

Can one go Pokémon dowsing!?

Nigel Twinn (August 2016)

OK – what connects the 17th-century Market Hall in Tetbury, Gloucestershire, a Pokémon Go! image and the 2016 World Of Music And Dance (WOMAD) festival? Answer – as ever, co-incidence.

Whilst chatting between performances at this year's WOMAD, my wife Ros and I were mulling over a conversation we'd had the week before with our nephew, who has been a Pokémon aficionado since its earliest incarnation. Whilst our own understanding of this worldwide phenomenon is woefully weak, we have gleaned that it involves the control and collection of virtual fantasy characters, which have apparently been located by the game's developers at venues all over the world. Some of the high-profile sites have caused a bit of understandable controversy, but what our nephew told us – which led us on an intriguing line of thought – was that they can be found in the most unlikely and seemingly quite ordinary of places. This inspired us to wonder (and you already know what's coming) would it be possible to dowse for these imaginary creatures?

Back at our B&B in Tetbury, I made the simple request 'Please show me the nearest Pokémon character to here'. Not having the slightest idea what to expect, I had to dodge the rod as it whirled back into my face – 'It's behind you!' Again a simple request elicited that the theoretical icon was some 300 metres away, in a direction that pointed to the very heart of this historic Cotswold Town.

Having survived three tough days of endless enjoyment at the festival (well, someone has to do it, or musicians would be out of work), sadly the time arrived to head for home. However, before leaving Tetbury, we decided to check out on foot and up close what we had tentatively dowsed back at base.

Our rods took us to the Market Hall, built in the 1650s on the site of an earlier building, probably dating back to the 1300s. Architectural gems of this age and interest are thin on the ground, but they are almost always the remaining markers of etheric energies from the most ancient of times. A ley passes through the open-pillared market space, and on through a painted mini roundabout – the last faint, physical vestige of a long lost market crossing point – it also clips the parish church on its way to an 'Iron Age Hill Fort' just to the south of the town.

Under the slabbed floor of the Hall, the tell-tale energy of two water flows and their associated spiral helped us to find the location of the original spring that had caused the built environment to form itself around this spot in the first place. A concreted-over circular hole in a paving stone, to one side of the trading area, showed where a pump had once stood, connected to the spring by a now disused underground culvert. As ever, a helpful local gentleman arrived on cue to ask what we were doing – and was keen to show me both the location of the 'well' and the pump site. Another thoughtful little conjunction brought into my reality!

The nearest energy manifestation is now under the market cross/mini roundabout (so we gave that one a miss!) and there were two pictograms of three linked circles. All good stuff, but not really what we had come to look for.

Was there a Pokémon presence here? – oh, yes. Knowing next to nothing about what the monsters would look like was actually a huge advantage – in that I was not able to find what I might have expected to find. The pattern drawn out by me, and for me, was of a broadly circular figure with two protrusions at the top and one at the bottom. Even my limited knowledge of the subject led me to be somewhat surprised that it was about three paces across – a bit big for a 9cm x 4cm Smartphone screen!

However, assuming the figures are set in the information background using Internet maps and photographs in the public domain, then digitally overlaying a minuscule image might well result in a three-metre picture in the physical world.

According to my dowsing, the web-based character does not interact with the various other energy patterns. However, having picked up an uncomfortable feeling, Ros prompted me to contact the site guardian (which, of course, I should have done at the outset). It seemed reasonably accepting of my retrospective greeting, but was rather less enthusiastic about the imposition of the oriental informational graffiti that had recently appeared in its space/time.

The parallels between Pokémon figures and lines of consciousness (often synonymous with leys) is slightly unsettling, even to experienced diviners. At a time when many aspects of the everyday world are disappearing at unprecedented speed, this blurring of the physical and the psychic via the medium of electronic make-believe can seem all the more unnerving.

I asked if the information of the characters could be removed by anyone else, but got a straight ‘no’. They could only be removed by the originator or someone with comparable and compatible knowledge – again a similarity with the ley phenomenon. Ros dowsed that the image would fade with time, so the meta-physical plane of the planet is probably not lumbered with them for all eternity.

Our dowsing showed that even someone with next-to-no knowledge of the subject could find a Pokémon site by simple rod-dowsing alone. However, to actually ‘collect’ and ‘capture’ the image would require the use of the bespoke software – and indeed the acquisition of some relevant hardware!

Combining our ancient craft with 21st-century information technology is an intriguing juxtaposition of concepts and outputs. However, for us, the real significance of this seemingly trivial exercise is that it reinforces the hypothesis that even entities composed solely of information – and invented on the other side of the world, using only digital characteristics – can be dowsed effectively, aided only by the most basic of tools. Here we are not dowsing anything physical, just something that has effectively been ‘thought into place’. While the philosophical link to leys is fascinating, the potential extension of that line of reasoning to other icons in our landscape, which involve the interaction of both physicality and consciousness could be groundbreaking. Dare I mention the phrase ‘Crop formations’?