbed; no-one is allowed to set foot on it because it belongs to the goddesses and gods. The Mountain is 6,714 metres (over 22,000 ft) above sea level, & I soon developed altitude sickness.



Tibet, known as the Roof of the World, is a land of mystery, remoteness, the paranormal & the supernatural. It contains sweeping silent plains, immense empty landscapes, towering mountains, enormous sand dunes, & mysterious lakes. There are few roads, mainly dirt tracks (although the Chinese occupiers are building a tarmac highway across the land). For centuries pilgrims have journeyed great distances to Mount Kailash. They hope to achieve enlightenment or cleanse themselves of sin, braving severe, harsh weather, high altitudes & robber attacks. There are no roads around the Mountain or in the passes, not even a track over rocky boulders in some places.

Although pilgrimage is a common element in all the world religions, its importance within each religion varies. The *journey* is always of prime importance, having *physical* and *spiritual* aspects, with the objective of encountering the Divine or the Sacred. The pilgrimage site is where the Divine or Sacred power is thought to be particularly accessible & many pilgrimages take the form of circumambulation, or walking around the site. This was our intention in Tibet. But first we had to get there.

'Kailash' is a Sanskrit word translating as 'crystal', & in Tibetan means, 'The Treasure of Snow Mountain'. Buddhists believe a palace rests on the summit, the dwelling place of Buddha. Tibetan Buddhists believe the Buddha Demchog & his consort Dorje Phagmo dwell on top of the mountain, representing Supreme Bliss, while Hindus consider the god Shiva & his consort Parvati to live on the summit, representing Asceticism & Marital Bliss. Hindus consider Mount Kailash to be Mount Meru, spiritual centre of the universe, their world pillar, 84,000 miles high with roots in hell & the summit in heaven. Jains believe the Mountain Astapada is where their first prophet Rishaba achieved enlightenment. The Tibetan indigenous Bon Po people believe the Mountain is where their founder Shanrab descended from heaven 18,000 years ago; it was the spiritual centre of their ancient Bon Empire of Zhang Zung. And Bon Po people believe the Mountain is the seat of the Sky Goddess, Sipaimen, & so it is their Soul Mountain, the "Nine Storey Swastika Mountain" signifying *Good Luck*. It is Asia's most sacred mountain & is a pyramid of black rock, a diamond with 4 faces with a cap of ice and snow, set in a mythic Himalayan landscape of immensely high snow-covered mountains & glaciers. The faces are covered in fissures that appear as swastikas or the shapes of human faces. Nearby there are two large sacred lakes: *Manasarova*, the embodiment of the *Forces of Light* and *Rakas Tal*, the embodiment of the *Dark Forces*. Mount Kailash has four sacred rivers rising close by: the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, the Sutlej & the Indus, all flowing to the Indian Ocean: a truly mythic and sacred landscape, replete with spirituality.

On this journey we met many marvelous people, including the Bon Po, believers in Tibet's indigenous faith, predating Buddhism & being shamanistic & animistic. The people also call the mountain 'Tise', meaning 'Water' or 'River Peak'. The sun and the moon orbit around Mount Kailash, forming a *Mandala of Bliss* on the ground. On the striking Tibetan house front doors along the way we saw many depictions of the sun and moon, & swastikas. The Bon Po walk counter-clockwise around the Mountain on their pilgrimage & as I encountered them on the paths and trackways they invariably gave me a beatific blessing as a fellow pilgrim.

We travelled with some caring Hindu pilgrims & found that they hold an 'umbrella' of beliefs and practices. Hinduism originated over 3000 years ago in

THE MOTHER OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

This landscape giantess is very large and is well recorded; ancient stories of her existence are to be found especially within the Persian Empire...

