

A few notes on dowsing

Anon (February 2014)

When I talk to people about dowsing, they usually think I mean looking for water. They are sometimes surprised when I say that it can be used for other things.

I have no difficulty finding water and can estimate how far down it is. If I wanted to find out the quality, I think that the method that Alan Neal writes about in '*Dowsing in Devon and Cornwall*' makes sense.

He says work on a scale of one to ten - anything over 5 is drinkable, anything below is not. He goes on to talk about ascertaining quantity of water by using a similar method. To find the quantity of water, look for an amount of around 1000 gallons per hour. In practice an amount near this figure would be acceptable. The requirements of a domestic household are different to that of a larger user. Alan says that he sets himself a minimum depth of 30ft even if the site is remote or on a hilltop. This is because of the pollution that might come from sewerage or agricultural chemicals.

Water isn't my main interest. I am more into Ley Lines (the Michael and Mary Ley lines especially) and looking for 'lost buildings'. It is usually Chapels, sometimes houses, Blacksmiths shops etc. When I went looking for Blacksmiths shops near Crediton one day, I found that the second one seemed to have a channel from the Mill Leat, to provide him with a continuous water supply – this was around 1720. I had read about it in a book, but they didn't say where it was. There was a house in the field and it was probably where he lived.

I came across the foundations of another house over that way, quite by accident one day. I went to Westcountry Studies Library to look on an old map and found it marked as the site of the Manor House (or something like it). I then checked on the Internet and found who had it built. I thought that it dated from around 1585 and went around the mid 1840's (there is some debate about that 1815, 1820? but I wasn't far out). When I went back one evening I found that it had a Chapel down below. I wondered about the house being on the side of a hill and think that steps led up to it. I often think it is like stepping back into the past, revealing secrets that a lot of people wouldn't know about.

When I started tracking the Michael and Mary Ley Lines, I visited some of the places mentioned in '*The Sun and The Serpent*'. I went to Glastonbury in August 2001 and traced it at some of the Churches on the way back, a few days later. I have found a lot more since then, because I have spent a lot of time searching locally. The lines come from West Cornwall and go to East Anglia, via Glastonbury and Avebury along the way. One of the first places that I picked them up was at Crediton, where they cross (Church of the Holy Cross). I stopped at Newton St. Cyres Church after a walk one day and found that they cross there as well. They come across to Tiverton from that direction – I have been to some of the villages in between and also some on the other side, but still have more that I would like to visit.

I have found Chapel sites (underground foundations) close to footpaths when I have been out walking, and think that some of the Footpaths and Bridle paths are a lot older

than we might think – they were well used, because people were walking from one place to another. Often the Chapel sites are where two paths meet.

These are some of the things that interest me. Some of you might become interested in something else. I never thought I would find it so interesting and find a little bit more every year. It also takes me to places that I might not have visited otherwise. I have also found that people tell me things when I have been doing the Classes (and when I am out), because they have the local knowledge – things that I might never have known about otherwise.

Dowsing is something that I only took up 10 years ago, but it is something I will always be doing.