The Persian Empire was at its greatest extent in the sixth century a.c. The Medes whose ancient capital was Ecbatana rose to importance after the sacking of Nineveh and their power by degrees encroached on the domination of the Babylonians. The Persians, the inhabitants of Persia, or Persia proper, whose capital was Persepolis had been subject to the Medes, but under the command of Cyrus they threw off the yoke, and obtained the mastery about a.c. 558. Immediately afterwards Cyrus subdued Croesus, king of Lydia, and added his dominions to the empire along with the Greek settlements on the coast of Asia Minor. He next extended his conquests eastward as far as the Indus, and then overthrew the Babylonian power. It was at this time that the Persians first came into contact with the Hebrews, in their captivity (Ezra i. 2-4; Is. xlv. 28; xlv. 1-4). Egypt was added to the Persian Empire by Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, a.c. 525. From this period the empire did not increase in extent, but it lasted till a.c. 330, when Darius Codomannus was overcome by Alexander, in the battle of Arbela, and his dominions became part of the Greek, or Macedonian, empire. (Map and extract from the Bible Atlas 1878)

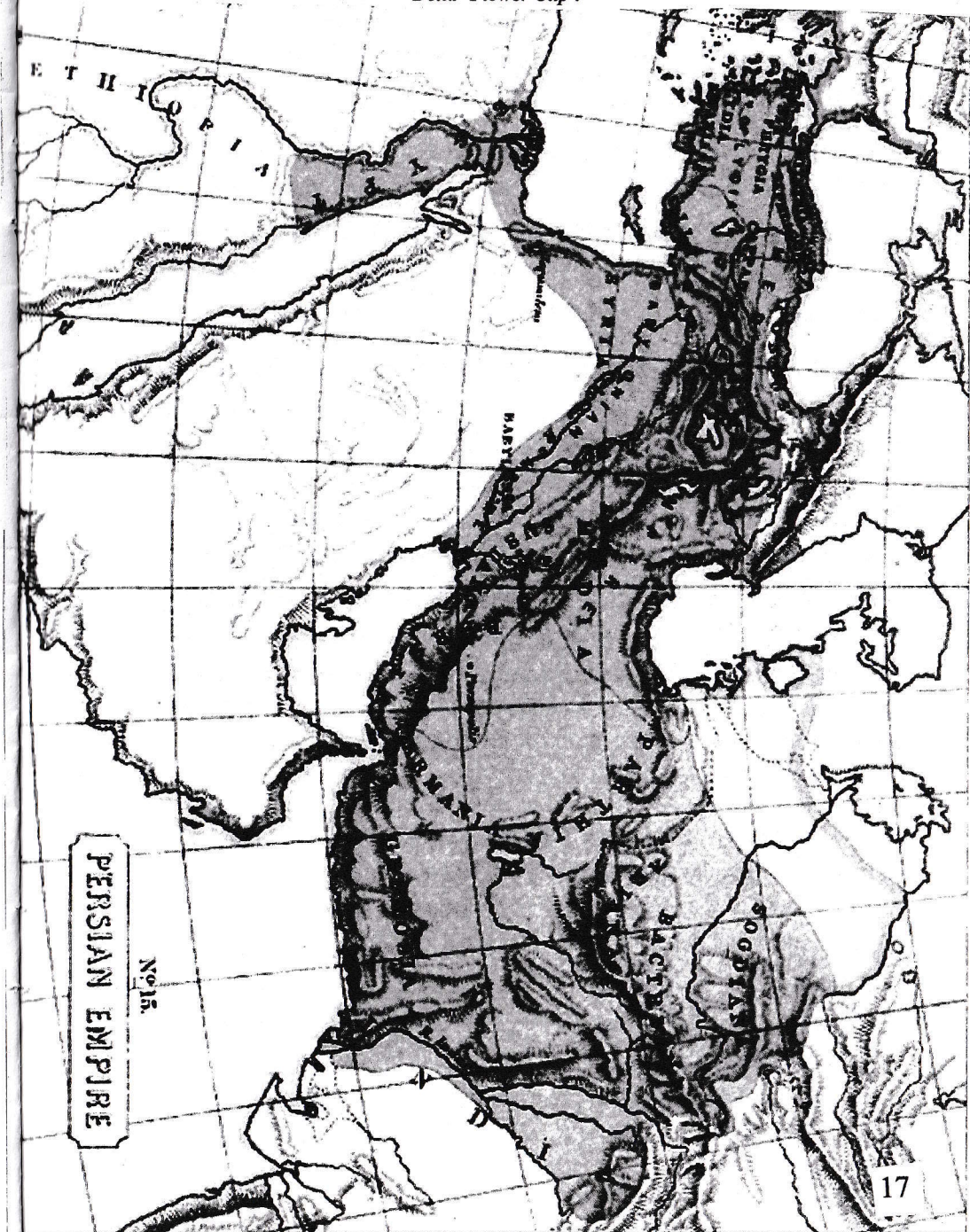
Revelation

When the sixth angel emptied his bowl at the location of ancient Babylon, it fittingly symbolized the plaguing of Babylon the Great as events move swiftly toward the final war of Armageddon. (Revelation 16:1, 12, 16) Likely, it is this same angel that now reveals why and how Jehovah executes his righteous judgments. John is struck with wonderment at what he next hears and sees: "And one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying: 'Come, I will show you the judgment upon the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, whereas those who inhabit the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication,'"—Revelation 17:1, 2.

"The great harlot"! Why so shocking a designation? Who is she? Some have identified this symbolic harlot with ancient Rome. But Rome was a political power. This harlot commits fornication with the kings of the earth, and this evidently includes the kings of Rome. Besides, after her destruction, "the kings of the earth" are said to mourn her passing. Therefore, she cannot be a political power. (Revelation 18:9, 10) Additionally, since she is mourned also by the world's merchants, she could not picture big business. (Revelation 18:15, 16) We read, however, that 'by her spiritistic practice all the nations were misled.' (Revelation 18:23) This makes it clear that the great harlot must be a worldwide religious entity 'a landscape giantess'. Which religious entity? Is she the Roman Catholic Church, as some have maintained? Or is she all of Christendom? No, she must be even larger than these if she is to

**Read more in: Landscape Giants by Graham Russell
£9.99, ISBN 9781906050122, www.melrosebooks.com**

*The Persian Empire in the shape of a woman.
Held within the hand of this landscape giantess/giant is to be found the River Nile,
Delta 'Flower Cup'.*



BOOK REVIEWS



The Silbury Treasure, the Great Goddess rediscovered

By Michael Dames

Publisher: Thames & Hudson Ltd, London 1976, 192pp, hardback, b&w illus,
ISBN-13: 978-0500050279

An astonishing and revelatory work. Michael Dames has done some excellent field work and research in revealing some the fascinating truths about Silbury Hill, and the surrounding area of Avebury.

The first part of the book gives a description of all the investigations that were previously conducted showing how considerable time and money were wasted on attempting to find a buried treasure along with the remains of a mythical King within the Silbury mound. The theory, backed up by folklore, had always been that Silbury Hill was a large barrow or burial mound, and, being so large (the largest man-made hill in all of Europe no less), it was assumed that it must have been a burial mound for someone frightfully important and probably very rich who no doubt would be buried with his treasure; hence, there was a great fascination with digging up the mound to find the King and lay hold of the treasure. However, there was just one problem - no King and no treasure was ever found.

The truth, as these expensive digs showed again and again, was far more fascinating. The author's psychological insight here is most poignant – the story of the King and his treasure was believed because of a one-sided *viewpoint* current over the last few centuries that anything of importance must be based on a male leader who is essentially someone just like themselves – a man of influence and power, in a word: a patriarch. Because of this one-sided view, the real purpose of Silbury remained entirely hidden from them. However, as Mr. Dames shows, the very shape of the structure, in

relation to its environment and positioning in the landscape, was an obvious clue to what it was really all about.

Mr. Dames' argues that the various researchers who dug up the hill with their background culture and limited viewpoint entirely missed something of real and striking importance - the *Goddess* symbolism that is everywhere present in the whole Avebury area, and, perhaps most obviously, in Silbury Hill itself. - *Liza Lewelyn*

The Avebury Cycle

By Michael Dames

Publisher: Thames & Hudson Ltd, London, 1977, 224pp, hardback, b&w illus,
ISBN-13: 978-0500050309

This book expands further upon many of the points put forward in Michael Dames' first book, *The Silbury Treasure*. It carries on the theme of the Goddess symbolism of the Neolithic age being behind the ancient constructions found at Avebury. As the first book focussed on Silbury Hill, this book takes in the *entire* Avebury landscape and associated man-made monuments, such as the famous Avebury Henge (the largest in Europe) and West Kennet Long Barrow. The main thesis of this book, as the name suggests, is that there was a cycle of activity, in harmony with nature, that caused a beautiful and extremely well-thought-out interconnection between all of these man-made monuments and the surrounding landscape. As in the Silbury book, there is a great emphasis on the idea that ancient man had a sense of the unity between the spiritual and the physical, between the outer and the inner, which people living in the modern world have for the most part completely abandoned for a disturbingly more dualistic view of the world. The ancients, as Mr. Dames eloquently argues, did not see themselves as merely *connected* to nature, their divine mother - they saw themselves and her as an *indivisible* unity. - *Liza Lewelyn*

Coldrum Stones, Birling & Trottscliffe

A walk with Jon Lord in the Kent landscape

Essential information:

County: Kent, Ordnance Survey Explorer maps OS147 & OS148

Nearest rail station: Borough Green & Wrotham

Camping & Caravan site: Gatehouse Wood

Ford Lane, Wrotham Heath, 01732 843 062

Premier Inn & Holiday Inn, both at Wrotham Heath

Pretty Maid B&B run by Andy & Sue Carr (tell them you know me)

All are just off the M26 and M20 Jct 2 and all have web sites

If you decide that a visit to Coldrum barrow in Kent is a 'must' then may I add, for consideration, some extras to visit whilst you are in the vicinity. I am not allowed space to write about Ightham, Wrotham, Addington or Ryarsh, perhaps there will be another time!

Coldrum is located at SN654606 in Trottscliffe (spoken as Trosley). The name 'Coldrum' comes from a now demolished farm property that was just south of the barrow called Coldrum Lodge.

Just under a quarter of a mile north east of Coldrum close to the North Downs track-way, SN653610 is a large spread mound over 300ft in length and 90ft wide orientated east-west and may possibly be the site of another long-barrow.

It is almost certain that Coldrum barrow was constructed after extensive land clearance and cultivation as the barrow is on top of well-developed lynchets which must have been formed by hill wash caused by ploughing. This takes cultivation and settlement much further back than many have previously believed and this area of Kent between the Darenth valley gap and the Medway gap was one of the early starting points for agriculture in these islands.

Although William Stukeley is known to have visited Kits Coty located on the side of Blue Bell Hill, there does not appear to be any record of him visiting Coldrum. This may be down to the fact that the barrow was hidden from general view by the overgrowth of bushes and brambles. It is believed that during the middle ages the site was known and partial destruction of the barrow may have taken place then by religious zealots when the under-soil at the front of the barrow was removed to assist in its collapse.

In the early part of the nineteenth century it was reported that "*proceeding from Coldrum in an easterly direction could be observed single stones of the same kind and colossal magnitude, scattered over the fields for some distance, and it is the tradition of the peasantry that a continuous line of stones ran from Coldrum to Kits Coty House*". Today there is no sign, however, in the edge of a copse near to the now cultivated fields are a large pile of sarsens. The approximate location is SN661607. With the advent of the traction engine it was common-place for the clearance and destruction of ancient sites in order to facilitate the plough.

Coldrum barrow was placed in the care of the National Trust in 1926 and they dedicated the site to the memory of Benjamin Harrison of Ightham. Using an imported stone they placed a plaque to him incorrectly describing the site as a stone circle! The stone and plaque are still there... after 85 years one would have thought they could correct such an obvious error.

Some 200 yards south of Coldrum on a path beside a barbed wire fence can be found a further group of sarsens which may have formed an alcove or point where dis-articulation may have taken place prior to internment within the barrow. When I visited the site in November 2011 I found that horse manure had been piled against the sarsens whilst on the opposite side of the path a large tree

had fallen onto the enormous recumbent sarsen lying there. In 2004 these were clear to see and unless work is undertaken to remove this fallen tree then I fear I will not view this again in my lifetime.

The North Downs track-way runs north of Coldrum at the base of the chalk slope and leads to three possible crossing points of the river Medway, They are at Halling, Snodland and Aylesford. It should be borne in mind that in neolithic and earlier times the river was non-tidal. One crossing point is at Snodland SN714615 and in 1940 it was reported that the river bed had large fist-sized stones to provide good foot-placement. The further north one goes along the river the softer the river bed becomes making crossing more difficult. I am, of course, discounting using animals, ferries and bridges. Both Kits Coty and Coldrum are on the same contour line at 311.6ft and are 6 miles apart, Kits Coty on the eastern side of the Medway and Coldrum on the west. The style of the barrows is quite different and it again is likely that they were constructed at different time-scales with Kits Coty being possibly the first to be built.

From the chamber at Coldrum the view is to the east encompassing the Medway gap, Birling church and the curving ridge of the North Downs towards Hollingbourne. The observer has clear site of mid-winter sunrise through to mid-summer solstice. This 'soup-bowl-rim' landscape also brings down the sky so that celestial bodies can readily be observed.

On the opposite side of the deep-cut lane beside Birling Church is a large meadow, convex in shape. From the centre of this and with a little imaginative mental landscape adjustment by removal of trees as well as the church the lines of sight go west along the Holmesdale valley and the south westerly green-sand ridge of Sevenoaks and beyond for mid-winter sunset. Look north east for the Medway gap and summer solstice and swinging in a southerly arc, Beltaine, equinox and mid-winter sunrises. Come to think of it why didn't they build the church in this meadow? Unless, that is, it had a more significant role to play! Interestingly there are a series of sarsen stones abutting the lane on the bend and road edge wall of the church as well as a prostrate sarsen providing the main step to the lynch gate. These could have come from this meadow. A vestry extension on the north side of the church has been constructed using broken-up sarsen stone. Behind the church the ground slopes down to the river Medway which is a short distance away.

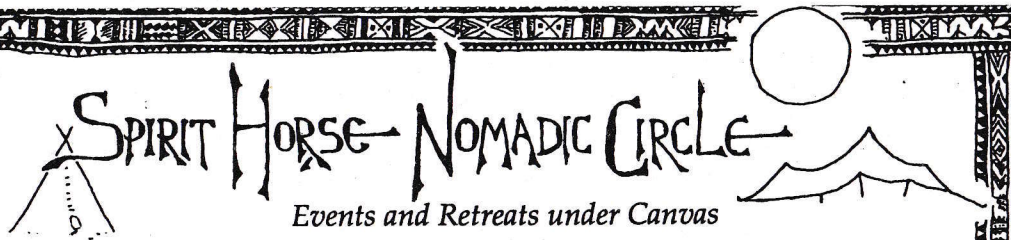
But back to Coldrum, walk back and past the parking area to the junction with the lane. Look due west and you will see the golden cock-spire of Trottscliffe church at your feet! It is a "must-see" – the footpath running from the lane at Coldrum down to the church is aligned south west – north east so that if you start from the bottom at the rear of the cottages by the church you will walk into the summer solstice sunrise as it sits on the path on the rise of the slope – pure magic! This is also a good place to observe the moon and stars as light pollution is low.

"Churches are built on high-points aren't they?"... I guess most of us will know the general reason for that but here at Trottscliffe church there are hidden treasures for you to see without entering the building, but if it is open do spend time inside this wonderful space. It is reputed that a church has been on this site since the eighth century. The foundations are on blocks of sarsens and these are clear to see under the south wall east of the tower as well as under the north wall and under the corner of the west wall. In the south east corner of the small churchyard stands an old yew. At Imbolc in 2003 I stood by the south east corner wall of the church watching the early sun peep around the edge of the hill through the branches of the yew and send a ray of light running down the south east corner of the church wall. I turned round in awe to watch this and in the lightening early morning sky saw the moon in the north west. It was like an act of courtship between these two celestial bodies.

Finally, if you want a good lunch or dinner then go to the George Inn on the village green, run by the Selfe family.

Jon Lord

Acknowledgements: The King's England, Arthur Mee: The Pilgrims' Way, Derek Bright The Pilgrims' Way in Kent, Donald Maxwell: Archaeologia Cantiana Vol CXVIII, 1998 Ightham, The story of a Kentish village. F J Bennett



For over 20 years the Spirit Horse Community, visitors, friends and tribal council have camped amongst the rock pools and wooded gorges of the wild upper end of Pennant Valley, Powys.

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For further information please see www.spirithorse.co.uk and www.forestofdreams.org.uk.

Erika Indre & Shivam O'Brien

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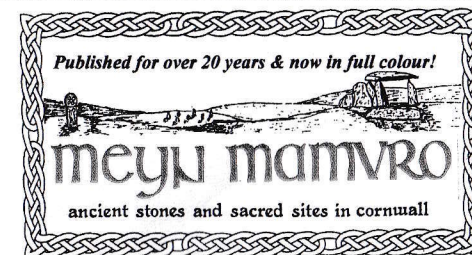
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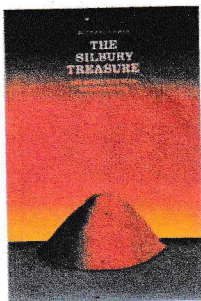
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